

## Al-Ghazali and His Thoughts Contributed to The Islamic Educational System

Ruhana Abd. Azeez Samaeng<sup>\*</sup>

## Abstract

The objectives of this paper were to highlight the thoughts of AlGhazali's to the Islamic Educational system . The need for an Islamic educational system is not only a matter of conviction, but also crucial for mankind. Al-Ghazali has advocated that it is the prime duty of Muslims to search for the reality through the knowledge in accordance with the Holy Qur'an. Where the aim and objective of education for mantion, construction, and completion of manners so that man can distincquish between good and bad and abstain from evil. This paper also discussed on his philosophy and theory of education, curriculum, methods and techniques of teaching, women's education, psychological views, application of Al-Ghazali's view in education arena, and strengths and weaknesses of his views. Al - Ghazali had advocated that revelation is essential to recognize the reality and that is granted to messengers of God only the Almighty. Moreover, he holds that parents responsible for looking after their children in proper manner, as he considers a child like a mirror, ready to reflect anything put in front of him, as well as a sacred trust in the hands of parents.

**Keywords:** Islamic educational system, Thoughts, Philosophy of Education, Islamic education, source of knowledge.

## บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์ของบทความนี้เพื่อศึกษาแนวคิดของอิมามอัล-ฆอซาลีเกี่ยวกับระบบการศึกษาอิสลาม ซึ่งท่านมีแนวคิดว่าเป็นหน้าที่หลักของมุสลิมทุกคนที่จะต้องศึกษาและค้นหาสัจธรรมและการจะได้มาซึ่งสัจธรรมที่แท้จริงนั้นต้องอาศัยความรู้ที่ได้กล่าวไว้ในอัลกุรอาน ในขณะที่จุดประสงค์ของการศึกษาในทัศนะของท่านคือเพื่อเปลี่ยนแปลงบุคลิกภาพของปัจเจกบุคคลให้มีความสมบูรณ์ สามารถแยกแยะระหว่างสิ่งที่ถูกต้องและสิ่งที่ผิด อีกทั้งยังประสบความสำเร็จในความพยายามเพื่อห่างไกลจากชัยตอนมารร้าย นอกจากนี้บทความนี้ได้กล่าวเกี่ยวกับแนวคิดของอัล-ฆอซาลีด้านปรัชญาการศึกษา ทฤษฎีการศึกษา หลักสูตร เทคนิคและวิธีสอน การศึกษาของสตรี จิตวิทยาการศึกษา การประยุกต์แนวคิดดังกล่าวในการจัดการเรียนรู้ จุดแข็งจุดอ่อนของแนวคิด และการแปลงแนวคิดสู่แผนการจัดการเรียนรู้แบบบูรณาการ อิมามอัล-ฆอซาลีเชื่อว่าวิวรรณ์ (อัลกุรอานและฮะดีษ) เท่านั้นที่สามารถนำพามนุษย์สู่สัจธรรมที่แท้จริง ในอันที่จะรู้จักตัวเอง รู้ผู้สร้างหรือพระผู้เป็นเจ้าแห่งทุกสรรพสิ่งที่ถูกสร้างในโลกนี้ ในขณะที่ร่อซูลนั้นได้ทำหน้าที่เผยแผ่ศาสนาจากอัลลอฮ์ผู้ทรงเอกะสู่มวลมนุษยชาติ นอกจากนี้อัล-ฆอซาลีมีความคิดเห็นว่าบิดามารดามีหน้าที่รับผิดชอบในการดูแลสั่งสอนบุตรให้มีบุคลิกภาพตาม

<sup>\*</sup> M.Ed. (Guidance and Counseling), อาจารย์ประจำสาขาวิชาอิสลามศึกษา คณะอิสลามศึกษา มหาวิทยาลัยอิสลามยะลา.

เจตนารมณ์แห่งอิสลาม ท่านเปรียบเทียบลูกๆ เสมือนกระจกที่พร้อมจะสะท้อนทุกสิ่งทุกอย่างที่นำมาวางไว้ข้างหน้า จึงเป็นอمانةที่ยิ่งใหญ่จากอัลลอฮ์แก่บิดามารดาทุกคน ท่านทั้งสองเป็นบุคคลสำคัญยิ่งในการพัฒนาปัจเจกบุคคลให้มีคุณภาพและมีศักยภาพตามที่อิสลามต้องการอีกด้วย

**คำสำคัญ :** ระบบการศึกษาอิสลาม แนวคิด ปรัชญาการศึกษา การศึกษาอิสลาม แหล่งที่มาของความรู้

### Introduction

The importance of Imam Al-Ghazali to Islamic educational theory has long been acknowledge, although the definitive monograph on the subject has still to be written. Imam Al-Ghazali, who himself remained associated for long with education of his time, has shown special interest in the basic principles of Islamic system of education, he has stressed on the proper development of the personality of child which can be achieved through the development of the various facts of his person. This paper deals with "Imam Al-Ghazali and his thoughts contributed to the Islamic Educational System"

