

The Educational Ethics of Iṣfahānī and Ghazzālī

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Abstrak

Tulisan ini membicarakan persoalan etika pendidikan iaitu “adab” belajar dan mengajar. Ia mengetengahkan pandangan dua orang tokoh besar pendidikan Islam iaitu Iṣfahānī dan al-Ghazzālī. pandangan kedua-dua tokoh ini tentang peranan guru dan murid dipaparkan untuk melihat sejauhmana mereka sependapat dalam hal ini serta pengaruhnya ke atas Ibn ‘Aqnīn dan Ibn Jamā‘ah.

1. Knowledge and Education in *Adab*

Before dealing with Iṣfahānī and Ghazzālī’s educational ethics, we shall devote this section to a brief outline of the literary contributions to *ādāb* as an educational concept, which creates the background for Iṣfahānī’s pedagogical ideas.

As a concept, *ādāb* means an ethical 'high quality of soul, good upbringing, urbanity and courtesy'.¹ The ingredients of *adab* are 'moral and social upbringing, intellectual education, entertainment'² The key theme in the *ādāb* literature between the 9th and 11th century is the importance of 'ilm (knowledge) and its relation to action.³ Māwardī (450/1058), who wrote the *Kitāb Ādāb al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn*,⁴ integrated the literary and ethical dimensions of *ādāb*. The opening chapter, which deals with the importance of educational and ethical activity,⁵ suggests we are dealing with moral didactic literature. In the same spirit, Iṣfahānī wrote his *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'*,⁶ an *ādāb* anthology that also identifies knowledge with *ādāb* and the intellect. Stupidity is also connected to desire; intelligence to prudence, energy, cleverness, self-reliance and consultation; knowledge to intelligence, nobility (*ḥasab*) and action. An educated person should know *ḥadīth*, Arabic grammar, speculative theology, jurisprudence and, lastly, counting, riddles and genealogy.⁷

The *Muḥāḍarāt* contains chapters on memory, forgetfulness, literature, qualities of scholars and the 'tribulations they have to endure at the hands of ignorant persons, who are by nature hostile to the learned.'⁸ The section on learning and teaching deals with

¹ Hilpatrick, 'Adab' in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, ed. J.S. Scott and P. Starkey, 2 vols (London: 1998), p. 56.

² *Ibid.*, p. 56.

³ Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, (Leiden:1970), pp. 254-268.

⁴ The scribe, Muḥammad ibn Ṣadaqah, completed this work in 534/1140.

⁵ Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, pp. 269-270.

⁶ Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-Udabā'* (Beirut: 1961). In the first chapter, which deals with theme of the intellect, is a section on studying and teaching, pp. 45-58.

⁷ Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, p. 270.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 270-271; cf. *Muḥāḍarāt*, Vol. I, p. 44; cf. Iṣfahānī, *al-Dharī'ah ilā Makārim al-Sharī'ah*, ed. A.Y. 'Ajami (Cairo: 1987), pp. 251, 177.

counsels for educators, which includes judiciousness in choosing promising pupils,⁹ consideration of the maturity of the students, the merits of memorized knowledge, the benefits of questions and admitting one's ignorance and the difficulty of gaining knowledge due to its great diversity. Furthermore, excellent methods of teaching are discussed, as well as the progress of clever and dull pupils, and bad teachers and teaching. Advice to teachers includes not transmitting knowledge to those not ready for it and the prohibition of excessive knowledge, which could hamper understanding.¹⁰ Finally, Isfahani turns his attention to eloquence, receptiveness to the preacher and other matters.¹¹ This text was an important source for *al-Dhari'ah*. The following three quotations from the *Muḥāḍarāt* are also found in *al-Dhari'ah*.

i. The Necessity of Revering The Teacher

Alexander was told: 'You revere your teacher more than your father'. He replied, 'Because my father is the cause of my temporary existence, and my teacher is the cause of my permanent existence'.¹²

ii. Prohibiting Knowledge to One Not Suitable For It

Jesus, the son of Maryam said: 'Do not pass on wisdom to those not able to assimilate it - this itself is contrary to wisdom; neither deprive the deserving of wisdom - this is unfair to them. Dispense medicine like a sharp physician who knows when it is beneficial.'¹³

iii. Prohibiting the Deep Penetration of Various Disciplines of Knowledge

It is said: the excessive flow of knowledge through the ear is misleading to the understanding.¹⁴

⁹ See section 3.

¹⁰ Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, p. 271.

¹¹ See *al-Dhari'ah*, p. 245.

¹² *Muḥāḍarāt*, p. 45. See section 3 for the changes in *al-Dhari'ah*.

¹³ *Muḥāḍarāt*, p. 46; cf. *Dhari'ah*, pp. 247-248 for the identical citation.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 52f. The context of the citation is the advice of 'Utbah ibn Abū Sufyān to his son's tutor. Isfahānī included it in *al-Dhari'ah*, p. 237, with a

Both Māwardī and Iṣfahānī include numerous citations from religious sources, the sayings of sages and anecdotes. Māwardī's style, however, is interrupted by many quotations; his work lacks philosophical depth and topics are treated superficially and unsystematically.

Classical educational literature dealt with the acquisition of knowledge, the moral dimension of education and the philosophical aspects of the educational ideal. The latter aspect was a direct result of the impact of Graeco-Arabic translation activity during the 9th century AD. Later Muslim writers gave the educational ideal an Islamic orientation.

Key educational terms are *adab* and *ta'dīb* corresponding with the Greek *paideia*. Monographs on philosophical education have not been preserved, but Plato's 'Exhortation on the Education of the Young Men' had been embodied by Miskawayh's *Jawadhin Khiradh*. Furthermore, the excerpts attributed to Plato are preserved in 'Amirī's *Kitāb al-Sa'ādah*. Likewise, the section on children's education by the Neo-Pythagorean Bryson was available in the 10th century in anonymous Arabic translation. These texts have had a profound philosophical influence on Muslim educational monographs.¹⁵

The Neopythagorean influence is evident in Bryson's 'Economics', which concerns the home, family and the education of

preceding statement: *wa yajib 'alā yakhūd al-insān fī al-fann ...* This is taken from the subtitle in the *Muḥādarāt: al-Nahi 'an al-Khawḍ fī Funūn min al-'Ilm*. It gives some indication of the sequence of these texts. The *Muḥādarāt* preceded *al-Dhari'ah* as the words are similar in both texts.

