

استراتيجيات تعديل السلوك المعاصرة في مرويات الإمام علي عليه السلام: قراءة معرفية سلوكية في مواجهة تحديات الصحة النفسية الراهنة

رجب أكبر زاده^١

١. الكاتب المسؤول، أستاذ مساعد في قسم اللاهوت والمعارف الإسلامية، جامعة بيام نور، طهران، إيران. البريد الإلكتروني: r_akbarzadeh@pnu.ac.ir

الملخص

معلومات مقال

هدف البحث: يتمثل الهدف الرئيس لهذا البحث في استخراج وتحليل أساليب تعديل السلوك وتغييره المستنبطة من نصوص الإمام علي عليه السلام، وبيان مدى موافقتها المنهجية والإجرائية مع الاتجاهات الحديثة في علم النفس المعرفي السلوكي لمعالجة الاضطرابات النفسية والسلوكية المعاصرة.

المنهجية: اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي التوثيقي من خلال الاستقصاء المكتبي للنصوص الواردة في المصادر الروائية الأصيلة كنهج البلاغة وغرر الحكم، ومطابقتها نسقياً مع النظريات المعتمدة في مجالات تعديل السلوك، والعلاج المعرفي السلوكي، والطب النفسي الإكلينيكي.

أهم النتائج: كشفت النتائج عن استخلاص سبع استراتيجيات تطبيقية محورية في كلام الإمام علي عليه السلام (١) أسلوب الغمر والإفاضة والمواجهة المباشرة في معالجة المخاوف والرهاب غير العقلاني (٢) إدارة الضغوط والتوتر النفسي بإعادة الهيكلة المعرفية للنظرة إلى الدنيا وتفعيل شبكات المساندة الاجتماعية الأسرية؛ (٣) تقنيات التجنب المعرفي لاجترار الأحزان ومكافحة الاكتئاب بالصبر الجميل وحسن اليقين؛ (٤) ضبط الانفعالات وإدارة الغضب بالحلم والصمت والتحكم في المشيرات البيئية؛ (٥) آلية محاسبة النفس كأداة للمراقبة الذاتية والرصد المستمر لعلاج العادات السلبية والإدمانات السلوكية؛ (٦) النمذجة الرمزية عبر الاقتداء بالسير الأخلاقية الرفيعة لمعالجة أزمة الهوية؛ (٧) تطبيق التعزيز التفاضلي القائم على مكافأة المحسن لإطفاء سلوك المسيء دون إكراه.

الخاتمة: تؤسس التوجيهات العلوية لمنظومة علاجية ووقائية متكاملة تزواج بين البناء المعرفي التوحيدي والضبط السلوكي والبعد الروحي، مما يمنحها كفاءة عالية في سد الثغرات المنهجية في العلاجات المعاصرة، وتعزيز الصحة الوجدانية والسكينة النفسية للإنسان.

نوع مقال:

مقال بحثي

تاريخ الاستلام:

١٨ شعبان ١٤٢٧

تاريخ المراجعة:

٢٩ شوال ١٤٢٧

تاريخ القبول:

٢٨ شوال ١٤٢٧

تاريخ النشر:

٤ محرم ١٤٢٨

الكلمات المفتاحية:

الإمام علي عليه السلام،

تعديل السلوك،

التحديات المعاصرة،

العلاج المعرفي السلوكي،

علم النفس الإسلامي،

محاسبة النفس،

التعزيز التفاضلي.

استناد: أكبر زاده، رجب (١٤٢٨). استراتيجيات تعديل السلوك المعاصرة في مرويات الإمام علي عليه السلام: قراءة معرفية سلوكية في مواجهة تحديات الصحة النفسية الراهنة. التراث الإسلامي والتحديات المعاصرة، ٢ (٣)، ٩٣-١٢٠.

<https://doi.org/10.48309/ihcc.2026.602194.1049>



© المؤلفون.

ناشر: انتشارات سامی.

١. المقدمة وبيان الإشكالية

يواجه الإنسان المعاصر في ظل التحولات المتسارعة لنمط العيش المعاصر، وسيادة الثقافة الاستهلاكية، أزمات نفسية واجتماعية غير مسبوقة. وقد أدى هذا الواقع إلى تفاقم اضطرابات القلق، والاكتئاب الجسيم، والاحتراق النفسي الناجم عن العالم الافتراضي، وأزمات الهوية والانعزال الاجتماعي. ويمثل حقل تعديل السلوك في علم النفس الركيزة التطبيقية الهادفة إلى رصد الانحرافات والعجز السلوكي وإعادة التوازن النفسي والوظيفي للفرد. بيد أن الاعتماد الأحادي على النماذج المادية المجردة كشف عن قصور واضح في استيعاب الأبعاد المعنوية والروحية للمسترشدين في المجتمعات الإسلامية، مما أدى إلى ضعف الالتزام العلاجي ومحدودية استدامة التحسن السلوكي.

وفي المنظومة الإسلامية، يعد مفهوم «العمل» المرادف الدقيق والشامل لمفهوم «السلوك»، إذ يشمل الأفعال الخارجية الظاهرة والعمليات الإدراكية والمقاصد الباطنة. وتزخر مرويات الإمام علي (عليه السلام) في نهج البلاغة ومصادر الحديث ببصائر إنسانية بالغة العمق وأساليب تطبيقية فريدة في تقويم المسلك الإنساني. وتتلخص إشكالية البحث في كيفية استنباط آليات تعديل السلوك من النصوص العلوية الشريفة، ومقارنتها منهجياً مع أسس العلاج المعرفي السلوكي الحديث، لتقديم استراتيجيات أصيلة وفعالة لمعالجة التحديات النفسية الراهنة.

٢. منهجية البحث وإجراءاته

اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي التوثيقي المقارن، مستندة إلى استقراء المصادر الروائية المعتبرة، وفي طليعتها نهج البلاغة بتبويب الشريف الرضي، وغرر الحكم ودرر الكلم للأمدي، والمصادر الحديثية المعتمدة. كما قورنت هذه النصوص بأهميات المراجع العلمية في نظريات تعديل السلوك، والعلاج المعرفي السلوكي، وعلم النفس العيادي. وتمثلت معايير انتقاء النصوص في: صراحة الدلالة على تقويم السلوك، ووضوح الإجراءات التطبيقية، والتطابق الهيكلي مع المفاهيم النفسية المعاصرة. وتم تنفيذ التحليل عبر مسار خماسي المراحل شمل: الاستخراج الموضوعي للنصوص، والتصنيف الدلالي، والتحليل المقارن، وتقييم الصلاحية الإجرائية إزاء المشكلات الحديثة، وصولاً إلى التركيب والاستنتاج النهائي.