### Short life of Imam Al-Ghazali

Imam Al-Ghazali was born in 450 A.H (1058 A.D) in the Taberan village in the district of Toos in Persia and his name Abu Hamid Muhammad . His title is Hujjatul Islam (proof of Islam) and his dynastic title is Ghazali. His father was a famous person and his grand father was one of leading men of that age. His father died when he was young, leaving him under the care of his mother and grand father. Imam Al-Ghazali is said to be the name of village in the district of Toos in the province of Khorasan in Persia. According to Maulana Shibli Normani, his ancestors had the business of weaving ( Ghazzal ) and therefore he retained his family title Ghazzali (Weaver) (Fazul Karim,1983:2-3).

#### a. His education

At the time of the death of Imam Al-Ghazali's father, he entrusted the education of his two sons Muhammad and Ahamad to one of his trusted friends, The latter imparted to them primary education and then sent them to private maktab, the boys within a short time committed the whole Qur'an to memory and after that began to learn Arabic.

They were then admitted in a free Madrasah. After sometime, Imam Al-Ghazali left his native village for higher education for Zarqan and began to study under a great lerned man Imam Abu Nasr Ismail. He used to take notes of his lectures but in a certain journey he was robbed of these notes by some dacoits along with his other belongings. He took courge, went to the thief of the robbers and begged of the notes only to be returned to him. It was returned to him at his earnest entreaties.

Then he joined Nizamia Madrasah at Nishapur which was a reputed seat of learning and a great educationist name I,amul Haramain was its principles. He had 400 students of whom three were

most noted- Harrasi, Ahmad bin Muhammad and Imam Al-Ghazali the latter became so much grieved at his death that he left Nishapur and went to Baghdad, the capital of the Caliphs. He was then a young man of 28 years of age.

At Baghdad, he was appointed at principal of Nizamia Madrasah by Nizamul-Mulk the chief vizier of the Turkish ruler Malek Shah. Being thus appointed at an early age to such a high post, his popularity as a great learned man spread far and wide and the rulers and the chieftains used to consult him in state affairs and theological matters (Fazul Karim, 1983:3-4).

### Al-Ghazali's philosophy of education

In the Ihya-al-ulum al-din, Al-Ghazali propounds his philosophy of education on the basis of his experiences. The true purpose of knowledge is to receive divine guidance and not merely to acquire information and gain material wealth. Real knowledge then means, " lifting of the veil from the eyes of the heart so as to see the mysterious relation between man and his Maker and to be filled with sense of awe and reverence in the presence of an omniscient Being, who pervades the universe (Al-Quraishi, 1983:102)

He has advocated that educational system of Islam derives from the Qur'an, the primary source of beneficial knowledge. It is a divinely revealed guidebook to recognize the reality. It is encouraging man to study and ponder everything around him. The traditions of the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as the practical explanation and application of this devine knowledge that demonstrates the prophet's practice in reinforcing certain behaviors and in deterring undesirable conduct.

According to Imam Al-Ghazali, it is the prime duty of Muslims to search reality through the knowledge in accordance with holy Qur'an . It is to make the human being aware of his Creator, Allah or establish man's relationship with Allah . When the individual has the awareness, he can establish a relationship with Allah . Allah stated in the Holy Qur'an 21:25.

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ﴾

(Al-Ambia'a, 21:25)

25. Not an apostle did we send before Thee without this inspiration sent by us to him: that there is no god but I; Therefore worship and serve Me.

This relationship that originates in the children is developed amongst children from the very beginning, it may prove a great asset from the Muslim community. Moreover, to teach the children to

accept and deal with reality as a normal part of this temporal life, the person will submit to his Creator realizes his own morality.

Moreover, he advocates that Revelation is essential to gain this knowledge and it is attained only if the heart (soul) is pure untarnished. So Al- Ghazali lays great stress on the development of the moral aspect of human nature, the foundation of which should be laid in childhood. He believes the child's mind is *tabula rasa*, or a clean state and as such good virtues and character can be cultivated amongst children from the very beginning. The innate capacity of man to believe in God (*fitrah*) and to worship Him is derived from the hadith which states, "every child is born in the state of *Fitrah*, but his parents make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian.