¹⁵ Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, pp. 284-285. These Arabic texts were used by Miskawayh and Ghazzālī. This is shown by Plessner (see Martin Plessner: *Der Oikonomikos des Neuphythagoreers 'Bryson' und sein Einfluß auf die Islamische Wissenschaft* (Heidelberg:1928). (*Orient und Antike*, v. 5), pp. 49ff and 13ff). An Italian translation based on the Arabic is published by M. Zonta in: *Aristotele, L'amministrazione della casa, a cura di C. Natali*, Roma-Bari 1995, pp. 140-171.

small children. Bryson recommends the inculcation of proper table manners, moral sexual behaviour and respect for elders.¹⁶ Miskawayh states that 'Exhortation on the education of the Young' (*Adab al-Sibyān*) was translated by Ishāq ibn Hunayn; however, Rosenthal is of the opinion that the form has changed, but not the content.¹⁷ This treatise deals with the ethical behavior of teachers and general precepts for students. Education should cultivate character and the pursuance of virtue. Accordingly, students are required to be morally unblemished, intellectually honest, sincere, humble and modest in their behavior. The primary focus is on moral education.¹⁸

In the sphere of religious education, Muḥammad Ibn Sahnūn (202-256/817-871), a Malikite, produced perhaps the earliest monograph on the elementary teaching of the Qur'ān, *Adāb al-mu'allimīn* 'The Behaviour of the Teachers'. The teacher is exhorted to treat the young equally and use corporal punishment sparingly.¹⁹ This was followed by a similar, but longer, treatise by another Malikite, 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Qābisi (324-403/936-1012).²⁰

2. Işfahānī's Educational Ethics

This section will expound on the educational ethics of Işfahānī as stated in *al-Dhari'ah* with special reference to adult education. The treatment here of 'Işfahānī's educational ethics' is divided into the following sub-sections: first, the mastery of knowledge; secondly, the duties of the student; thirdly, the duties of the teacher; and fourthly, the rulers of education.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 288-289; Ansari, *The Ethical Philosophy of Miskawayh*, (Aligarh: 1964), pp. 122-125. Miskawayh has similar views, which also apply to adults, except that one should be less strict with them. (See section 4, below).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 285f.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 285-286.

¹⁹ Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, p. 290f.

²⁰ Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, p. 291.

2.1. The Gradual Mastery of Knowledge

As the pursuit of a discipline requires a lifetime, the student should concentrate on basic knowledge required for each stage of his life. He should be like a traveller who takes sufficient provisions for each stage of his journey; not like one who consumes all his food in the early stages of his journey and finds that there is nothing left at the end of it. Similarly, if the student absorbs more knowledge than he needs, he cannot reflect upon it nor digest it properly, and he will not realize his aims. A little knowledge is not a dangerous thing if one masters it and uses it to benefit others, for, "The tree is not discreditable by bearing few fruit, if they are of benefit to people."²¹ Isfahānī compares a little knowledge that benefits people with a tree that bears little fruit:

A person's duty is to take [from] the various sciences sufficient provision prepared for the different stages of travel. He expends enough provisions on each stage according to his need. He does not also deflect from reflecting completely upon knowledge [and presuming that he had perfected it], rather, he applies himself [fully] to its pursuit. Furthermore, he does not exceed the minimum requirement for each stage, and he exhausts whatever it contains. [To be sure] man's pursuit of one kind of knowledge till he is totally satisfied with [its mastery], may require a lifetime of effort; yet, he might not realize its full value, or reach its full depth and potential.²²

The pursuit of each science should ultimately lead to the knowledge of God,²³ but people cannot achieve this if they do not

²¹ *Al-Dhari'ah*, pp. 236-237.

²² *Al-Dhari'ah*, pp. 236-237; cf. Ghazzālī's sixth duty in: al-Ghazzālī, *Mizān al-'Amal*, ed. Sulayman Dunyā, (Cairo: 1964), p. 348; cf. Ghazzālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4 vols, Beirut, n. d., (corrected by A. A.I. al-Sirwānī); cf. Ghazzālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, Kitāb al-'ilm, vol. 1, p. 76f. English Translation by Nabih Amin Fariṣ, *Al-Ghazālī, Book of Knowledge*, (Lahore: 1962), pp. 134-136. Ghazzālī does not mention Isfahānī's analogy of a traveller with provisions.

²³ *Mizān*, p. 351.

follow the basics first. They should first master what is of primary importance before proceeding to the advanced stages.²⁴ Işfahānī does not specify what the basics are, but when he places worship in the category of compulsory duties (*farā'id*), then we know that he is referring to a knowledge of these things.²⁵ One needs to pursue knowledge in stages, and the highest level, according to Işfahānī, is the knowledge of God:

A person should not go deeply into a subject [an art] until he has dealt with a field of study adequately according to procedures, which precedes it. He should extract the particular knowledge whatever he requires of it, for the overflow of knowledge through hearing will mislead the understanding. To this effect, God, Most High said: 'Those to whom we have given the book and they read it with due sincerity and commitment'. That is, they do not draw away from a field of study until they have perfected it in knowledge and action. A person has to proceed from the important without any disturbance to the order because many people have lost their destination because they have left their basic principles. His duty is to go beyond each science until he reaches the end, and the end of the theoretical sciences is the knowledge of God, according to the true reality, and all sciences are in the service of it, and it is by itself [absolutely] free. It is related that a portrait of two ancient philosophers was seen shining in one of their mosques. In the hand of one of the philosophers was a scroll on which is written: 'If you have done everything well, do not think you have fulfilled anything until you come to know God, Most High, that He is the Cause of all causes, and He is the Creator of all things.' The second sage also holds a portrait on which is written: 'Before I had known God, I was wont to drink and thirst again: but when I had known Him my thirst was quenched without any drinking.'²⁶

²⁴ *Al-Dhari'ah*, p. 237; p. 94.

²⁵ *Al-Dhari'ah*, p. 94.

²⁶ *Al-Dhari'ah*, p. 237, 1-13; cf. *Mizān*, 348f; cf. Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā'*, vol. 1, p. 71f/ Trans. Faris, *Book of Knowledge*, pp. 134-135.

Both philosophers have inscribed on the scroll the importance of the knowledge of God, which is superior to all knowledge. The second philosopher seems to emphasise a direct knowledge, which is different from a rational knowledge of God.

Isfahānī compares the acquisition of knowledge with material things, and then identifies four states of knowledge; first, the seeking of knowledge; secondly, the possession of it; thirdly, the attainment of spiritual insight and enjoyment of it; and fourthly, the imparting of it to others. The last stage, which is the most commendable, is compared to a 'a sun that shines on others and is still radiant; or like musk that gives fragrance to others and is still fragrant.' The lowest, least commendable stage is when someone 'teaches someone else what he knows, without taking advantage of his knowledge.' Isfahānī gives the example of someone who is like a notebook with the intention of instructing others with wisdom, although it does not contain it itself; or a whetstone that sharpens the razor but is itself blunt; or a needle to sew clothes for others to wear, but is naked himself; or a wick that gives light to others but burns itself out. So one who gains knowledge but does not benefit himself or others is like a palm tree with prickles on its leaves that is defenceless when its fruit is snatched.²⁷

2.2. Isfahānī's Ethics of Learning

In this section we will be dealing with the duties of the student.

2.2.1. Three Main Duties

Isfahānī identifies three main duties of the student.²⁸

1. The student should clean his soul of vices as the soil is

²⁷ *Al-Dhari'ah*, p. 239; Ghazzālī, *Ihyā'*, vol. 1, p. 74/ Trans. Faris, *Book of Knowledge*, p. 144.