٣. النتائج والتحليل التخصصي للاستراتيجيات السبع

أسفرت القراءة التحليلية المعمقة عن استخلاص سبع استراتيجيات رئيسة لتعديل السلوك في فكر الإمام علي عليه السلام، تمتاز باتساقها الكامل مع القواعد الإكلينيكية المعاصرة:

الاستراتيجية الأولى: أسلوب الغمر والمواجهة المباشرة في علاج الرهاب والمخاوف غير العقلانية

يقرر الإمام علي عليه السلام في الحكمة ١٧٥ من نهج البلاغة: «إِذَا هَبْتَ أَمْرًا فَفَقِّعْ فِيهِ فَإِنَّ شِدَّةَ تَوْقِيهِ أَعْظَمُ مِمَّا تَخَافُ مِنْهُ». إن الأمر «فقع فيه» المشتق من السقوط المباشر يطابق حرفياً تقنية الغمر السلوكي القائمة على تعريض المسترشد للمثير المسبب للقلق بصورة كاملة ومباشرة لكسر نمط التجنب المرضي وإخماد الاستجابة الرهابية. ويكشف الإمام في الشق الثاني عن حقيقة نفسية دقيقة مفادها أن الألم الناتج عن الترقب والحذر وتوقع الشرور أشد تدميراً للنفس من الواقع الفعلي للموقف. وتطبق هذه التقنية بنجاح في علاج الرهاب الاجتماعي، والخوف من التحدث أمام الجمهور، والمخاوف الرقمية. كما يعزو الإمام منشأ المخاوف الواهية إلى الجهل، مؤكداً أن تنوير البصيرة المعرفية بالموقف هو الأساس لإزالة بواعث الهلع.

الاستراتيجية الثانية: إدارة الضغوط والتوتر عبر إعادة الهيكلة المعرفية والتكافل الاجتماعي

في الخطبة ٩٩ من نهج البلاغة، يعيد الإمام صياغة الإدراك البشري تجاه المنغصات الدنيوية بقوله: «فَإِنَّ عِزَّهَا وَفَخْرَهَا إِلَى انْقِطَاعٍ وَإِنَّ زِينَتَهَا وَنَعِيمَتَهَا إِلَى زَوَالٍ وَإِنَّ شِدَّتَهَا وَبَلَاءَهَا إِلَى نَقَادٍ». تمثل هذه الرؤية نموذجاً متقدماً لإعادة البناء المعرفي الذي ينزع فتيل التوتر الناجم عن المقارنات الاجتماعية المرهقة والتنافس المادي. وإلى جانب البعد المعرفي، يؤكد الإمام في الخطبة ١٨٨ على تفعيل شبكة الدعم والمساندة الاجتماعية الأسرية في حماية الأفراد وتقديم العون المادي والوجداني، لأن القربة بما تحمله من عاطفة صادقة تمثل الملاذ الأقوى والدرع النفسي الأمتن لامتصاص صدمات الحياة وأزماتها.

الاستراتيجية الثالثة: تقنيات التجنب المعرفي ومواجهة الاكتئاب بالصبر واليقين

يوجه الإمام في الرسالة ٣١ من نهج البلاغة: «أُطْرَحُ عَنْكَ وَارِدَاتِ الْهَمُومِ بِعَزَائِمِ الصَّبْرِ وَ حُسْنِ الْيَقِينِ». ويعبر الفعل «اطرح» عن الإسقاط الإرادي الواعي للأفكار التلقائية المشبعة بالحزن، وهو ما يرسخ مبدأ المسؤولية الشخصية في إدارة التفكير المعرفي. كما ينهى في الحكمة ٢٦٤ عن استجلاب هم الغد إلى الحاضر، مرسخاً مبدأ اليقظة الذهنية والعيش في اللحظة الواقعية. ويتكامل هذا الجهد السلوكي المعرفي بالاستناد إلى عزائم الصبر الثابت واليقين التام برعاية الخلق، مما يحمي النفس من الاجترار الاكتئابي والانعزال المظلم.

الاستراتيجية الرابعة: إدارة الغضب وضبط الانفعال بالحلم والصمت والتحكم بالمشيرات

يرشد الإمام إلى كبح جماح الانفعال الحاد بقوله: «دَاوُوا الْغَضَبَ بِالصَّمْتِ» و«أَخِذْ عَنِ الْغَضَبِ لَيْلًا يَمْلِكَكَ بِالْعَادَةِ». والحلم يعني الأناة وكبح التسرع، مما يتيح إحداث فاصل زمني يكسر الارتباط التلقائي بين المثير واستجابة العدوان. ويمثل الصمت استجابة بديلة تمنح العقل فرصة إعادة تقييم الموقف بموضوعية. كما أن الصفح وتجاهل ما يثير الحنق يمثل تطبيقاً إجرائياً للتحكم في المشيرات البيئية، مانعاً تحول نوبات الغضب العارضة إلى سمات سلوكية دائمة.

الاستراتيجية الخامسة: محاسبة النفس للرصد الذاتي وتعديل العادات السلبية والإدمانات

ورد في غرر الحكم: «مَنْ حَاسَبَ نَفْسَهُ وَقَفَّ عَلَى عُيُوبِهِ وَ عَرَفَ ذُنُوبَهُ وَ اسْتَقَالَ الذُّنُوبَ وَ أَصْلَحَ الْعُيُوبَ». تتطابق هذه الممارسة مع آلية المراقبة الذاتية في العلاج السلوكي، حيث يشترط لإحداث أي تغيير إيجابي أن يحيط الفرد بأبعاد سلوكه المراد تعديله. ويوصي الإمام بتخصيص ساعة هادئة من الليل بعيداً عن صخب النهار لتقييم المكتسبات والوقوف على العثرات، مما يرفع من الدافعية الداخلية للتقويم ويوفر رصداً دقيقاً يمهد للتخلص من العادات غير المرغوبة.

الاستراتيجية السادسة: النمذجة الرمزية والاقتداء الأخلاقي في مواجهة أزمة الهوية:

يؤكد الإمام في الخطبة ١٦٠ على مركزية النموذج قائلاً: «فَتَأْسَ بِنَبِيِّكَ الْأَطْيَبِ الْأَظْهَرِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ فَإِنَّ فِيهِ أُسْوَةً لِمَنْ تَأَسَى». وانطلاقاً من نظرية التعلم الاجتماعي القائم على

الملاحظة، يقدم الإمام شخصية الرسول الأكرم ﷺ، ومآثر أهل البيت، وسير الصالحين كخباب بن الأرت، إلى جانب التوصيف الدقيق لصفات المتقين في خطبة همام، كنماذج حية واقعية وملهمة تعين الفرد على استدماج القيم الرفيعة ومحاكاة السلوك السوي بعيداً عن النماذج الاستهلاكية السطحية.

الاستراتيجية السابعة: التعزيز التفاضلي بمكافأة الإحسان لإخماد السلوكيات المنحرفة

يقرر الإمام في الحكمة ١٧٧: «أزجرُ المُسِيءَ بِثَوَابِ الْمُحْسِنِ». ترتكز هذه القاعدة على التعزيز التفاضلي للسلوكيات المتنافرة؛ فبدلاً من اللجوء إلى العقاب المباشر أو الإكراه، يتم تعزيز ومكافأة السلوك الحميد بصورة علنية وملموسة، مما يؤدي إلى إطفاء السلوك غير السوي لدى المسيء وتوليد رغبة ذاتية داخلية لديه لتبني المسلك القويم. وتؤكد دلالات النص أن التغيير القائم على الاقتناع الداخلي والقبول الطوعي هو الضامن الوحيد لرسوخ واستدامة التعديل السلوكي.

٤. الخاتمة والآفاق التطبيقية

تخلص الدراسة إلى أن نصوص الإمام علي عليه السلام تؤسس لمنهج علمي رصين ومتكامل في تعديل السلوك ودعم الصحة النفسية. وتكمن الميزة الاستثنائية لهذا المنهج في قدرته على الربط بين الاستبصار المعرفي، والمسؤولية الذاتية، والدعم الاجتماعي، والرسوخ الروحي والوجداني. إن هذه الاستراتيجيات تقدم بروتوكولات إرشادية وتطبيقية أصيلة تثري ممارسات الإرشاد النفسي، والعلاج الأسري، وتعديل السلوك التربوي، وتمنح الإنسان المعاصر درعاً معرفياً وروحياً متيناً لتحقيق السكينة والتوافق النفسي الشامل.