He considers human mind a simple state whom the teacher burishers. He divides Muslim theologians into four categories, prophets, Chaliphs, devine theologians, and general sermonizers (Mohd Sharif Khan, 1986:78-79)

Supervision over the child's activities should begin as soon as he shows signs of discrimination. The duties of parents and teachers is not merely to impart knowledge to the young children who are given to them as sacred trust but also to arouse their moral conciousness and to train them to the properties of social life. All educational activities must therefore, be directed towards the development of the individual character and at the same time also lead on to building a moral and virtous society. (Ruhana Samaeng, 1999)

Al-Ghazali also firmly believes in the utility of knowledge, that is, theoritical knowledge should not be divorced from practice. All good thoughts must be translated into action. Knowledge differs from person to person according to his capacity for it.

Basing his educational philosophy on ethics and the spiritual dimension, Al-Ghazali prescribes a code of behaviour and duties for student and teacher as follow :

#### Student

- Must not be proud of his knowledge and never should show off in the presence of his teacher.
- Must not be too proud to study under obscure teachers-before a teacher, a student should be like soft soil which takes in all the rain water which fall on it.
- Should learn each sciences at least to the extent of knowing its main purpose as all sciences are co-related and co-operative . No branches of learning should be taken up all at onec without having studied its anticedent sceinces.
- Should refrain from distractions and purify his self from low habits and evil qualities since knowledge is devine and it enters only pure hearts.

- Should dress in white and be simple in dressing-refrain wearing silk and other ornaments which symbolise wealth and power.

- Should engage in physical exercise to ensure physical and mental health and will enable one to devote oneself to God with zest and energy.

- Should be able to endure physical punishment as “ endurance is the characteristic of brave men and crying the prerogative of slaves and womenfolk”.

- Clever student (Murid) can be asked to teach weaker ones-advantage-they will not be restive in class and can be initiated into the art of teaching.

- Women’s education should be in accordance with needs of the society-to provide proper training of children and fulfil domestic responsibilities. However, higher education is not essential for women. (Fazul Karim, 1983:61-65).

#### Teacher:

- Teachers-student relation should be based on just and equal treatment of all students. Teacher should be kinder to students than their parents-be sympathetic and treat them as his own.

- Should follow the prophet and seek no remuneration for teaching students. The only reward a teacher should hope for is the pleasure of God.

- Should not hold from students any advice and at the same time be honest with them and

- should not give them the ijazahs before they are worthy of them.

- Should exhort them and rebuke them for miss conduct and their evil ways. But he should not be lengthy and open in his reprimand. Should be sympathetic and give suggestions.

- Should not revile or degrade other subjects before his students; instead he should teach his subject in such away that it may creat love for other subjects too.

- Should consider inteectual level of students before presenting a subject to them. Should guard against the teaching of a matter which is beyond the students’ comprehension. Should not require of them what they cannot grasp.

- Should relate lessons to interests of daily life and should move from known to unknown, and from easy things to difficult ones.

- Should prepare lesson in advance to have full command over the subject-matter and use teaching aids to make teaching more interesting and effective.

- Should teach lessons with active co-operation and participation of students.

- Should practice what he preaches, lest his deeds should be lie his words. Should be a role model as words devoid of action fall flat and bring ridicule to the teacher (Al-Ghozali, 1962:30-36).

### Devision of knowledge

Al-Ghazali devides knowledge into two parts. They are dogmatic and non dogmatic. By dogmatic knowledge it means that knowledge which has come to us through prophets. The wisdom, experience or auditions have no role in them. Mathematic, medicine and peotry are not dogmatic knowledge because the first one is related with wisdom, the second one with experiences and the third one with audition.

Even non dogmatic are divided into three parts. They are desirable knowledge, and lawful or permissible knowledge. The desirable knowledge includes those subjects which are related to worldly life such as medicine and arithmetic. The undesirable knowledge includes subjects like magic, sleight of hand etc "The lawful or permissable knowledge includes poetry if it is not immoral, history, etc.

The dogmatic knowledge is divided into two categories, they are desirable and undesirable. The desirable are also divided into basic, subsidiary, introductory and supplementary. The basic knowledge consist of holy Qur'an, prophet sunnah, consists of Muslim opinion and traditions of companions of the holy prophet. The subsidiary knowledge is obtained by understanding the above mentioned basic knowledge. They are not understood by their words but their explanations which are within comprehension. They expand the area of understanding. Some of them are related with worldly considerations and others are related with the betterment of the hereafter.

Al-Ghazali has also divided knowledge related to hereafter path into two categories. They are knowledge related to revelation and knowledge related to affairs. The revelation is the extream and the supream of all other knowledge, knowledge related to affairs tells the condition of heart. It is knowledge of conditions (Mohd Sharif Khan, 1986: 79-80).