²⁸ These correspond with the first three duties enumerated and elaborated upon by Ghazzālī. Other duties are implicit in other sections. For example, Isfahānī deals with the 'mastery of knowledge', but Ghazzālī considers this to be one of the duties.

cleansed of weeds.²⁹ Just as prayer without a clean body is incomplete, so worship without a clean soul is incomplete.³⁰

2. The student should reduce his worldly activities to have more time for the study of the true sciences. Total devotion (to all things) is no guarantee that he will realize his goal. A mind's attention that is dispersed in different directions is like a stream of water that flows in different directions, and as a result, it is absorbed by both earth and the air, nothing remaining for the irrigation of planted lands.³¹
3. The student should not elevate himself above that of the teacher,³² but should trust his teacher to conduct his affairs and take his advice as a patient would of a clever physician. Furthermore, the student should only ask questions that relate to his discipline.³³

Clearly, an ethical kind of education is suggested in the above-mentioned duties. The pupil is perceived as a *tabula rasa*, who is receptive to impressions. He should purify his soul of lower desires and worldliness, and always do good as a basis for his happiness in this world and the next. Thus, the father should teach his child to be righteous, frugal and respectful to his teachers.³⁴

²⁹ *Al-Dhari'ah*, pp. 240-241; Ghazzālī, *Ihyā'*, vol. 1, p. 76/ Trans. *Book of Knowledge*, p. 126.

³⁰ *Al-Dhari'ah*, p. 96; *Mizān*, p. 341f; Ghazzālī, *Ihyā'*, vol. 1, p. 76/ trans. Faris, *Book of Knowledge*, p. 126; cf. Ibn Jamā'ah, *Tadhkirat al-Sāmi'*, pp. 67-68. The author states that one should purify one's heart and intention to attain nearness to God.

³¹ *Al-Dhari'ah*, p. 240 *Mizān*, p. 343f; Ghazzālī, *Ihyā'*, vol. 1, p. 67f. /Trans. Faris, *Book of Knowledge*, p. 129.

³² *Al-Dhari'ah*, p. 240; *Mizān*, p. 344f; Ghazzālī, *Ihyā'*, vol. 1, p. 68f/ Trans. Faris, *Book of Knowledge*, pp. 129-132.

³³ *Al-Dhari'ah*, p. 242; cf. A.S. Tritton, *Materials on Muslim Education in the Middle Ages*, (London: 1957), p. 21, on the pupil's respect for his teachers and parents.

³⁴ Tritton, *Muslim Education*, pp. 19-21.

2.2.2 Another Duty (Avoiding Controversy)

The student who is weaker than his teacher requires continuous guidance and protection, as he could easily be led astray by bad company. (This is another duty, although Iṣfahānī does not mention this in his three main duties of the student.) The teacher should therefore ensure that the student does not indulge in futile controversies. Iṣfahānī is suggesting that the teacher is superior and could protect weak students from futile controversies with non-Muslims. Thus, Iṣfahānī states: 'The student compared with his teacher is like poor soil that receives heavy rain without benefiting from it. He should then be amenable to listen and gain knowledge from the learned scholar.'³⁵ The teacher's superiority is supported by the *ḥadīth*: 'The higher hand is better than the lower hand.' A weak student could have his faith shaken by controversies, which could lead him to apostasy. He should therefore avoid the intimate company of non-believers. For God states, 'O believers, do not take as close friends other than your own people, they will spare no effort to corrupt you' (Q. 3:118); and, 'Do not follow the fancies of a people who went astray in the past and led others astray and strayed from the right path' (Q. 55:77).³⁶

Thus, Iṣfahānī states that God forbids the masses from being in the company of innovators. They are like vulnerable sheep in the company of wolves. Some sages even suggest that the reason why pork is forbidden to Muslims is to prevent believing Arabs from being in the company of sceptical Jews and Christians. Ordinary Muslims should therefore not socialise with them, especially those who are weak of faith,³⁷ but the sage can do so in order to understand their doubts and to challenge their arguments, and to more effectively defend the faith physically and verbally.³⁸

³⁵ *Al-Dhari'ah*, p. 240.

³⁶ *Al-Dhari'ah*, p. 241f.

³⁷ See below for comparison with Ghazzālī.

³⁸ *Al-Dhari'ah*, p. 242; cf. *Mizān*, p. 346.

2.3. The Ethical Duties of the Teacher

There are four duties of the teacher. The first duty is to be sympathetic to children and treat them as his own.³⁹ When Alexander the Great was asked: 'Is your teacher more honoured to you than your father?', he replied, 'My teacher, because he is the cause of my eternal life, but my parents are [only] the cause of my transient life.'⁴⁰ What is meant here is the knowledge that leads to endless bliss in the Hereafter.⁴¹ As children of one father should love one another and co-operate in achieving a common goal, students of one teacher should love and cherish one another. For Işfahānī, therefore, the brotherhood of virtue is above the brotherhood of birth.⁴² Ghazzālī discusses the same idea using similar words.⁴³

³⁹ Ibn Jamā'ah, *Tadhkirat al-Samī' wa al-Mutakallim fī Ādāb al-'Ālim wa al-Muta'allim*, (Hyderabad): 1353 AH), pp. 49-50. See translation by Noor Muhammad Ghifari, *The Memoir of the Listener and the Speaker in the Training of Teacher and Student*, Islamic Research Institute Press, Islamabad. (n.d).

⁴⁰ This citation is adapted slightly from the *Muḥāḍarāt*, vol. 1, p. 45. In the response, Işfahānī mentions the teacher first (before the father) and refers to him as *mu'allimī* instead of *mu'addibī* in the original. This means that Işfahānī does not always quote literally from the *Muḥāḍarāt*. See Tritton, *Muslim Education*, pp. 27, 48, who cites the same statement from Ibn al-Jawzī's *Muntazam*, 5, ii, 89.

⁴¹ *Al-Dharī'ah*, p. 244; cf. Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā'*, vol. 1 p. 56, 16-17/ Trans. Faris, *Book of Knowledge*, p. 145. Ghazzālī clarifies that the teacher is concerned with either the sciences of the Hereafter or of this world. His goal in the pursuit of these sciences should be bliss in the Hereafter, not success in this world.

⁴² Cf. Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, p. 333, for the idea that scholars and students should remain together as a family to promote knowledge.

⁴³ Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā'*, vol. 1. p. 56f/Trans. Faris, *Book of Knowledge*, p. 145. However, Ghazzālī adds his definition of the teacher as being one who is concerned with either with 'the sciences of the Hereafter or the sciences of the world, whose goal, in all his work, is [bliss in] the Hereafter and not success in this world.'

The second duty of the teacher is to dissuade the student from evil ways by suggestion (and with sympathy) rather than openly,⁴⁴ for the following reasons. First, suggestion or allusion is more effective than the direct statement, for the noble soul or discerning mind is able to extract the meaning of the allusion by itself.⁴⁵ Secondly, unlike open dissuasion, allusion does not offend the learner by violating his dignity or modesty. Thirdly, the direct (or open) approach has only one dimension or way of expressing itself, but allusion allows for various means of getting the point across. Its flexibility makes it more effective in hinting to a person about certain matters which might otherwise lead to embarrassment if a blunt or direct method had to be used. Fourthly, the approach of allusion can employ different idioms to say something appropriate to the occasion. Thus, to forbid something openly and bluntly makes thing alluring, as the Prophet said: 'If the people were prohibited from making porridge from the camel's dung, they would have done it, stating, "We would not have been forbidden to do it if there had been some good in it."' Iṣfahānī further illustrates the wisdom of this method by citing the case of Adam and Eve, who consumed the forbidden fruit.