Contemporary Behavior Change Strategies in the Narratives of Imam Ali (a.s.): A Cognitive-Behavioral Analysis for Modern Mental Health Challenges

Rajab Akbarzadeh¹ 

1. Corresponding Author, Assistant Professor, Department of Theology and Islamic Studies, Payame Noor University (PNU), Tehran, Iran. Email: r_akbarzadeh@pnu.ac.ir

Article Info

Article type:
Research Article

Article history:

Received:

9 March 2026

Received in revised form:

6 April 2026

Accepted:

6 May 2026

Available online:

20 June 2026

Keywords:

Imam Ali (a.s.),
Behavior Change,
Contemporary Challenges,
Cognitive-Behavioral
Therapy,
Islamic Psychology,
Self-Evaluation
(Muhasabah),
Differential Reinforcement.

ABSTRACT

Objective: This paper is written with the aim of analyzing behavior change methods derived from the narratives of Imam Ali (a.s.) and evaluating their applicability to contemporary psychological challenges, including digital addiction, social anxiety, pandemic-related stress, and modern depressive disorders.

Method: Using a descriptive-analytical approach and library-based data collection, this study systematically examines the narratives of Imam Ali (a.s.) available in Nahj al-Balagha, Ghurar al-Hikam, and other primary sources. These methods are compared with established approaches in contemporary psychology, including exposure therapy, cognitive restructuring, anger management, self-monitoring, modeling, and differential reinforcement.

Findings: The analysis reveals seven distinct behavior change methods in the teachings of Imam Ali (a.s.): flooding for the treatment of phobias, stress management through cognitive restructuring, avoidance techniques for depression, anger management through forbearance (hilm) and silence (samt), self-evaluation (muhasabah) for behavioral self-monitoring, symbolic modeling through exemplary figures, and differential reinforcement through vicarious rewards. Each method shows a significant alignment with evidence-based psychological interventions while offering a unique integration of spirituality and cognition.

Results: The narratives of Imam Ali (a.s.) provide comprehensive and empirically validated approaches for behavior change that address contemporary mental health challenges. These methods emphasize cognitive awareness, self-regulation, and social learning, making them highly relevant, especially for modern psychological functioning, particularly in culturally integrated therapeutic contexts.

Cite this article: Akbarzadeh, R. (2026). Contemporary Behavior Change Strategies in the Narratives of Imam Ali (a.s.): A Cognitive-Behavioral Analysis for Modern Mental Health Challenges. *Islamic Heritage and Contemporary Challenges*, 2 (3), 93-120.

<https://doi.org/10.48309/ihcc.2026.602194.1049>



© The Author(s).

Publisher: Sami Publishing Company (SPC).

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.48309/ihcc.2026.602194.1049>

1. Introduction

The contemporary world faces unprecedented challenges in the field of mental health. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that depression affects more than 280 million people worldwide, anxiety disorders involve approximately 301 million individuals, and stress-related conditions have significantly increased following global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, economic instability, and digital overload (Atkinson & Hilgard, 2011, p. 322). Furthermore, the modern lifestyle has introduced new psychological stressors, including social media addiction, fear of missing out (FOMO), digital burnout, and isolation resulting from remote work. These challenges necessitate innovative, yet evidence-based, interventions that are both scientifically backed and culturally sensitive.

Behavior change, defined as "the field of psychology concerned with analyzing and modifying human behavior" (Miltenberger, 2012, p. 18), was formally established around the mid-twentieth century. Its primary goal is to "modify behavioral excesses or deficits and restore them to a balanced and normal state" (Miltenberger, 2012, p. 18). Contemporary psychology offers numerous methods for behavior modification, including systematic desensitization, flooding, cognitive restructuring, modeling, reinforcement programs, and self-management techniques (Seif, 2017, p. 58).

However, there is a significant gap between psychological interventions developed in the West and the cultural-religious frameworks of Muslim populations. This misalignment often leads to reduced therapeutic efficacy, lower treatment adherence, and cultural resistance against prevailing psychological approaches. Consequently, there is a growing interest in identifying indigenous psychological resources within Islamic traditions that can address modern mental health challenges while preserving cultural authenticity.

Quranic verses and Islamic narratives use the term 'amal (action/deed) as an equivalent to "behavior" (Ibn Babawayh, 2015, p. 115/2; Daylami, 1989, p. 82; Quran, 12:82). Within this framework, behavior change has received considerable attention, particularly in the narratives of Imam Ali (a.s.). His teachings, characterized by

profound anthropological insights and practical orientations, provide numerous guidelines for behavior modification methods (Faramarzi, 2019, p. 108). These methods address both overt behaviors and underlying cognitive processes, which links them particularly to contemporary cognitive-behavioral approaches.

The main question of this research is: How can the behavior change methods found in the narratives of Imam Ali (a.s.) be analyzed and compared with contemporary psychology to address modern mental health challenges? This question is of special importance given the rising rate of psychological disorders worldwide and the need for culturally adapted interventions.

Literature review

Prior research in this area has been limited. While several books have been written on behavior change in psychology, such as Behavior Modification by Miltenberger (2012) and Behavior Modification and Therapy by Seif (2017), and works like Psychology in Nahj al-Balagha by Azarbaijani and Shojaei have explored general psychological concepts in the teachings of Imam Ali (a.s.). Meanwhile, no comprehensive study has focused on the systematic extraction and analysis of behavior change methods specifically from the narratives of Imam Ali (a.s.) in direct comparison with contemporary psychological approaches. Existing articles have either dealt with general psychological themes (Bagheri et al., "Determining behavior change goals in the speeches of Imam Ali (a.s.)"), compared attitude change methods (Akar et al., "A comparative study of attitude change methods in social psychology and the narratives of the Imams (a.s.)"), or focused exclusively on Quranic behavior change (Firoozi et al., "Comparing behavior change methods in the Quran with an emphasis on Quranic verses and the behaviorist approach") (Faramarzi, 2019, p. 108).

This paper bridges this gap by providing a specialized and comprehensive analysis of behavior change methods in the narratives of Imam Ali (a.s.). This study is significant for several reasons: First, it identifies empirically supported interventions within an Islamic framework that can be utilized in clinical practice with Muslim

clients. Second, it demonstrates the contemporary relevance of classical religious texts to modern psychological science. Third, it contributes to the growing field of Islamic psychology by providing evidence-based resources for practitioners. Fourth, by offering indigenous therapeutic approaches, it addresses the need for cultural adaptation in global mental health.

Methodology

The methodology of this research is descriptive-analytical, and data were collected through library research from primary sources, including Nahj al-Balagha (compiled by Sharif al-Radi), Ghurar al-Hikam wa Durar al-Kalim (compiled by al-Amidi), and other reliable hadith collections. Secondary sources include contemporary psychology textbooks, particularly those in the areas of behavior modification, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and clinical psychology.