### Aim and objectives of education

Al- Ghazali had determined the aims and objectives of education in accordance with Islamic way of life. According to him, the objective of education is to motivate and help children to attain piety (taqwa). This conciousness of God is what is call taqwa in the Qur'an and it is crucial to the individual's spiritual and moral development. It must be given first importance in all teaching of Islam. Indeed student will attain taqwa it depends in part on the state of readiness of the child's heart. Some children's hearts are more open than others',and taqwa cannot be forced on a child, it is learnt by reflection and experience.

According to him the objective of education for mantion, construction and completion of manners so that man can distinguish between good and bad and abstain from evil. On the other hand it will reform the society through education which was later on presented by other philosophers. Therefore it is necessary to cultivate faith in order to get the hidden qualities manifested so that the

human personality has a balance growth and the human being becomes a *moral being* and follow the prophetic norm (Mohd Sharif Khan, 1986: 81).

This means that sincere acceptance of faith affects the human heart and thereby allows the spirit in which lies embeded the basic qualities granted by Allah to influence and direct the intellect to engage actively toward the establishment, maintenance, and furtherance of the balanced order in individuals and societies. Primary emphasis of moral Is on the purification of the heart through faith as Allah mentioned in the Holy Qur'an

﴿ أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ ﴾  
(Al-Haj, 22:46) .

46. Do They not travel through the land, so that their hearts (and minds) may Thus learn wisdom and their ears may Thus learn to hear? truly it is not their eyes that are blind, but their hearts which are In their breasts.

#### Al-Ghazali's educational theory

Al-Ghazali holds parents responsible for looking after their children in a proper manner, as he considers a child like a mirror, ready to reflect anything put infront of him, as well as a sacred trust in the hands of parents. He is of opinion that through education a child can turn into a good citizen or criminal. He consider self respect, modesty and sincerity as his outstanding qualities (Syed Sajjad Rizavi, 1986:103-104)

It is very important and contineuos process for parents to present Allah to the children as positive, protective and loving, and not as threatening and frightening

The child who has developed the capacity for shame should never be neglected, rather this and his diserection should as aids in his education. Among the general rules for the training of a child, he includes that: (T.J. Winter, 1990:35-37)

1.The first trait to take control of him will be greed for food, he is to be desciplined in this regard, so that for instance, he picks up food only with his right hand, says in the name of Allah (God), when rising it , eat, from that which in nearest to him, and does not start eating before others. He should not stare at his food or at the other people present, neither should he bolt it, but should chew it properly instead, he should not eat one mouthful after another without pause, he should not get food on his hand or his clothes, and he should acquire the habit of sometimes eating nothing but bread so that he does not think that the presence of other kinds of food is inevitable.

2.He should be encourage to like white rather than coloured or silk garments, and made firmly to believe that these latter are proper to women and effeminate, and that (true) men disdain them.

3. For the child who is neglected in the early years of his growth will usually grow up the ill natured, dishonest, envious, obstinate, inclined to the theft, backbiting, from all of which things he can be protected through a sound upbringing.

4. He should be busy at school learning the Qur'an, the traditions, and tales of devout men, so that love for the righteous take root in his heart.

5. He should not be spoken to at length every time, for effectiveness such words have upon his heart.

6. He should not be permitted to sleep by day, for this conduces to laziness, and should always be allowed to sleep at night, but not on a soft bed, which would prevent his members from growing tough.

7. His body should not be allowed to grow fat, for this would make it hard for him to rough bedding, clothing and food.

8. He should be prevented from doing anything secretly, for he will conceal things only when he believes them to be ugly, and if he is left to continue these practices he will grow used to doing ugly things.

9. He should acquire the habit of walking, moving about and taking exercises for part of the day so that he is not governed by illness and should draught not to uncover his limbs or walk fast, and not to dangle his arms but to keep them close to his trunk.

10. He must be forbidden to his fellows about any of his parents possessions, whether these be money or property, or about anything he eats or wears, or about his tablet and pencease, and should become used to being modest, generous and middle in his speech to all with whom he associates.

11. He should be put in the habit of never speaking before anyone else, and of speaking only response to question and in proportion to them, and of listening properly whenever an older person is speaking, and rising (when he enters) and making a place for him and sitting facing him.

12. He should be forbidden to speak loosely, or to curse or insult anyone, or to mingle with these who do such things, for these habits will inevitably be acquired should he fall in with bad company, the preservation from which is the very root and foundation of the education of children.

13. If his teacher strikes him he should not erg out and sob, or seek anyone's intercession, but should rather bear his punishment, and be told that to do so is a mark of courage and manhood, while to cry is the practice of slaves and women.

14. After school, he should be allowed to play in a fashion which give him some rest after his hard work in class, but should not be allowed to grow exhausted. To overrebt a child from playing, and to fatigue him with constant lessons will cause his heart to die and harm his intelligence, and make life so hateful to him that he will east around some means of escape.