The third duty of the teacher is to follow the example of the Prophet by not expecting remuneration or material reward for imparting knowledge. The teacher's service should be free for the glory of God, and to come close to Him. Iṣfahānī states:

The teacher should know that whoever sells knowledge for worldly gain, has gone against God's wisdom because He has ordained that wealth be used for food and clothes that serve the body; but the body serves the soul, and the soul serves knowledge. Knowledge is therefore the overall master that is

⁴⁴ *al-Dhārī'ah*, p. 245; cf. Ghazzālī, *Ihyā'*, vol. 1. p. 57f./ Trans. Faris, *Book of Knowledge*, p. 149. Ghazzālī cites it as the fourth duty, but Iṣfahānī defends in detail the notion that diplomatic speech is better than blunt speech.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Ihyā'*, vol. 1. p. 56f./Trans. Faris, *Book of Knowledge*, p. 149. Ghazzālī continues with the statement, saying, 'And the pleasure of grasping their meaning results in a greater desire on the part of man for learning in order to show that such things are not beyond the capacity of his intellect.'

served and does not serve anything; but wealth serves and is the master of none. So whoever uses knowledge as a means to material gain has reduced that which is to be served, to serve, when in reality it is the master and not the servant.⁴⁶

The fourth duty of the teacher/sage is to protect the ignorant student from pursuing the inner realities of knowledge and to teach him only what he can grasp, otherwise he would end up confused and averse to his subject.⁴⁷ The Prophet said: 'Speak to the people according to what knowledge they bear, and refrain from [talking about] that which they have no knowledge, or is it that you would have God and His Prophet to be belied?' The Prophet also said: 'Whenever somebody talks to people about what they do not comprehend, it will cause them to go away'. Jesus, the son of Maryam, said: 'Do not dispense wisdom to those who cannot assimilate it, for it would be a violation of wisdom, but impart it to those who do understand, otherwise you will be unjust towards them. Be as an intelligent physician who dispenses medicine knowing it will be beneficial.'⁴⁸ Thus, the teacher who sees the student is receptive

⁴⁶ *Al-Dhari'ah*, p. 246. After this, Işfahānī proceeds to a new section in which he refers to the duty of the sages (*hukamā'*). This corresponds to the second duty of the teacher in Ghazzālī. Cf. Ghazzālī, *Ihyā'*, vol. 1, p. 56, 27ff/ Trans. Faris, *Book of Knowledge*, p. 146f. The author, emphasises in more elaborate detail the idea that teaching should be to please God rather than human authorities such as kings and sultans. Wealth should be one's servant not one's master. *Fa inna al-māla wā mā fī dunyā khādimu al-badani wa al-badānu murakkabu al-nafsi wa muṭituhā wa al-makhdūmu huwa al-'ilmu idh bi-hī sharafu al-nafsi.* (Wealth and what is in this world are servants of the body, and the body is the vehicle of the soul, which, in turn, is in the service of knowledge with which the soul is honoured) Ghazzālī, *Ihyā'*, vol. 1, p. 56, 30-31/ Trans. Faris, *Book of Knowledge*, p. 146f. See Tritton, *Muslim Education*, p. 9f, on non-payment for the teaching of Qur'ān and other branches of knowledge. He cites the example of an extreme case: a teacher fell into a well and would not allow the pupil to pull him as this might be considered payment.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Muḥādarāt*, pp. 52-53.

⁴⁸ *Al-Dhari'ah*, pp. 247-248; cf. *Muḥādarāt*, p. 46.

should impart knowledge according to his capacity.⁴⁹

The layman should be bound by the law, not depart from it as doubts and suspicions enter his soul.⁵⁰ But a restless soul that seeks knowledge of reality should be encouraged to specialise in certain areas of knowledge.⁵¹ Moreover, the student who pursues an in-depth knowledge in a specialised area of study should try to excel in order to rise above the level of the general public to the level of the intellectual elite. Iṣfahānī states:

If a person from the preceding nations comes forward to the educated to specialise in philosophy and true knowledge to progress from the level of the masses to the level of the elite, he must be tested first. If he does not have the temperament for such studies, or is ill-prepared for it, he should be discouraged and prevented from pursuing such knowledge. If he is found to be good, and ready for learning, then he must enter the House of Wisdom on condition that he remains bound to it. He is then forbidden to leave until he has acquired all the knowledge required of him or unless death comes to him.⁵²

In sum, the teacher should not over-saturate the novice student with knowledge, but should let him first master the basics, otherwise the advanced knowledge will confuse him. In principle, one has to 'begin at the beginning and ... not confuse the mind with too many new ideas all at once.'⁵³ As mentioned, Ghazzālī shares

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 249; cf. *Muḥāḍarāt*, p. 46. Compare with Ghazzālī below.

⁵⁰ Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, 306-308. According to Rosenthal, Iṣfahani placed value in doubt to obtain certainty, but he was also conscious of the sectarianism and the disunity it can bring to the Muslim community. Thus, he did not recommend it for uneducated people, but for the eager and mature students who could advance to higher levels.

⁵¹ *Al-Dhari'ah*, pp. 249-250; cf. Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, pp. 306-308, for a discussion of doubt. Iṣfahānī's valued doubt only if it helped to gain certainty; but the novice student was to refrain from knowledge that leads to doubt and confusion. Compare with Ghazzālī below.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 250.

⁵³ Tritton, *Muslim Education*, p. 7.

the same idea with similar wordings and analogies. Earlier Islamic scholars might have shared some of these ideas on the duties of the student, but it is Işfahānī who has given it a unique formulation, which made an impression on Ghazzālī.

2.4. Rulers as Educators of Society

Işfahānī distinguishes between different forms of leadership or ruling. They all have the responsibility to prohibit evil and encourage good at different levels. Işfahānī was probably inspired by Fārābī's political philosophy, who in turn was inspired by the Ikhwān al-Şafā'. According to the latter, people are divided into three groups, the elite (*khawāṣṣ*)?, the masses (*'awāmm*) the middle class (*mutawassitūn*). The last group is able to interpret the Qur'ān in the literal and allegorical sense.⁵⁴ Işfahānī also divided people into three groups, and the middle class (*mutawassit*) are those who combine both the affairs of this world and the Hereafter. According to him, the sages and Prophets belong to this group.⁵⁵ Corresponding to the different levels of society, are different kinds of leaders who attend to the internal and external needs of the society. The idea of a philosopher-ruler, who is inspired by God, and guides them to perfect moral behaviour, has already been expressed in al-Fārābī. In a perfect state, religion is the cornerstone of politics, and the individual co-operates with fellow citizens, to obtain ultimate happiness.⁵⁶ Işfahānī identifies four levels of ruling in society; the Prophets, the sages, the governors, and the preachers. The governors, for example, who rule over the extrinsic dimensions of society, play a significant role in the education of the society, albeit at the external level. The four rulers are: first, the Prophets' rule over the elite and the masses, on the extrinsic and intrinsic level; secondly, the governors' rule over the extrinsic, but not intrinsic beliefs of the elite and masses; thirdly, the sages' rule

⁵⁴ Hans Daiber, 'Political Philosophy', *History of Islamic Philosophy*, Ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London & New York: 1996) 2, 841-885, p. 850.