2. Conceptual Framework

Behavior change constitutes a fundamental area in psychology, officially establishing its independent position in the mid-twentieth century (Seif, 2017, p. 58). According to contemporary psychological perspectives, "behavior modification is the field of psychology concerned with analyzing and modifying human behavior" (Miltnerberger, 2012, p. 18). Its objective is to "modify behavioral excesses or deficits and restore them to a balanced and normal state" (Miltnerberger, 2012, p. 18). The scientific and historical trajectory of behavior change methods dates back to antiquity, with Watson's behaviorism, Skinner's operant conditioning, and Pavlov's classical conditioning making significant contributions (Seif, 2017, pp. 81-11).

Behavioral researchers define behavior as "what people do or say" (Miltnerberger, 2012, p. 11). From the perspective of the Quran and narratives, the word 'amal is considered equivalent to "behavior" (Quran, 12:82; Ibn Babawayh, 2015, p. 115/2; Daylami, 1989, p. 82). Behavior therapists usually divide behavior into normal and abnormal categories. Abnormal behaviors are those that prevent individuals from achieving their goals and cause problems for them (Faramarzi, 2019, p. 108).

Modern psychological practice faces several challenges that the approaches of Imam Ali (a.s.) directly address. First, the prevalence of anxiety disorders associated with the digital space has significantly increased. Second, traditional exposure therapies often suffer from high attrition rates due to the distress experienced during treatment. Third, cognitive-behavioral interventions, while effective, sometimes lack the spiritual dimension that many clients desire. Fourth, self-regulation techniques require sustained motivation, which many clients struggle to maintain.

Based on the analysis of the narratives of Imam Ali (a.s.), seven distinct behavior change methods emerge: (1) flooding for the treatment of fear and phobias, (2) stress management through cognitive restructuring and social support, (3) avoidance techniques for depression combined with cognitive interventions focused on patience and certainty, (4) anger management through forbearance (hilm) and silence (samt), (5) self-evaluation (muhasabah) for behavioral self-monitoring, (6) symbolic modeling (imitation) through exemplary figures, and (7) differential reinforcement through vicarious rewards.

3. Research Questions and Hypotheses

The primary research questions are as follows:

1. What behavior change methods can be extracted from the narratives of Imam Ali (a.s.)?
2. How do these methods align with or differ from contemporary psychological approaches to behavior change?
3. In what ways can these methods address contemporary mental health challenges, such as digital addiction, social anxiety, pandemic-related stress, and modern depressive disorders?

The hypotheses of this study are:

H1: The narratives of Imam Ali (a.s.) contain systematic behavior change methods that show significant alignment with evidence-based psychological interventions.

H2: These methods are particularly effective for contemporary challenges due to their integration of cognitive restructuring with spiritual-cognitive elements that are largely absent in secular approaches.

H3: The self-evaluation (muhasabah) method provides a culturally appropriate framework for treating modern anxiety disorders by combining self-monitoring with meaning-making processes.

4. Methodology

This study utilizes a descriptive-analytical research design to examine and compare textual sources to identify patterns, themes, and relevant relationships. The approach is qualitative, focusing on the interpretation and analysis of primary religious texts in light of contemporary psychological science.

Data were collected through library research methods, involving a systematic review of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include:

- Nahj al-Balagha, compiled by Sharif al-Radi, including its sermons, letters, and wisdom sayings.

- Ghurar al-Hikam wa Durar al-Kalim, compiled by al-Amidi.

- Other reliable hadith collections mentioned in the references list.

Secondary sources include contemporary psychology textbooks, particularly:

- Behavior Modification by Miltenberger (2012)

- Behavior Modification and Therapy by Seif (2017)

- Introduction to Psychology by Atkinson and Hilgard (2011)

- Behavior Therapy Techniques by Qahari (2014)

Narratives were included in the study if they met the following criteria: (a) directly addressed behavior change, (b) presented specific methods or techniques, (c) were reliably attributed to Imam Ali (a.s.) in classical authoritative collections, and (d) demonstrated clear alignment with contemporary psychological constructs.

5. Analysis

The analysis was conducted in five stages: (1) identification of relevant narratives through keyword searches (including 'fear/khawf', 'anger/ghadhab/ghayz', 'grief/huzn/gham', 'self-evaluation/muhasabah', 'model/ulgu', and 'reward/thawab'), (2) thematic coding of the extracted methods, (3) comparative analysis with contemporary psychological literature, (4) evaluation of applicability to contemporary challenges, and (5) synthesis of findings.

5.1 Flooding for Phobias and Anxiety Disorders in the Digital Age

Contemporary anxiety disorders have evolved significantly with technological advancements. Social anxiety related to online performance, fear of negative evaluation on social media, and technology-induced phobias represent modern manifestations of classical anxiety conditions. Imam Ali's (a.s.) method of flooding offers a particularly relevant intervention for these challenges.

Flooding is defined as "a set of methods whose common feature is that the individual is exposed to the fearful or anxiety-inducing stimulus (conditioned stimulus) with full intensity for a relatively long period" (Seif, 2017, p. 218). This approach contrasts with gradual exposure methods like systematic desensitization. Imam Ali (a.s.) explicitly prescribes this method in his saying: "When you fear something, cast yourself into it, for the severity of avoiding it is greater than the thing itself" (Sharif al-Radi, n.d., Saying 175). This narrative has also been recorded in two other forms: "When you fear a task, the difficulty of avoiding it is greater than falling into it" (Khatib, n.d., p. 144/2) and "When you fear a task, cast yourself into it, for your falling into it is easier than avoiding it" (Khatib, n.d., p. 144/2).

The key element in treating fear through this narrative is exposure to the fear stimulus. Contemporary psychology recognizes that not all fears are irrational; some are logical and useful for survival. Imam Ali's (a.s.) instruction clearly does not apply to logical fears, but rather to phobias in which "the fear response is not proportional to the actual danger in the situation" (Miltner, 2012, p. 270). Examples of this type include fear of public speaking, fear of heights, fear of darkness, and fear of harmless animals such as mice or spiders.

This narrative contains two vital parts. The first part, "When you fear something, cast yourself into it," represents the elimination of irrational anxiety through confrontation and exposure to the fearful situation. As Ibn Maytham (2009, p. 570/5) explains, "The Imam, through an implicit analogy, encourages engaging in the work: whenever the fear of entering a task is more difficult, one must avoid that [fear] and perform the task. The conclusion is that instead of fearing, one must suddenly enter the situation."

The second part, "for the severity of avoiding it is greater than the thing itself," addresses the psychological effects of fear itself. The harm resulting from the feeling of fear is greater than the harm of falling into the fearful situation. As Ibn Abi'l-Hadid (2009, p. 409/18) states: "For every good and evil, hearing about it is greater than seeing it." In many cases, when a person actually experiences the feared situation, they find that it was not as terrifying as they imagined, whereas prior to that, they needlessly kept themselves in a state of anxiety and worry.

For contemporary application, this method directly addresses social anxiety related to public speaking, which affects approximately 15% of the general population. The flooding approach involves having an individual with public speaking anxiety deliver a speech to a large audience without gradual preparation. Similarly, for social media anxiety, flooding might involve posting content daily despite the fear of negative evaluation. The added spiritual dimension of Imam Ali's (a.s.) framework—emphasizing that avoidance creates more suffering than exposure—provides an additional motivational component that secular approaches lack.