### Curriculum

Al-Ghazali on curriculum, like Ibn Sina, Al-Ghazali believes that education of a child should begin with the Qur'an for the first time in the history of Muslim education, he took steps to improve the curriculum which was in vogue in his age.

These steps are given below: (Syed Sajjad Rizavi, 1986:104)

1. Classification of subjects into religious and non-religious studies and treatment of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) as a worldly subject.
2. Exclusion of polemics from al kalam.
3. Further classification of subject as obligatory (*Fard'ain*) and optional (*Fard kifayah*).
4. Declaring certain subjects as approved (*mahmood*) and some others as disapproved (*madthmum*).
5. Making tafsir, hadith, fiqh and al-kalam, including logic, as compulsory subjects
6. Condemnation of the idea that rational subjects (*'ulumma'qulah*) are not compatible with the non rational subjects (*'ulm ma'qulah*).
7. Division of optional subjects into three types:
  - a. approved ( *Mahmud*)
  - b. disapproved ( *Madthmum*)
  - c. unobjectionable ( *Mubah*)

He treats medicine, arithmetic, economics, tailoring, weaving, agriculture, politics and hair dressing as good for society, history and poetry have been declared as unobjectionable subjects. He has suggested a golden principle that subjects should be taught in their order of utility and importance. In education is imparted to the children through co relating (Mohd Sharif Khan, 1986: 83).

For inclusion in the curriculum. Thus we can easily say that modern education is clearly reflected in his educational thoughts.

### Methods and Techniques of Teachings

If we go through procedures of teaching of Imam al-Ghazali we find that these very procedures have been suggested by modern western educational experts also. Some of them are discussed below:

Imam Al-Ghazali has suggested to the teachers that they should always prepare lesson in advance. A teacher can not do justice to the students without adequate preparation. When they go to the class, they should teach the lesson with active co-operation and participation of the students. The colleges of education of these days also emphasize these principles and procedure.

Imam Al-Ghazali also emphasize the importance of previous knowledge of students. He was of the opinion that if the lesson will be given keeping this thing into active consideration, the students

will be immensely benefited. The same principle and procedure of teaching is later on emphasized and advocated by Western educational thinkers. Herbert and Paertalozzi are main exponent of his point of view. He writes that it is also one of the duties of the teachers that they should teach easy things first and difficult thing later on. The Western educational thinkers presented it later on as one of the maxim of teaching aids to make the lesson more interesting and effective.

#### Al-Ghazali's definition and division of Akhlaq

Akhlaq is the plural of khulq which explained as "possession by the human soul of those distinct innate powers by operation of which its various influences emanate agreeably to volition these powers are three: 1.The reasoning power (*Ilm*) 2.The vindictive power (*Ghazab*) 3. The appetent power (*Shahwat*.)

When these three sorts of virtues have been realised, they become connected and blended together, and from the mixture of the three a condition results analogous to each but presenting them in their highest perfection and completeness. This is known as husni akhlaq, and the soul (person) having this perfect blending will be called *Husnul-Akhlaq* (Mansor Quraishi, 1983:106).

Al-Ghazali has followed Ibn Maskawaih in his definition and division of akhlaq. Ibn Maskawaih in his turn, base his philosophical system of ethics on material taken from Plato, Aristotle, Galen and Muslim religious law.

Food is the greatest attraction for a child and eating his most pleasant activity, therefore, his early educative training should begin here. He should not start eating without having said "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate and the Merciful". He should eat what is near him on the table. Let him learnt with an humble fare.

Children should be dress in white. It should be instilled into them that silk clothes donot be fit men. They tend to make them effeminate.

#### Women Education

In women's education Imam Al-Ghazali views are different from the view of modern educationists. He advocates for primary education for women which should be in accordance with the society. It will help women to provide proper training and education to children and to fulfill the domestic responsibilities with fairness. However, he does not consider higher education essential for women. Aristotle and Rousseau have also expressed the same views. The greatest achievement of Imam Al-Ghazali is the advocacy of home science education of women (Mohd Sharif Khan, 1986: 84).

In line with this view, the great Muhaddith Shaikh Shamsul Haqq al -Azimabadi wrote an article dealing with the question of teaching women to read and to write. He affirmed the permissibility of that and after

investigation of reported the Hadith, Muslim scholars came to the conclusion that it is sound and it can be taken as a basis for the permissibility of teaching women to read and write (Ad-Darsh, 1996:26).

For the future happiness and stability of the Muslim family, the question of selectivity is an essential question, which has to be dealt with from a practical, as well as a decency point of view. As Muslims we should not lose sight of the basic duty of a Muslim women. She is a mother first, and only then does her profession or whatever come into the picture. Her success will be measured by her success in bringing up stable, integral, happy and morally sound generations. An achievement in addition to that is a bonus. they can not claim a bonus when they haven't had their basic wage

### Physical and Health Education

Imam Al-Ghazali has also given great emphasis upon physical education of the children because health is required for mental health. He advocated for proper physical growth and development of children. He suggested all steps which might help physical growth of children. Thus it can be said that Imam Al-Ghazali was in agreement with saying "Sound mind in a sound body".