⁵⁵ *Al-Dhari'ah*, p. 402.

⁵⁶ Daiber, 'Political Philosophy', p. 849.

over the internal condition of the elite; and fourthly, the preachers' rule over the internal beliefs of the masses.⁵⁷

These four levels of rule cover education at all levels of society and the individual, both at the extrinsic and intrinsic, and formal and informal levels. Education occurs in the school, the *madrasah*, college, mosque and civic organisation. Preachers are concerned with the rule over the internal beliefs of the masses and operate from the mosques. We distinguish them from the sages below.

Leaders should respect the expertise and jurisdiction of each other to avoid an unhealthy rivalry for power and claims to have knowledge in areas that they are not qualified in, otherwise envy, vice, disunity and violence will prevail.

The mediocre scholars seek to belittle great scholars with deceptive innovations to deceive the general public. They also tend to exploit the true scholars for their own ends of achieving power and status. They pretend to be scholarly to usurp the positions of the truly learned. Moreover, to achieve their diabolical objectives, they shamelessly brand the learned scholars as unbelievers. This is how they influence misguided people.⁵⁸ True scholars, according to Isfahani are like shepherds: they surrender to those with more intelligence and more virtues. They do not oppose the learned, but surrender to them out of necessity, since they are more virtuous and intelligent. He who denies the superiority of the learned and virtuous one is morally defiled. Such a person seeks the position of worldly leadership and makes his intellect a servant of his desire.⁵⁹

2.5. The Preacher as Educator of the Public

Unlike the teacher whose domain of transmitting knowledge is the school, college or mosque, the preacher operates in the mosque and other public institutions. The teacher has a small number of stu-

⁵⁷ *Al-Dhari'ah*, pp. 251, 4-6; 386, 13-17; *Mizān*, p. 328f.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

dents whom he is in regular contact with, and yet he is still expected to set a moral example.

Tritton states that the teacher of classical Islamic education 'must act according to his teaching, for his aim is the perfecting of character. As life is too short to learn everything, men must be content with a general knowledge of ancillary subjects and concentrate on the important.'⁶⁰ This principle of educational ethics in Işfahānī also applies to the preacher.

The sage's rule is not like that of the preacher. The general public cannot appreciate the sage, for 'never will the eyes of bats see the sun.' However, the preacher could learn from the sage, and through him he could benefit the public. The preacher, who is in touch with the public, could act as an intermediary between the sage and the people. His role is akin to the minister who acts as an intermediary between the king and the people.⁶¹

The sound preacher should be a moral example.⁶² He should be guided himself before he guides others. He should see truth himself before he can make others see it. He may be compared to the sun which supplies the moon with light rays, yet it contains itself more than what it gives away; the fire which causes iron to melt, yet it itself has a greater glow than the iron. His actions correspond with his speech. He is the antithesis of the following person that God describes: '[You will find] among the people a person whose discourse about life in this world displeases you, and who calls Allah to vouch for what is in his heart, although he is your worst enemy. And when he departs, he roams the land sowing corruption therein and destroying crops and livestock; but Allah does not like corruption' (Q. 2:204-205).⁶³ The following saying by 'Alī aptly describes such a person: 'I become extremely annoyed by the doings of two kinds of people: The uneducated per-

⁶⁰ Tritton, *Muslim Education*, p. 49.

⁶¹ *Al-Dhari'ah*, p. 252.

⁶² *Muḥāḍarāt*, pp. 52, 53.

⁶³ *Al-Dhari'ah*, p. 254.

son who assumes the position of the pious; and the learned man who is corrupt. The ignorant person deceives people with his seemingly pious attitude, and the learned one drives them away with his corruption.⁶⁴

A preacher who does not practice what he preaches does not benefit the public who tend to be impressed by the outward actions that they notice with their physical senses (*baṣar*). They cannot appreciate his inner knowledge which requires intuitive insight (*baṣīrah*), which they lack. Thus, it is imperative that the preacher reveals his actions more than his knowledge, which can only be perceived by the few with intuitive insight. The preacher's relation to the audience is equivalent to the doctor's relation to the patient. When the doctor tells people to avoid poisonous food, but eats it himself, his behaviour would appear preposterous. The same applies to the preacher who does not practice what he preaches.⁶⁵ Iṣfahānī cites more analogies to compare the preacher with that which is preached:

It is also said that the preacher compared to the preached can be compared with the printer and the printed. Likewise, it is not possible to imprint into clay that which is not sketched in the engraver; similarly, it is impossible for the soul of the preached to obtain virtue when it is absent in the soul of the preacher. Thus, if the preacher's speech is devoid of action, the preached will only learn from his speech but not his action. Also, the relationship of the preached and the preacher is like the relation between the shadow and the possessor of the shadow. As it is impossible for someone who has a shadow to bend while the shadow is still straight, so also is it impossible for the preacher to be crooked while the preached remains on the straight path. Also, everything which has a special nature will cause others to follow it with or without their will, like water which transforms elements into its own nature all according to the special elements to be transformed into the na-

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

ture of water; likewise fire, earth and air. Thus, the preacher, if he is misguided, others will follow his misguidance, and the responsibility will be attributed to him.⁶⁶

3. The Reception of İsfahānī's Educational Ethics in Ghazzālī

We have discussed above İsfahānī's educational ethics with reference to the three duties of the student and the three duties of the teacher. We have extrapolated more educational duties from other parts of *al-Dharī'ah*, including sections dealing with the duties of the sage and preacher. We noted that for İsfahānī education is broad, it includes the Prophets, the governors, the sages and the preachers. Ghazzālī extracted the educational principles from İsfahānī; he expanded on them, and systematized the whole discussion of educational ethics. Hence, we find the ten duties of the student and eight duties of the teacher in the *Mizān* and the *Ihyā'*. Ghazzālī not only restructured the whole discourse on educational duties, but also elaborated on them in detail in the *Mizān* and the *Ihyā'*. The content and style in these two works are essentially the same, but the *Ihyā'* is more detailed. Whereas İsfahānī made a clear distinction between the sage, the teacher and the preacher, Ghazzālī placed them all under the category of 'the duties of the teacher guide' (*Wazā'if al-murshid al-mu'allim*). It is interesting to note that Ghazzālī uses the Sufi term *murshid*.⁶⁷

We will now turn to a comparison of specific passages from *al-Dharī'ah*, *Mizān* and the *Ihyā'*. Pertaining to the first duty of the student.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

⁶⁷ In the *Mizān*, p. 362, 7, Ghazzālī also uses the term in *Wazā'if al-Mu'allim al-Murshid*. Note the slight change here. See also M.A. Abdullah, *The Idea of Universality of Ethical Norms in Ghazzālī and Kant*, (Ankara: 1992), p. 96. The author is of the opinion that Ghazzālī uses the term *Murshid* as it suggests that the student should follow the guidance of his spiritual guide rather than depend on his reason.