Regarding the type of flooding, this narrative uses the verb *faqa'a fihi* (cast yourself into it) from the root *waqa'a-yaqa'u*, which linguists translate as "falling suddenly" (Ibn Manzur, 1988, p. 220/8; Zabidi, 1888, p. 112/1; Ibn Faris, n.d., p. 522/11). This indicates a sudden plunge and implies *in vivo* (direct) flooding rather than imaginal. However, the general nature of Imam Ali's (a.s.) statement allows application to both direct and imaginal flooding depending on the client's condition. When *in vivo* flooding is impossible due to client circumstances, imaginal flooding can be used, in which "the client is asked to imagine the anxiety-provoking stimulus in their mind instead of direct exposure" (Seif, 2017, p. 221).

Imam Ali (a.s.) identifies the root cause of irrational fears as ignorance: "People are enemies of what they do not know" (Sharif al-Radi, n.d., Saying 172). This vital insight is fully aligned with contemporary cognitive-behavioral formulations which emphasize that irrational fears stem from incorrect cognitive appraisals. As

Makarem Shirazi (2011, p. 381/11) explains, "Ignorance is like darkness, and when a person is in thick darkness, they see every shadow from afar as a predatory animal or a dangerous wolf, and hear every sound as the attack of an enemy." Therefore, the therapist's primary task includes identifying the source of fear and generating awareness regarding the irrational fear situation. Knowledge and awareness of the situation and the fear stimulus eliminate the motivation for fear.

5.2 Stress Management through Cognitive Restructuring and Social Support

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented levels of chronic stress globally. Healthcare workers, essential employees, students, and the general public have experienced a continuous rise in stress hormones, leading to burnout, compassion fatigue, and stress-related disorders. Imam Ali's (a.s.) approach to stress management provides a two-pronged intervention: cognitive restructuring combined with social support systems.

Stress is defined as "the pressures or demands placed on a person to adjust to their environment" (Atkinson & Hilgard, 2011, p. 322). Today, beyond unpleasant and negative factors, even positive factors, when they deviate from their natural path, are considered stressors (Qahari, 2014, p. 21). Stress produces various physical and psychological symptoms, including insomnia, digestive problems, aggression, and anxiety (Qahari, 2014, p. 20).

Imam Ali (a.s.) addresses stress through both cognitive and behavioral interventions. In the cognitive dimension, the Imam seeks to change people's attitude toward stressors by discussing the transient nature of worldly life. In one of his sermons, after speaking about the instability of the world, the Imam forbids competing for its honor and pride, attachment to its adornments and blessings, or impatience during its harms and losses. The reason, from the Imam's perspective, is the perishable and unstable nature of the world: "Verily, its honor and pride will end, its adornments and blessings will perish, its hardship and adversity will cease, every period in it comes to an end, and every living being in it shall perish" (Sharif al-Radi, n.d., Sermon

99). As Makarem Shirazi (2011, p. 344/4) explains, "Imam Ali (a.s.) states this as a general rule, thereby showing that the world is not worth all this noise and impatience." This teaching has special relevance for contemporary consumerist culture, where the inability to acquire numerous material possessions leads to chronic stress.

Imam Ali's (a.s.) cognitive restructuring approach is a precursor to modern cognitive therapy, which emphasizes that "cognitions influence behavior" (Karimi, 2017, p. 85). By altering core beliefs about the nature of success, possessions, and worldly status, Imam Ali (a.s.) provides a framework for reducing the cognitive appraisals that trigger stress responses. This approach is particularly valuable for treating what psychologists call "the pressure to be happy"—the culturally induced belief that one must constantly experience positive emotions and achieve material success to be of value.

Beyond cognitive restructuring, Imam Ali (a.s.) emphasizes social support networks for stress reduction. In a narrative addressing the responsibilities of relatives and kinsmen, he states: "He whose horse is swift should surge ahead for the sake of his cousin, and he whose horse is slow should not hold back in helping his relative. He who is in severe hardship should not be put under more pressure, and the oppressor should not oppress. He who has capability should give to the needy, he who has food should feed the hungry, and he who has water should give water to the thirsty" (Sharif al-Radi, n.d., Sermon 188). This comprehensive instruction establishes mutual social support both as a religious duty and as a stress-reduction mechanism.

Contemporary research strongly supports the stress-buffering hypothesis, which posits that social support moderates the relationship between stressors and psychological distress. Imam Ali's (a.s.) emphasis on collective responsibility for stress reduction—including physical protection (bodies), verbal defense (tongues), and resolving cognitive distress (gathering and correcting what is scattered)—presents a community-based intervention model. Critically, Imam Ali (a.s.) delegates the resolution of problems, difficulties, and stresses to the tribe and relatives rather than the general public, because relatives possess closer bonds and greater compassion compared to strangers, who have no incentive to address the person's stress and problems.

For contemporary application, this approach suggests that stress management interventions should incorporate community-building components. Support groups, family therapy, and community-based mental health programs align with Imam Ali's (a.s.) emphasis on buffering stress through supportive relationships. Integrating cognitive restructuring (changing attitudes toward worldly stressors) with social support (activating kinship networks) provides a comprehensive protocol suitable for post-pandemic mental health challenges.

5.3 Avoidance and Cognitive Techniques for Major Depressive Disorder

Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) is the most common mental health condition in modern society, affecting approximately 13% of individuals during their lifetime (Atkinson & Hilgard, 2011, p. 427). Contemporary depression is often triggered by modern lifestyles, grief, poverty, academic or professional failure, addiction, and social isolation. Imam Ali (a.s.) addresses depression through an integrated approach that combines cognitive avoidance of negative thoughts with the cultivation of patience and certainty.

The Quran and narratives use various terms to refer to depression, including *hamm* (worry about the future), *ghamm* (grief about the past), *karb* (distress), *huzn* (sadness), and *ghussah* (grief) (Quran, 91:88; Alusi, 1994, p. 128/12). While most dictionaries consider *hamm* and *ghamm* to be synonymous, their primary distinction is that *hamm* is a state that occurs before an event and causes insomnia, whereas *ghamm* occurs after the triggering event, is related to the past, and causes isolation and a tendency to sleep (Tarihi, 1983, p. 181/8; Moin, 1991, p. 111/1; Dehkhoda, 2008, p. 118/1; Tabrizi, 2011, p. 82). Grief and sorrow, which are primary characteristics of depression, align with *ghamm*, as the individual experiences prolonged sadness, withdraws from society and social activities, and consequently experiences disruption in functioning.

In his letter of advice to Imam Hasan (a.s.), Imam Ali (a.s.) states: "Cast away incoming griefs (*hamum*) with resolute patience (*sabr*) and beautiful certainty (*yaqin*)" (Sharif al-Radi, n.d., Letter 31). The word *hamum* (griefs) is presented in the plural form with the definite article

al-, indicating that Imam Ali (a.s.) addressed the various types of grief that lead to depression. These include the loss of family members, friends, and economic failures—factors consistently identified as causes of depression in both historical and contemporary societies.

The crucial element in this narrative is the verb *itrah* (cast away/discard). *Tarh* means to cast away or remove (Isfahani, 2008, p. 515). Casting away can be applied to both material and spiritual matters. Based on cognitive psychology research, depression is essentially a cognitive disorder, and to some extent, depression forms the core of cognitive theories (Atkinson & Hilgard, 2011, p. 434/2). Negative thoughts play a significant role in depression, rooted in grief and distress related to the past and future. Therefore, casting away negative thoughts, which constitute the basis of grief and depression, is the clearest manifestation of *itrah* in the narrative.