### Psychological views

Imam al-Ghazali occupies high position as a psychologist also. He is of the opinion that human temperament is instinctively not based upon evil. In his opinion evil or virtue are not natural or instinctive. The old theologians in their book on education have given place for the diseases of "self" There are chapters on it in celebrated books Akhlaq Jalali and Akhlaq Nasri.

#### a. Al Ghazali ' Views on the psychological Nature of Man

Al-Ghazali examines the psychological nature of man and discovers that all psychological phenomena originate in the soul or self. He regards the soul as different from the body in that the former is created and immortal, that is, it does not come to an end with the decay of the body. It is the spiritual entity which abides in his physical body and controls his organic and physical functions. The soul in this sense is more important than the body because the former is of divine origin, while the body is of baser matter.

Al-Ghazali explains that there are four terms used in relation to the soul viz, *Qalb* (heart), *Ruh* (spirit), *Nafs* (desire, needs), and *Aql* (intellect, reason). Each of this entity has two meanings, one material and the other spiritual. And each is essential to the knowledge of the ultimate reality. The spiritual meanings of these four terms refer to the same spiritual entity, but they denote different states of it. The soul is the essence of what is meant by "Man", it can be known through intellect and by observing the activities which originate in it (Ahmed Sherif, 1975:15).

It has to be noted that Al-Ghazali, in his discussion of the heart in relation to ethics and virtue has often variously referred to it as *Ruh*, *Qalb*, and *Aql*. Al-Ghazali expresses what traditional Muslim meant by the heart: “ When we speak of the heart, know that we mean the reality of man, which sometime is called *ruh* ( spirit ) and sometimes *nafs* (soul); we do not mean that piece of flesh which lies in the chest which can be seen by the ordinary eyes.... What ever could be seen by eyes, belongs to *shahada* (visible world). The reality of the heart is not of this world....the realization of God and the perception of His beauty is of the unseen world.” (al-Naqib al-Attas, 1979:28).

The soul has an inherent yearning for an ideal which it strives to realise. The soul has been endowed with quality that help it, on one hand, to provide for the bodily needs, and on the other, to qualify for the ideal. It fulfill the bodily needs through the *motor* and *sensory* powers. The *motor* power comprises *propensities* and *impulses*.

The two special types of propensities are:

Appetite—such as hunger, thirst, sexual craving, ect. Which urges the body to strive for and obtain what is good for it and

Anger—such as rage, indignation, revenge ect., which urge the body to avoid or repel what is harmful to it.

The impulse is the power of apprehension which perceives and takes cognizance of what is harmful and what is good for the body. Without it the propensities would not be able to function properly.

Apprehension includes the five outer senses, viz., sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch, with their special sense organs. The inner senses, viz., commonsense, imagination, reflection, recollection and memory have no special organs but are located in the regions of the brain. While the five outer senses equip man to act in the present situation, the five inner senses help it to learn from the past experiences and foresee future situations. All these powers control and regulate the body, and the *qalb* or soul controls and rules over them. The *Qalb* is the spiritual dimension of man that determines his behaviour. According to Huseni Abbas, Al Ghazali maintains that “perception, cognition, affection, emotion, motivation and consequently, behaviour, all depend on the spiritual state of the person” (Hafsah Abdullah, 1998).

#### b. Al Ghazali's View on the origin of Virtue

In Al Ghazali's view, virtue can be acquired in two ways: habituation, and learning. Habituation, that is learning how to act virtuously, implies a positive attitude of a person who seek to acquire virtue; learning depends on an authority outside the agent that teaches him how to act virtuously even if he is not whole heartedly seeking to attain such a state. Since the soul is of divine origin and virtue is natural to the soul, it should be easier to cultivate good habits. Man must practice

goods deeds so that they become habits for him. The newly acquired good habit must be strengthened by performing good deeds continuously.

### c. Al Ghazali's View on character and Virtues

Appetite, anger and apprehension are common to man and animals. But what distinguishes him from animals and enables him to actualise human virtues and attain spiritual perfection are two additional qualities. The soul of man possesses the theoretical faculty or *'ilm* (knowledge or intellect) and the practical faculty or *Irada* (will).

The practical faculty is the principle of movement of the human body which directs it to individual actions after deliberation on whether they are in accordance with the rules defined by the theoretical faculty. The practical faculty must govern all other subordinate faculties of the body to ensure bad character qualities or vices do not develop. The theoretical faculty, in contrast, has the function of perceiving the real nature of the intelligibles as they are abstracted from matter, place and position. Therefore, the practical faculty is the one which determines ethical matters for man.