DHARĪ'AH (ISFAHĀNĪ)	MĪZĀN (AL-GHAZZĀLĪ)	IHYĀ' (AL-GHAZZĀLĪ)
<p>To purify his soul of vices (<i>an yuṭahhiru nafsahu min radi' l-akhlāq</i>)⁶⁸ as the earth is purified of bad plants and it was mentioned that the pure only live in a pure house and that the angels do not enter a houses where there is a dog.⁶⁹</p>	<p>To purify his soul of moral vices. (<i>Taqdīmū taḥāratil-nafsi 'an-radhi' l-akhlāq</i>).⁷⁰ As it is not correct to pray except with the purification of the limbs and knowledge is the worship of the soul, and in the language of the Law it is the worship of the heart; so it is not correct except with the purification of the heart from moral dirt and blameworthy characteristics.⁷¹</p>	<p>The first duty (of the student) is to purify his soul of his impure traits (<i>Taqdīmū taḥā-rati nafsi 'an radhā' il al-akhlāq</i>)⁷² and blameworthy characteristics because knowledge is the worship of the heart as well as prayer of his inmost self and the submission of his inward being before God. Just as prayer, which is the duty of the physical senses, is not fulfilled unless the physical body has been purified from excrements and impurities, so is the worship of the inward being as well as the reformation of the heart: they are not fulfilled through knowledge unless they (first) be cleansed from impurities and uncleanness.⁷³</p>

Iṣfahānī and Ghazzālī share two main points from this duty: First, the teacher should teach what is essential for the reform of the soul and the nurturing of character; and second, the teacher should himself set the moral example. The *Ihyā'* is more detailed in its exposition. The analogy of bad plants and the mention of angels are absent in Ghazzālī's passages. Iṣfahānī's reference to angels entering a house with a dog is based on a *ḥadīth*. The dog is

⁶⁸ *Al-Dhari'ah*, p. 240, 3.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 240, 1-5.

⁷⁰ *Mizān*. p. 341, 18

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 341, 17-19; 342, 1-2.

⁷² *Ihyā'*, I, p. 50, 9.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, I, p. 50, 9-12; cf. trans. Faris, *Book of Knowledge*, p. 126

a metaphor for moral vices. As angels do not enter the house that contains a dog, God's light does not enter a morally dirty heart. Thus, piety can only dwell in a clean heart. Ghazzālī does not use the metaphor of the dog in this specific passage, but compares the clean body for the worship of the limbs with a clean soul for the worship of the heart.⁷⁴ Seven lines below, Ghazzālī cites the actual *ḥadīth*? concerning the dog in the house. The above table provides samples of the kinds of style that are reflected in all three works.

One can see this when one examines the way he deals with the first duty of the student. Ghazzālī explains in detail the meaning of the prophetic Tradition. For him, the heart represents the house of angels; the dog represents vices such as anger and lust. Angels do not enter a house crowded by dogs. God sends knowledge to the human heart through angels. Just as angels will not come to a dirty house, they will not come to a dirty heart.

Ghazzālī warns that one should not understand the Tradition literally, nor interpret it only esoterically (as the Batinites have done). The use of metaphors in the Tradition conveys a suggestion (*al-i'tibār*) which is more subtle, balanced and effective in approach. It causes one to reflect on the affairs of others first, and then by analogy to oneself.⁷⁵ This kind of detailed explanation is typical of Ghazzālī in the *Iḥyā'*, but not in the *Mizān* and *al-Dhari'ah*. Iṣfahānī also discusses this aspect of subtle communication, but more with reference to correcting a student (See below).

We quoted a long passage from Iṣfahānī above regarding the gradual mastery of knowledge and the knowledge of God. Knowledge should start with the basics, which include the *fard 'ayn* knowledge.⁷⁶ The same idea is contained in the *Mizān* as the sixth duty of the student. Ghazzālī makes the point that the student

⁷⁴ A corresponding idea appears in another passage of *al-Dhari'ah* (p. 96) and in another context: *lā yuslihu li-khilāfati llāhi ta'āllah ... illā man kāna tāhira al-nafs*. (only someone with a pure soul is suited for the vicegerency of God).

⁷⁵ *Iḥyā'*, I, p. 60; trans. Faris, *The Book of Knowledge*, p. 127

⁷⁶ *Al-Dhari'ah*, p. 237; p. 94.

should not study all things at the same time, but should start with what is most important, as life is too short to perfect all things. So he should not delve deeply into a branch of knowledge unless he has mastered what has come before and perfected it in knowledge and action.⁷⁷

Regarding style, Ghazzālī quotes the same Qur'anic verse as Iṣfahānī and his style is similar to the first part of Iṣfahānī's passage. One sentence (in italics) is almost identical, and they both cite the same statement by 'Alī.⁷⁸ Ghazzālī's reference to the knowledge of God and Iṣfahānī's anecdote about the two ancient philosophers appear in the *Mizān* as the seventh duty and the *Ihyā'* as the sixth duty of the student.⁷⁹ Thus, Ghazzālī restructures Iṣfahānī's ideas and rearranges the quotations to suit his own purpose.

Both Ghazzālī and Iṣfahānī (see above) consider knowledge of God to be the highest knowledge. To Ghazzālī, in the *Mizān* knowledge of God is the cause of salvation and happiness. Faith (*īmān*) is not mere verbal utterance of the *shahādah* (confession of faith), but is rooted in one's heart. It is not based on blind imitation or dialectical argumentation. In the *Ihyā'* Ghazzālī develops a Sufi orientation to the knowledge of God. He states: 'The goal of action (*mu'āmalah*) is unveiling (*mukāshafah*), and the goal of unveiling is the knowledge of God. ...It is the fruit of a light cast into the heart of a servant who has purified it with the struggle of his inner self against vices.' *Mukāshafah* is a well-known Sufi concept, and Ghazzālī states that he is referring to a conviction here which is exemplified by the Prophets and the saints.⁸⁰

On avoiding controversy, Ghazzālī shares with Iṣfahānī, the concern about the negative impact of theological disputes on the

⁷⁷ *Mizān*, p. 348.

⁷⁸ *Ihyā'*, I., p. 53.

⁷⁹ *Mizān*, pp. 349-51; *Ihyā'*, I, p. 53.

⁸⁰ *Ihyā'*, p. 57f; cf. *Muḥāḍarāt*, p. 53, on perfecting one stage of learning before pursuing another.