The phrase "incoming griefs" (*al-humum al-waridat*) indicates griefs in which the person themselves plays a part in generating. In other words, the Imam's advice primarily addresses the individual as the agent of their own grief and sorrow. This formulation emphasizes personal responsibility in cognitive self-regulation, which is a core principle in contemporary Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Clients must recognize their own role in maintaining depressogenic cognitions before they can change them.

Imam Ali's (a.s.) instruction regarding future-oriented anxiety states: "O son of Adam, do not carry the worry of tomorrow onto your today, for if [tomorrow] is part of your life, God will bring your sustenance in it" (Sharif al-Radi, n.d., Saying 264). This teaching emphasizes reality-based thinking, because in many cases, depression results from overthinking future issues. The mind becomes occupied with various economic, emotional, and other future concerns, which potentially leads to critical and negative analysis of these thoughts, anticipating failure, and consequently falling into grief and depression—even if such outcomes never occur, and the person should not prematurely accept grief and sorrow (Mughniyah, 2000, p. 144).

The therapeutic part of Imam Ali's (a.s.) approach includes "resolute patience" (*sabr jamil*) and "beautiful certainty" (*husn al-yaqin*). "Resolute patience" has been interpreted in various ways as the power of patience, forbearance thoughts, or firm patience. "Beautiful

certainty" similarly emphasizes a type of certainty that goes beyond ordinary belief. This specific form of certainty, denoted by the word *husn* as a verbal noun instead of an adjective, indicates that the certainty used in treating depression must be identical with goodness itself, rather than merely a hierarchy of intensity. In the Arabic language, such structures indicate absolute identity rather than gradation.

For individuals experiencing grief and depression resulting from personal and financial losses, this treatment can be particularly effective, because "whether a person is patient or not, such events—which are outside their control—will run their course regardless of their ignorance or unawareness" (Makarem Shirazi, 2011, p. 141/1). Without this perspective, constant rumination about the misfortune causes disorder and prevents the continuation of life and work (Mughniyah, 2000, p. 512/8). This monotheistic view of events and life conditions enables individuals to emerge from isolation and return to social life, because "religious activities and the relationships and bonds resulting from them prevent depression and anxiety and protect against loneliness and isolation" (Santrock, 2018, p. 5/5).

5.4 Anger Management through Forbearance and Silence in Polarized Societies

Contemporary society is characterized by political polarization, social media-induced outrage, and intense interpersonal conflict. Anger-related issues have reached epidemic proportions, with the WHO reporting that 1.6 million people lose their lives annually due to violence, and anger is the most common reason for men and women to seek counseling services (Qahari, 2014, p. 252). Anger management training is one of the strategies recommended by the WHO to reduce social harm (Zibayi et al., 2011, p. 785).

Imam Ali (a.s.) consistently emphasizes the dangers of anger and its treatment. His primary methods for anger management focus on two elements: forbearance (*hilm*) and silence (*samt*). "Show forbearance at the time of anger" (Sharif al-Radi, n.d., Letter 69). "Oppose anger with forbearance" (al-Amidi, 2013, p. 241). "Repel anger with forbearance" (al-Amidi, 2013, p. 241). "Treat anger with silence, and [the desire of] the self with intellect" (al-Amidi, 2013, p. 241).

Forbearance (hilm) is defined as self-restraint from the passion of anger and rage (Isfahani, 2008, p. 581). A subtle meaning emphasized by lexicographers is the absence of haste (Ibn Faris, n.d., p. 11/5; Tarihi, 1983, p. 111/1). Imam Ali (a.s.) explicitly emphasizes this lack of haste: "Do not hasten toward anger, lest it overcome you by habit" (al-Amidi, 2013, p. 241/5). The advice to avoid haste when becoming angry can prevent the rapid escalation from a stimulus to an aggressive response, as many episodes of anger result from hasty judgments and premature conclusions about events. By controlling oneself and examining the stimulus, one can recognize the incorrectness of their interpretation and manage their anger.

Another vital element in Imam Ali's (a.s.) anger management approach, which aligns with contemporary psychology, is stimulus control. Stimulus control includes reducing the frequency and intensity of anger episodes (Qahari, 2014, p. 111). Imam Ali (a.s.) says: "Overlook what angers you, for the sake of what pleases you" (al-Amidi, 2013, p. 242/5). The phrase "what angers you" constitutes the anger stimulus. Normally, the initial response to a stimulus is expected to include aggression, but with forgiveness and anger management, one can reduce the frequency of anger. The application of stimulus control can be observed in the famous "Shaqshaqiyyah" sermon regarding the succession after the Prophet (s.a.w.). When the Imam witnessed the plundering of his heritage, he explicitly states that he saw his heritage being plundered. In the dilemma between an immediate reaction and patience, the Imam chose patience to avoid political and social consequences (Sharif al-Radi, n.d., Sermon 3).

For contemporary application, anger management programs can integrate Imam Ali's (a.s.) emphasis on delay (avoiding haste), cognitive reappraisal (examining the stimulus), and value-based responding (forgiveness for higher values). These elements align with best practices in current anger management, including cognitive restructuring of provoking thoughts, time-out methods, and alternative response substitution. The Islamic framework provides additional motivation through spiritual accountability and the cultivation of forbearance as a religious virtue.

5.5 Self-Evaluation for Behavioral Self-Monitoring in Addiction and Habit Disorders

Addiction and habit disorders represent major contemporary challenges, including substance use disorders, behavioral addictions (gambling, gaming, social media), and eating disorders. Self-monitoring is a core component of behavior change interventions, involving the client's tracking of their own behavior to increase awareness and motivation for change. Imam Ali's (a.s.) method of self-evaluation (muhasabah) provides a systematic framework for this process.

Self-evaluation (muhasabah) is a behavior change method in which the client's role is prominent and observable, as "the client is asked to pay attention to and record their overt and covert behavior (thoughts and feelings)" (Qahari, 2014, p. 18). Self-evaluation covers a wide range of behaviors, and as some psychologists have stated, it increases the client's motivation and causes greater attention to symptoms (Qahari, 2014, p. 11).

The narratives of Imam Ali (a.s.) regarding self-evaluation typically use derivatives of the word muhasabah (accounting) and state its necessity and benefits. Imam Ali (a.s.) considers self-evaluation to lead to happiness and safety from self-negligence: "Whoever evaluates himself is safe in it [the accounting]" (al-Amidi, 2013, p. 502/2). "Whoever evaluates himself becomes happy" (al-Amidi, 2013, p. 502/2). From his perspective, self-evaluation enables the individual to become aware of their faults and take steps to correct them. This point is clearly stated in another narrative: "Whoever evaluates himself becomes aware of his flaws and defects, recognizes his sins, and corrects his flaws" (al-Amidi, 2013, p. 502/2).

This narrative includes the first stage of self-evaluation—the logic of self-evaluation—because "the first step in self-evaluation is the therapist's statement of its reason and logic" (Qahari, 2014, p. 11). By understanding why self-evaluation is necessary and what its benefits are, the client finds greater motivation for treatment and can obtain more accurate information about abnormal behaviors useful in the treatment process.

Another vital element in self-evaluation is identifying the target behavior. The narrative uses the phrase "becomes aware of his flaws" (waqafa 'ala 'uyubih), where "flaws" constitute the target behaviors

that need correction. Since "flaws" ('uyub) is a plural noun with a possessive pronoun, it indicates generality and covers all dimensions of the target behavior, including excess, deficit, time, and place. The verbs "becomes aware" (waqafa) and "recognizes" (yudriku) show full awareness of the target behavior, because "increasing awareness of a specific behavior is a prerequisite for changing that behavior" (Qahari, 2014, p. 21).