For al Ghazali, both virtue and good character denote the state in which bodily faculties are subordinate to the practical faculty or the will of human soul. This is the normal state, deviation from which produce vice and bad character. Good character means training the three faculties, viz., the deliberative (reflective), concupiscent (desire), and irascible will produce courage. When the latter two are trained and have been subordinated to the first, the virtue of justice is achieved.

Al Ghazali calls the deliberative faculty "reason" or "intellect" (*aq'l*) and the other two faculties "passion" (*hawa*). Passion (which linked to the satanic forces) and reason are in continuous conflict with each other. To achieve virtue, one has to follow reason. But the problem is how to distinguish between the motive which belongs to passion and that which belongs to reason. Al Ghazali argues that man should undertake actions which are more painful, since such actions are usually dictated by reason and by divine guidance. He further advises that whenever man is in doubt about which of the two motives is dictating his intention, he should pray to God for guidance.

Al Ghazali rejects the view that character has an unchangeable natural quality on the ground that, if this were true, the teachings, advice and even mission of all prophets would be in vain. Another basis for his rejection is that it is observable that animals can be trained to be domestic.

Al Ghazali explains that the necessity of character training through the doctrine of the mean. For him, a healthy body is in a state of equilibrium while a sick body is in disequilibrium. Similarly, when the soul is sick this means that it has deviated from the state of equilibrium. Equilibrium is the middle way between the two opposite character traits, each of which is an extreme. Good character (virtue) therefore, lies in this state of middle way. This middle way, however depends on states and

circumstances, i.e., it is a relative mean. For example, if someone has the character of rashness, he can achieve the mean with respect to anger by training himself in the other extreme, i.e., cowardice.

Since deviation from the mean indicates that the soul is sick, Al Ghazali emphasises the need for a physician of the soul, who teaches men how to hit the mean. This “teaching” of virtue may come through parents or the spiritual leader who treats the soul of the novice. Furthermore, treatment of the soul continues constantly, curing when it is sick and when it is healthy, maintaining its condition. Furthermore, the term “sick soul” is a relative one according to one’s position in the scale of salvation. A morally good man may still have to be treated as sick if he intends to seek higher levels.

#### **Application of Al-Ghazali’s view in the educational arena**

Elements of Al-Ghazali’s views can be incorporated in the educational arena in the following manner:

A teacher (especially at the primary level) should capitalise on the fact that children are born in the true state of original purity, with believe in God, by teaching them good habits and moral values from very early stage. They are at an impressionable stage, so making an impact on them would be easy. She should also give them ample opportunities to put into practice the theoretical moral and spiritual values they have learnt in moral and religious classes because for these values to be internalised children have to see them “in action”. This can be done by putting the children in groups of mixed ability and of different cultures where they would get hands –on– practise at learning to adjust, to adapt, to be tolerant, to share, care, help, and establish social relationship. The teacher can play a significant role in the character building of students and starting young with solid grounding in good moral and spiritual values will go a long way in ensuring they grow up to be morally upright personalities.

Values are not only taught but are also caught. In fact, values and habit that children observe in adults (parents and teachers) have great impact in moulding their own habits and values. The teacher should remember she is the role model and that her every move, word and thought would be observed and even followed. A teacher has to put to practice what she preaches. She will not be able to reprimand a student for not observing punctuality if she herself enters class late all the time. Similarly, a teacher who is strict about deadlines for handing up work but she does not return marked work on time and does not prepare her lessons would not be setting good example for student to follow. Teacher who show biases or have favourite or pets, who indulge in name calling, who ridicule and belittle students for being slow, can do great damage to the self-esteem of student and at the same time can be unwittingly teaching the students to do likewise. Therefore, a teacher should not just stop at teaching values but has to demonstrate them in her own actions if she wants students to develop good character traits.

Ensuring an environment conducive for inculcation of good habits and moral values will produce student (and teacher too) who will be motivated to do only what is right and praiseworthy. Such students, when face with a situation where there is motive and counter motive, would know in which direction to turn for their reason will win over their passion. If the parents and teacher do not nurtured virtues in him while young, he would prove easy prey to devious and blameworthy acts.

Teacher should prepare her lesson to gain command of the subject matter and to give the best of her ability to the students. Moreover, when preparing lessons and teaching materials, she should bear in mind the level of the students to tailor her lesson according to their ability. She should vary her teaching strategies and have realistic and reasonable goals depending upon students ability. A teacher who tries to cut work by recycling the same lesson in every class she enters is being most irresponsible.