Muslim masses. He also discourages weak Muslims from indulging in dialectics, which could lead to apostasy. Ghazzālī advocates avoidance of people who indulge in dialectics, especially heretics and unbelievers. The sage (*ḥakīm* whose faith is strong, could however engage in theological debates. Ghazzālī uses the term *aqwiya'* instead of *ḥakīm*, and explains this point in more detail. He says that whereas the sage can mix with non-believers, weak Muslims cannot do so because of their vulnerability. There is wisdom in God's prohibition of pork, for it creates a social barrier between Muslims and non-Muslims. Thus, both Işfahānī and Ghazzālī share this idea, but the former supports his argument by citing religious sources. Concerning *jihād*, Işfahānī speaks of it in the context of the sage's struggle against the enemy. He makes a distinction between the struggle of the hand and the tongue. The latter kind of struggle is that of the philosopher sage.⁸¹ Ghazzālī places the idea of struggle within a Sufi context. He cites Sufi sayings, and distinguishes between the outer struggle (*zāhir*) through worship and the inner struggle (*bātin*) through the presence of the heart. The latter, the Sufi struggle of the heart, is more advanced. The strong ones (*aqwiya'*) pursue such a struggle. Işfahānī avoids an overt association with the Sufis, and Ghazzālī avoids an overt association with the philosophers.

The 'second duty' of the teacher is to prevent the student from incorrect ways by means of suggestion and gentle persuasion, not frankly and bluntly. Ghazzālī incorporated this idea in the *Ihyā'* (as a fourth duty of the teacher) with a brief explanation. Işfahānī's explanation is more elaborate. He identifies five reasons for preferring diplomatic over blunt speech. His predilection for subtle communication is because he is an *adīb*; hence he uses the literary devices of descriptive comparison (*tamthīl*) and the simile (*tashbīh*) for didactic purposes. He believes these are effective ways of persuasive.⁸²

⁸¹ *Mizān*, p. 346.

⁸² Tritton cites a statement by Işfahānī: 'A man of letters is apt to see metaphors everywhere', in *Muslim Education*, p. 74.

As noted above there is another implicit duty of the teacher/sage (not mentioned in Iṣfahānī's three duties), which is that the amateur student should not be saturated with knowledge beyond his understanding, but the promising student should pursue advanced studies. Iṣfahānī does not specify subjects of knowledge. Ghazzālī deals with this point in his 'fourth duty of the teacher', but specifies the subjects. Compare the following passages:

IṢFAHĀNĪ	GHAZZĀLĪ
<p>Knowledge is a property by which one can reach the everlasting life. Likewise is wealth, a property by which one can reach sustenance in the worldly life. Whoever exposes a person who is not competent to deeper knowledge, should be punished. Conversely, whoever deprives someone who is worthy of it, should likewise be brought to task. God therefore says: <i>It is such that God took a covenant from the People of the Book in order that they clarify it to mankind and not to conceal that by which they may benefit.</i> (Q. 3: 187).⁸³</p> <p>God also says: <i>Those who conceal of the book that which God has revealed, and they appropriate but a small gain, will have no share of the Religion in the Hereafter.</i> (Q. 2: 174).</p> <p>Competent learned men should therefore first scrutinize him. If it is that he naturally accepts the knowledge and that he is stable, and has a keen understanding and perception, a realistic imagination and intuition, he should be given the opportunity to study, and he must be assisted in the path that has been created for him. On the other hand, if he has an evil nature or lacking in understanding,</p>	<p>If the teacher notices that the student is seeking knowledge only for the sake of worldly advantages, he should examine what science the student is pursuing. If he sees that these sciences are disputation in jurisprudence, argument in theology, and handing down controversial opinions and legal disputes, (the teacher) should dissuade him from them because they do not belong either to the sciences of the Hereafter, or to purposeful sciences not (directly) in the services of God, but useful to it. These include the sciences of interpretation and tradition, also the disciplines of the ancients that pertain to the Hereafter, qualities of the soul, and the reform of the soul.⁸⁵</p>

<p>he should be strongly prevented from being preoccupied with (a field of study) he is unable to comprehend. Otherwise two evils will result from (pursuing a study he is not apt for): (1) He will not be able to benefit the worshippers and the country, (2) He will be so preoccupied with doubt (as a result of his study) that it will be futile for him.⁸⁴</p>	
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These two passages reveal that Iṣfahānī and Ghazzālī caution the teachers against saturating the students with too much knowledge, and not considering the student's limitations. Iṣfahānī does not mention which knowledge he is referring to, but Ghazzālī distinguishes between knowledge that is useless and that which is useful. The latter kind includes ethics, the reform of the soul and knowledge directed at the service of God.

Implicit in Iṣfahānī's passage is the recognition of a hierarchy of knowledge. Some sciences are more important than others. Iṣfahānī censures those in authority, from governors to sages, who encourage students to study branches of knowledge they are ill equipped for, and discourage students from studying subjects they are equipped for. Ghazzālī accepts this principle of gradation and advises educators to act responsibly in accordance with it.

While Ghazzālī adopts some principles of educational ethics from Iṣfahānī his exposition of them is more systematic. As mentioned, Iṣfahānī distinguishes between different types of rulers: the Prophet, the governor, the sage, and the preacher. They cater for various needs, and contribute to society's moral education of the society. Like Iṣfahānī, Ghazzālī distinguishes between the rule of

⁸³ *Al-Dhari'ah*, p. 249, 6-13; cf. *Muḥādarāt*, p. 46 for a similar idea in the context of Plato's response to his pupils' question.

⁸⁴ *Al-Dhari'ah*, p. 249, 17, p. 250, 1-10; cf. *Knowledge Triumphant*, pp. 306-308, for a discussion of doubt. Iṣfahānī's value of doubt was only aimed at gaining certainty; but the novice student was to refrain from levels of knowledge that would lead to doubt and confusion.

⁸⁵ Ghazzālī, *Ihyā' &*, I, p. 57/ Trans. Faris, *Book of Knowledge*, pp. 147-148.

the sage and the rule of the preacher, but links his discussion in the *Mizān* with education and politics, and not under the topic of educational ethics. This is why the duty of the preacher is not discussed separately by Ghazzālī, but comes under the duties of the teacher. The preacher and teacher, for Iṣfahānī, are not only rulers, but also educators. The preacher manages the internal beliefs of the masses. In Iṣfahānī, therefore, but not in Ghazzālī, there is a consistent relation, between different rulers and different educators.

4. Ghazzālī's Impact

We noted above that Ghazzālī appropriated Iṣfahānī's ideas and developed a more systematic structure and coherent discussion on the etiquette of teachers and students in the *Ihyā'* and *Mizān*. Ghazzālī's educational ideas influenced the Spanish Moroccan Jewish author Joseph ibn Judah ibn 'Aqnin (624/1226), who was a disciple of Maimonides. Halkin states that 'in view of his Jewish-Arabic background and milieu it can be taken for granted that his source or sources were Arabic, notwithstanding the fact that most of the sayings are attributed to Greek and Latin sayings.'⁸⁶ Ibn 'Aqnin's ethical work, *Tibb al-Nufūs* ('Spiritual Medicine'), is different from previous Arabic works because of its greater systematic treatment. Rosenthal states:

His treatment is distinguished by a more systematic method, a greater stress on essentials, and a more comprehensive view of education as a unified process from the most elementary to the highest stages. In a way, he succinctly combines the best practical thought of the religious-traditionalist and the philo-

⁸⁶ A.S. Halkin, "Classical and Arabic Material in ibn 'Aknin's 'Hygiene of the Soul'", *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, (New York, 1944), 14:27-167, p. 29. The editor only extracted the aphorisms from the complete work, entitled *Maqālah fī Tibb al-Nufūs al-'Āimah wa Mu'ālat al-Qulūb al-Salimah*. (Treatise on the Hygiene of Sick Souls and the Care of Sound Hearts). It is in this complete work where the author devotes a section to educational ethics in a long chapter on education. For an edition and translation of this chapter, see M. Güdemann, *Das Jüdische Unterrichtswesen der Spanisch-Arabischen Periode*, text, 1-57, trans. 43-138 (Vienna: 1873, reprint Amsterdam:1968).

sophical literature on education. In this respect, he may have been inspired by ideas current in the climate of Western Islam.⁸⁷

According to Rosenthal, Ibn 'Aqnīn's prime model was Ghazzālī's *Ihyā'*. We will compare below the duties of the teacher and student as set out by Ibn 'Aqnīn and Ghazzālī, and conclude that there is a close resemblance, which confirms Rosenthal's premise that Ibn 'Aqnīn imitated Ghazzālī.