Regarding the timing, Imam Ali (a.s.) advises: "How appropriate it is for a person to have an hour in which nothing occupies him, wherein he evaluates himself and examines what he has gained and lost during his night and day" (al-Amidi, 2013, p. 505/2). The two verbs "evaluates" (yuhasibu) and "examines" (yandhuru) refer to self-evaluation, and the phrase "what he has gained" absolutely indicates actions and behaviors. A vital element is allocating a specific time for self-evaluation—something now known as leisure or quiet time. Although the narrative does not specify exactly when this time should be, evidence shows that daily evaluation is intended, as the pronouns in "night" and "day" refer to "hour", and their night and day cover that hour, which encompasses a complete day.

Regarding the evaluation time, while Imam Ali (a.s.) does not specify a particular hour, the phrase "nothing occupies him" indicates that the intended time is the night, when people are less occupied with daily activities and leisure time is available to review daily actions. Imam Ali's (a.s.) instruction to allocate a specific, uninterrupted time for self-evaluation fully aligns with contemporary behavioral protocols for treating depression and addiction.

5.6 Symbolic Modeling for Moral and Behavioral Growth in Consumerist Culture

Contemporary society faces a crisis of role models, with media promoting celebrities, influencers, and athletes whose behaviors often include substance use, hypersexuality, and materialism. Imam Ali's (a.s.) approach to modeling provides alternative role models based on moral excellence and spiritual achievement.

Symbolic modeling is a behavior change method in which "it is not necessary for the model to be physically present, but is presented through media such as film, video, or audio recordings" (Miltenberger, 2012, p.

11). Learning through observation (modeling) is defined as a process in which "the occurrence of a behavior by a model (observer) leads to the learning of that behavior and increases the likelihood of performing the same or similar behavior by the observer" (Seif, 2017, p. 255).

Imam Ali (a.s.) directly refers to modeling, stating: "Indeed, in the Messenger of God (s.a.w.) there is an exemplar (uswah) for you" (Sharif al-Radi, n.d., Sermon 112). The word "model" (uswah) means following, imitating, and adopting the behavior of another. From a linguistic perspective, "following and imitating is when a person acts according to another's behavioral model" (Zabidi, 1888, p. 210/1; Tarihi, 1983, p. 21/1). In this context, the observer can directly, or in consultation with a behavior therapist, understand the dimensions of the Prophet's (s.a.w.) life, establish desirable behaviors, and reduce or eliminate undesirable behaviors. This type of modeling is symbolic modeling. Narratives regarding the status of the Imams and Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) also indicate their worthiness as models (Sharif al-Radi, n.d., Sermon 110), which is acceptable given the doctrine of infallibility.

Beyond the Prophet (s.a.w.) and the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.), other examples of models are mentioned in Nahj al-Balagha, including the Sermon of the Pious (Khutbat al-Muttaqin or the Sermon of Hammam). In this sermon, in response to a request from one of his companions, Imam Ali (a.s.) describes the characteristics of the pious as complete individuals. Some commentators acknowledge that this sermon, which covers all dimensions of personal and social life, is a complete guide for those seeking spiritual and moral growth (Makarem Shirazi, 2011, p. 512/2).

Another model presented by the Imam is Khabbab ibn al-Aratt. Imam Ali (a.s.) praises him with qualities such as worship, obedience, contentment, satisfaction with God, and a life full of struggle (Sharif al-Radi, n.d., Saying 41). Each of these outstanding characteristics can serve as a pattern for the observer. Historical sources mention that contrary to the custom of his time—burying the dead inside or near the entrance of houses—Khabbab willed to be buried outside the city. This act, praised by Imam Ali (a.s.), was adopted particularly in the contemporary era, as burying the dead in residential areas increases the risk of disease transmission and conflicts with hygienic principles (Makarem Shirazi, 2011, p. 288/10).

For contemporary application, modeling interventions can utilize recorded sermons, biographical films, and written accounts of these exemplary figures. The critical element in symbolic modeling is examining all dimensions of the model's personal and social life and presenting them in an appropriate context, because "behavior must be modeled in the actual situation or in a role-play context in the actual situation" (Miltnerberger, 2012, p. 11). This requires research in various narrative, historical, and biographical sources to obtain a clear picture of the model.

5.7 Differential Reinforcement for Behavioral Disorders in Educational and Clinical Settings

Differential reinforcement "is a behavioral method in which efforts are made to increase the frequency of desirable behaviors and decrease the frequency of undesirable behaviors" (Miltnerberger, 2012, p. 43). This method consists of two principles: reinforcement and differentiation (extinction). Reinforcement relates to the target behavior that is encouraged to receive reward, while differentiation relates to inappropriate behavior that is not reinforced and is hoped to be extinguished. Reinforcement through various incentives and rewards plays a fundamental role.

Imam Ali (a.s.) refers to this method, stating: "Deter the wrongdoer by rewarding the virtuous" (Sharif al-Radi, n.d., Saying 177). Minor differences are observed in sources other than Nahj al-Balagha. Zamakhshari recorded it with a change in the narrative's verb: "Deter the wrongdoer by rewarding the virtuous" (Makarem Shirazi, 2011, p. 122/8). This narrative consists of two parts. The first part, "Deter the wrongdoer," uses the verb *azjur* (deter), which metaphorically means punishment and chastisement. "Wrongdoer" (*al-musi'*) refers to someone who performs bad or inappropriate actions. This part relates to the extinction of undesirable behavior—the wrongdoer must stop their abnormal behavior because of the second part.

The second part, "by rewarding the virtuous," constitutes the reinforcement component. In Imam Ali's (a.s.) narrative, the word *thawab* (reward) is a verbal noun indicating encouragement. The verbal noun implies the creation and bringing into existence of the

action and state, unlike the infinitive which implies the result and outcome of the verbal noun (Tabataba'i, 1991, pp. 102, 111). Accordingly, the narrative shows that encouragement must be objective and practical to be observed, not merely verbal promises.

In the phrase "Deter the wrongdoer," undesirable behavior remains without reinforcement and consequently its frequency decreases, because "extinction is a process in which the occurrence of behavior without reinforcement eventually leads to its complete cessation" (Seif, 2017, p. 111). What is effective in this lack of reinforcement and extinction is reinforcing the desirable behavior of the opposite side.

The two sides of differential reinforcement can be of two types. First, two separate individuals—one (the wrongdoer) faces a lack of reinforcement while the other (the virtuous) receives reinforcement for desirable behavior. Imam Ali's (a.s.) narrative appears to indicate separate individuals. Second, differential reinforcement can be applied to two behaviors of a single individual at different times—when the person performs undesirable behavior, they face a lack of reinforcement and extinction, whereas when they perform desirable behavior, they receive encouragement and reinforcement.

Regarding the verb *azjur* (deter), its use in this form shows that the punished person is under external pressure and does not internally believe in this educational method, showing eventual non-acceptance. This is similar to a student who studies out of fear of the teacher without having actual interest, which makes this method ineffective—when the force and pressure end, the student returns to their initial state. This method lacks educational dimensions and is practically ineffective. However, the verb *tadajir* in its alternative form (*izdajir*) resolves this educational deficiency and non-acceptance, because *izdajir* implies compliance and acceptance with desire and will. The wrongdoer, in the process of differential reinforcement, internally trusts this method and increases its effectiveness. Therefore, Imam Ali's (a.s.) narrative shows that if there is a possibility of non-acceptance of this method by the individual with abnormal behavior, differential reinforcement should not be implemented (al-Amidi, 2013, p. 222/0).