#### **Strenghts and weaknesses of Al-Ghazali's views**

It is amazing that though Al-Ghazali had propound his ideologies and theories almost a millennium ago, they are very much the same as what the modern, present day researchers and scholar are advocating. His acute insight into the Islamic educational system is remarkable.

#### **Strenghts**

Al-Ghazali intuitive understanding of the workings of the human mind, the psychology of human nature, the manner in which human character can be trained and moulded to produce spiritually and morally upright personalities have actually become the basis of research of present day researchers. Educational thinkers like John Dewey, Herbert and Pertalozzi are in agreement with many of Al-Ghazali's views.

Western, scular educationists who placed too much emphasis on cognitive development at the expanse of the spiritual development have realised the folly of concentraiting on only one dimension. They now appreciate the need for incoporating moral and religious teachings in school curriculum and educational philosophies in an attempt to combat the rising incidents of indiscipline and immoral activities.

Al-Ghazali saw the need for inclusion of vocational subjects such as weaving, agriculture, tailoring, hair-cutting and other domestic sciences in the curriculum in order to cater for those who were not so intellectually gifted and for the benefit of girls whose main concern would be the family and up-bringing of children. This far-sightedness is reflected in the curriculum of modern education.

Teacher in particular can derive great benefits from his pointers as to the normative aspect of teacher behaviour and also in understanding students behaviour and learning to cope with them.

### Weaknesses

Some of Al-Ghazali's views are rather archaic, outdated, unrealistic and impracticable, especially when applied to modern era.

Al-Ghazali was first amystic, a philosopher, a theologian and then only an educationist and sociologist. Thus he placed great emphasis on the spiritual and moral development of an individual compare to other dimensions such as cognitive, social and emotional development. He was of the view that concentrating on the spiritual growth would naturally lead on to the development of other dimensions of personality. However, for holistic development of a person, such an approach may not prove to be very effective.

The argument that teacher should follow the prophet's example and not accept any remuneration in this time would be quiet impossible. Not withstanding the fact that teaching is a noble profession, teacher still need some form of payment to live a reasonably comfortable life in this modern and progressive times. Accepting of wages should not be equated with less commitment or dedication. One has to be realistic, especially with changing times. Furthermore, if there were no remuneration, there is going to be an acute shortage of teachers.

As a mystic philosopher, Al Ghazali's emphasis on worldly renunciation and the austere and conservative outlook was an attempt to counteract the tendencies to vice, luxury and pride which was so common during his days. Thus his advice that students should be dressed in white, and should refrain from wearing fine clothes is not in keeping with times.

Similarly, his support for severe corporal punishment can be refuted. Infact Ibnu Khaldun, who came just about 200 years after Al-Ghazali was very much against imposing too many restrictions on children and excessively harsh punishment. He contends that excessive severity injured the moral and intellectual dignity of the students. Moreover, severity would make a student hate his teachers and parents and his studies and would resort to falsehood and deception to escape punishment.

Al-Ghazali's views regarding women's education is another antiquated notion that need to be discarded. His intentions were good, given the situation in his days. However, now, to deny higher education to women would be an infringement of their rights. On the other hand, there have been, of late, the view that many of the present day social ills such as divorces, broken homes, juvenile delinquency, ect. Could be curbed if women remain at home. But then again, the solution to this problem should not be through curtailing a women's intellectual growth. A more feasible compromise has to be sought.

### A teaching - learning situation

Elements of Al-Ghazali's views that a teacher can corporate in this particular lesson are:

- Teach according to students' mental capacity
- Give little (facts, information) at a time



- Use teaching aids to enhance teaching-learning process
- Go from simple to more complicated concepts
- Relat to every day life-stress the practical aspect of theoretical knowledge
- Knowledge gained can be applied to other subjrcs
- Raise awareness of one's responsibility/accountability
- Inculcate good habits
- Co-operative learning- as in doing group projects.

### Conclusion

Establishing an Islamic educational system in the modern world may seem idealistic, the impractical and unachievable longing of Muslim to revive the Islamic glory of the period between the seventh and thirteenth centuries.

The man made education system has led to many forms of social degeneration: misuse of human intellect and creativity to suit political and economic objectives. Therefore, it is clearly logical and desirable for Islamic educational system based on the Creator's revealed guidance which is the basis for the ultimate success of mankind.

The Islamic educational system only can prepares the agent to carry out successfully his obligations. Without this education, obedience to Allah commands and acting as a good agent of Allah is impossible. The balance growth of the total personality of man cannot be ensured by any system other than Islamic education system as well.

Thus it can be softly said that Imam Al-Ghazali was one of the greatest thinkers of Islam and he had given thinking to the educational philosophy and problems in his own days. His point of view and suggestions are very much similar to those which are presented by the western thinkers and educationists.

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