In brief, the seven duties of the teacher according to Ibn 'Aqnīn are: firstly, mastery of the subject; secondly, action in accord with knowledge; thirdly, no remuneration for teaching; fourthly, treating students as if they were his children; fifthly, a conviction in the excellence of knowledge and inculcating this conviction in students; sixthly, guiding students to happiness and kindness, and being patient with them; and seventhly, a graded curriculum tailored to the mental capacity and stage of each student.

The nine duties of the student are first, purity of character; secondly, asking critical questions but acknowledging the greater experience of the teacher; thirdly, unconcern with financial and family matters; fourthly, mastery of the principles of a given discipline and then only of its details in order to face doubts, even if at the beginning it is better to shy away from them and to trust the teacher; fifthly, familiarity with differences of opinion (as taught in Aristotelian philosophy); sixthly, constant reflection on the relationship between knowledge, virtuous action and livelihood; seventhly, devotion to knowledge with no ulterior motives; eighthly, willingness to seek a good teacher; and ninthly, a respect for the teacher bordering on reverence.⁸⁸

A comparison with duties set by Ghazzālī reveals that they share the same principles of education. The mastery of knowledge, respect for the teacher and the principle of gradation and purity of

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

⁸⁷ Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, p. 293f.

character are common to them both. These principles are contained in *al-Dhari'ah*, and we have no evidence of an earlier work discussing them in the manner that Iṣfahānī did. Ibn 'Aqnīn imitated him in a long section of his ethical work, but instead of Ghazzālī's 'eight duties of the teacher', Ibn 'Aqnīn has seven; and instead of Ghazzālī's ten duties of the student, Ibn 'Aqnīn has nine. This is a minor structural difference. Rosenthal assumes that the Jewish author used the *Ihyā'* as a source, but comparison with the *Mizān* will confirm if the author used one or both these works of Ghazzālī.

Another question to raise is whether Ibn 'Aqnīn was directly influenced by his master, Moses Maimonides (who, according to Rosenthal, was influenced by Ghazzālī) or whether his educational ideas were inspired directly by Ghazzālī. Ghazzālī was concerned with the qualifications of scholars and their methods, and he was influenced by Sufi ideas towards worldly and religious knowledge (that is, favouring the latter, but not neglecting the former). Rosenthal states that proof of the pervasive power of cultural and literary custom with regard to knowledge can be found in the great law code (Mishne Torah) of Moses Maimonides, which begins with *Seper ham-maddā'* (Book of Knowledge), and which contains all the basic duties of the Law of Moses which human beings must know.⁸⁹ A part of the text begins with the relationship between teachers and pupils, which is worthy of comparison with Ghazzālī. Furthermore, 'the remainder of the contents of Maimonides' *Book of Knowledge* can be read as a summary of Ghazzālī's *Ihyā'*.⁹⁰

Another work in the spirit of the Shāfi'ī Ghazzālī (and Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī) is *Tadhkirat al-Sāmi' wa al-Mutakallim fi Adab al-'Ālim wa al-Muta'allim* by the Shāfi'ī Ibn Jamā'ah (733/1333). The author, who reflects on the higher religious education prevalent in the *madrasah*, imitates Ghazzālī in the view that teachers should have good manners (*ḥusn al-ādāb*) and study not for worldly gain but for the love of God. They should also have dig-

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 95f.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, *Knowledge Triumphant*, p. 96.

nity, piety and modesty. Furthermore, they should follow a graded method of instruction (note the principle of gradation above). Students should be helped to overcome bashfulness, and the teacher should show concern for their welfare. Similar to Ghazzālī's duties of the student, the students should be pious, choose the right company and respect their teachers.

Different from Ghazzālī or Işfahānī is the idea that the teacher should show decorum in his dress, learn from the young and write and publish. If he doubts the teacher's statement, he should resolve the matter tactfully. Note the cultivation of a critical, yet respectful attitude towards the teacher.⁹¹ The *Tadhkirat al-Sāmi* has now been translated into English, and so a close comparison with Ghazzālī would be worthwhile?

Similar ideas are also reflected in the educational philosophy of Ibn Khaldūn (809/1406) who, like Ghazzālī, is also concerned about the 'method of of giving such instruction',⁹² and about the principle of gradation. Ibn Khaldūn states: 'It should be known that the teaching of scientific subjects is effective only when it proceeds gradually and little by little'.⁹³ The teacher should teach the basics first before delving into the subject. Also, he should teach the essentials of the discipline to avoid confusion, and at a higher level, he should teach the details and even the secrets.

Teaching methodology should proceed according to the following three steps which involve repetition at each level: first the bare essentials should be taught, secondly the bare essentials should be taught at a higher level, and then the final step is to clarify all obscurity and explain all the secrets. The teacher should focus on one book or one subject, depending on the age and receptivity of the student.⁹⁴ On the subject of severity of punishment,

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 296-297.

⁹² Rosenthal (tr.), *The Muqaddimah*, vol. 2, (London, 1958), pp. 292-298; cf. *Ihyā'*, III, pp. 251-258.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 292. See above for this principle in Işfahānī and Ghazzālī.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 293f.

Ibn Khaldūn states that punishment leads to deceit and trickery, and the child's outward behaviour will not conform to his inner thinking. The teacher should therefore not be too severe on the child, and should not strike the child who deserves punishment more than three times. Religious law should internally discipline one, then there will be no need for external punishment, which will only humiliate the soul.⁹⁵ There is a definite echo of Ghazzālī in Ibn Khaldūn, in terms of the principle of gradation and the principles of allusion and gentle persuasion. Ibn Khaldūn adopted these educational principles from Ghazzālī or from those who imitated him, and elaborated on them in a more concrete manner.

To conclude, we have shown that both Iṣfahānī and Ghazzālī wrote on the subject of educational ethics, and that they share similar ideas regarding the duties of the teacher and the student. Ghazzālī extracted some of these duties from Iṣfahānī, but Ghazzālī's greater systematic presentation proved to be far more influential on later thinkers. It attracted the attention of the Jewish Ibn 'Aqnīn and the Shāfi'ī ibn Jamā'ah. Finally, we noted some parallels in the educational thought of a much later scholar, the well-known historian, Ibn Khaldūn.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 305.