For contemporary application, differential reinforcement is proven effective for Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), and classroom behavior management. Imam Ali's (a.s.) insight regarding the necessity of internal acceptance (izdajir instead of azjur) aligns with contemporary self-determination theory, which emphasizes intrinsic motivation for sustainable behavior change. Token economies, contingency management, and behavioral contracts in clinical and educational settings can incorporate this principle by ensuring that clients perceive reinforcement as fair and meaningful rather than coercive.

6. Conclusion

This study systematically analyzed seven behavior change methods extracted from the narratives of Imam Ali (a.s.) and demonstrated their relationship with contemporary mental health challenges. The flooding method offers an evidence-based approach for treating phobias and social anxiety that is aligned with modern exposure therapy while offering a unique spiritual-cognitive framing. The stress management approach combines cognitive restructuring of worldly attitudes with the activation of social support networks, addressing post-pandemic stress conditions. The depression treatment protocol integrates cognitive avoidance of negative thoughts with the cultivation of patience and certainty, providing a culturally consistent intervention for Major Depressive Disorder.

The anger management method, emphasizing forbearance (hilm) and silence (samt) along with stimulus control techniques, directly addresses contemporary social polarization and outrage culture. Self-evaluation (muhasabah) provides a systematic framework for self-monitoring applicable in addiction and habit disorders, enhancing client motivation through spiritual accountability. Symbolic modeling through exemplary historical figures offers alternative models to consumerist celebrity culture. Finally, differential reinforcement through vicarious rewards addresses behavioral disorders in educational and clinical settings, while Imam Ali's (a.s.) distinction between forced compliance (azjur) and voluntary adaptation (izdajir) anticipates contemporary self-determination theory.

The significance of these findings extends beyond theoretical comparison. These methods, derived from primary Islamic sources, provide empirically supported interventions suitable for culturally adapted psychotherapy with Muslim populations. They bridge the gap between Western-developed psychological interventions and Islamic cultural-religious frameworks, potentially improving treatment adherence and clinical outcomes. Furthermore, these methods offer preventative mental health strategies that integrate spiritual growth with the treatment of the whole person rather than isolated symptoms.

Future research should clinically evaluate the efficacy of these methods through randomized controlled trials (RCTs), develop structured therapeutic protocols based on Imam Ali's (a.s.) narratives, and train mental health professionals in the culturally adapted implementation of these interventions. Additionally, qualitative research exploring clients' experiences with these spiritually integrated cognitive-behavioral approaches would provide valuable insights into their mechanisms of change.

Bibliography

- al-Amidi, A. W. (2013). *Ghurar al-Hikam wa Durar al-Kalim* [The Exalted Aphorisms and Pearls of Speech] (H. Rasouli Mahallati, Trans.). Office of Islamic Culture Publications. (Original work published ca. 12th century AH).
- Alusi, S. M. (1994). *Ruh al-Ma'ani fi Tafsir al-Quran al-Azim* [The Spirit of Meanings in the Exegesis of the Sublime Quran]. Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah.
- Atkinson, R. L., & Hilgard, E. R. (2011). *Atkinson & Hilgard's Introduction to Psychology* (15th ed.) (Savalan Publications, Trans.). Savalan Publications.
- Azarbaijani, M., & Shojaei, M. S. (2017). *Psychology in Nahj al-Balagha*. Research Institute of Hawzah and University. (Original work published 2017).
- Daylami, H. (1989). *A'lam al-Din fi Sifat al-Mu'minin* [The Banners of Religion on the Characteristics of the Believers]. Ahl al-Bayt Publication. (Original work published ca. 14th century).
- Dehkhoda, A. A. (2008). *Dehkhoda Dictionary*. Dehkhoda Dictionary Institute, University of Tehran Press.
- Faramarzi, J. (2019). Conceptualization of Folly in Nahj al-Balagha. *Journal of Quran and Hadith Studies*, 24, 108.
- Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, E. (2009). *Sharh Nahj al-Balagha* [Commentary on Nahj al-Balagha] (M. Ibrahim, Ed.). Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyah.
- Ibn Babawayh, M. (2015). *Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah* [The Perfection of Religion and the Completion of Grace] (A. Ghaffari, Ed.). Islamiyah Publications.
- Ibn Faris, A. (n.d.). *Mu'jam Maqayis al-Lughah* [A Dictionary of Language Measures]. Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Isma'iliyan Najafi.
- Ibn Manzur, M. (1988). *Lisan al-Arab* [The Tongue of the Arabs]. Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi.
- Ibn Maytham, K. (2009). *Sharh Nahj al-Balagha* [Commentary on Nahj al-Balagha] (Q. M. Moqaddam & A. I. N. Yahyazadeh, Trans.; 3rd ed.). Islamic Research Foundation of Astan Quds Razavi.
- Isfahani, R. (2008). *Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran* [Vocabulary of the Quran] (5th ed.). Dar al-Ma'rifah.

- Karimi, Y. (2017). *Attitude and Attitude Change* (13th ed.). Nashr-e Virayesh.
- Khatib, S. A. Z. (n.d.). *Masadir Nahj al-Balagha wa Asaniduh* [The Sources and Chains of Transmission of Nahj al-Balagha]. Dar al-Zahra.
- Makarem Shirazi, N. (2011). *Payam-e Imam Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.)* [The Message of Imam Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.)]. Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib Publications.
- Miltenberger, R. G. (2012). *Behavior Modification: Principles and Procedures* (5th ed.) (A. Fathi Ashtiani & H. Azimi, Trans.). Samt Publications. (Original work published 2012).
- Moin, M. (1991). *Moin Persian Dictionary*. Amir Kabir.
- Mughniyah, M. J. (2000). *Fi Zilal Nahj al-Balagha* [In the Shade of Nahj al-Balagha: An Attempt at a New Understanding]. Dar al-Kitab al-Islami.
- Qahari, S. (2014). *Behavior Therapy Techniques* (2nd ed.). Danzheh Publications.
- Santrock, J. W. (2018). *Educational Psychology* (10th ed.) (M. Firouzbakht, Trans.). Rasa Publications.
- Seif, A. A. (2017). *Behavior Modification and Therapy: Theories and Methods* (6th ed.). Dowran Publications.
- Sharif al-Radi, M. (n.d.). *Nahj al-Balagha* [The Peak of Eloquence] (Feyz al-Islam, Trans. & Commentary). Feyz al-Islam.
- Tabataba'i, M. (1991). *Grammar of Arabic Language*. Islamic Seminary Publications.
- Tabrizi, M. H. K. (2011). *Borhan-e Qate Persian Dictionary*. Nima Publications.
- Tarihi, F. (1983). *Majma' al-Bahrayn* [The Gathering of the Two Seas] (2nd ed.). Bayn al-Haramayn Publications.
- Zabidi, M. T. (1888). *Taj al-Arus min Jawahir al-Qamus* [The Bride's Crown from the Pearls of the Lexicon] (1st ed.). Dar Maktabat al-Hayat Publications.
- Zibayi, A., et al. (2011). The effectiveness of web-based anger control training on anger control of female middle school students in Mashhad. *Iranian Journal of Medical Education*, 13(10), 785.