

Rereading Teaching Ethics in the Ghazali's *Mizan-alaml* in the Light of the Ragheb Isfahani's *Al-Dari'ah*

Hasan Ahmadizade¹, Somayye Masoodinia²

Submitted: 2021/9/30
Accepted: 2022/2/26

Keywords: Teaching ethics, Al-Dari'a, Mizan Al-Aml, Ragheb Isfahani, Ghazali

Abstract The subject of teaching ethics is one of the fundamental and important issues of ethical knowledge. How the teacher treats students has important implications for well-being and educational issues. Ragheb Isfahani, the author of *Al-Dari'ah al-Makarem al-Shari'ah*, is one of the Muslim thinkers who has paid attention to the moral duties of the teacher in the course of the educational and moral issues of this book. Although the general structure of Ragheb Isfahani's moral theory in this book has been influenced by Greek philosophers, its general content is religious and Qur'anic, in which philosophical and Qur'anic ethics are integrated. Since Ghazali's statements about teaching ethics in the *Mizan-alaml* are influenced by Ragheb Isfahani's expressions, it can be acknowledged that there are similarities between these two books. Ragheb Isfahani in *Al-Dari'ah* talks about five duties for the teacher, but Ghazali talks about eight duties. Compassion, indirect deterrence, being a factor in speech and behavior, setting an example for the Prophet (PBUH), and addressing the learners according to their level of understanding are among the most important tasks advocated by both Ragheb Isfahani and Ghazali, but Ghazali uses a number of these tasks to take on other implications and provide a broader explanation of teaching ethics.

DOI: 10.30470/phm.2022.540076.2082

Homepage: phm.znu.ac.ir

1. Associate Professor, University of Kashan, (Corresponding author), ahmadizade@kashanu.ac.ir.

2. PhD in Quran & Hadith, University of Kashan, smasoodinia@yahoo.com.

Introduction: One of the most important issues in the pedagogy and practical ethics in the Islamic tradition is the teaching ethics. That is because the teacher by his morality and different behaviors can influence his students in many different ways, that is to say by his good or bad ideas. This subject has been studied and surveyed by many old thinkers in the Islamic philosophy and theology. In the present article, we will try to focus on two famous Islamic moralists, Al-Ghazali and Ragheb Al-Esfahani. These two thinkers in their books highlight the teaching ethics or the ethics of teaching. So we will focus on the especial books in their writings: Ghazali's *Mizan-alaml* and the Ragheb Isfahani's *Al-Dari'ah*. This study aims at examining whether Ghazali in his book repeats the Ragheb's sayings or he has deployed different

new items on the teaching ethics.

Findings:

1. Teaching Ethics in the Isfahani's *Al-Dari'ah*

In the view of the Ragheb Al-esfahani, the first task of the teacher is that s/he should deal with students as their own children. So every teacher should honor his/her students and treat them by compassion and sympathy. According to the *Al-Dari'ah*, Ragheb, believes that the teacher should try to teach the knowledge to the students in a way that is beneficial for both this world and the afterlife world. Teacher in his teachings should deal with his or her students by dignity, grace and moderation and forbid them from bad or non-moral behaviors; he or she should deal with their students by gravity and deliberation not candidness and directness. Ragheb, in his book, regarding his ethical suggestions on the teaching ethics, underscores the

sayings or the traditions of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and emphasizes that the teacher should consider the practical method of the Prophet in his life especially in his confronting with the student in the classroom or every other place for teaching. Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), like many other religious Prophets, in teaching the knowledge of different religious subjects to his students and his followings, did not receive any money or any other fees. So, teachers should transfer their good knowledge to their student without receiving any payment; it is only for the God's consent. In the Ragheb's view, the teacher should forbid their new students from confronting with the deep and complicated issues. Teachers should present every issue to their students according to their understandings so that they are not confused in receiving and analyzing the

different new knowledge. Ragheb for this issue relies on the different sayings and traditions of the religious books. In his view, teacher should encourage the students that are highly interested in learning and understanding the new knowledge so that they can raise their level of learning and social behaviors. But the teacher must not present some knowledge to bad or evil students that have bad thoughts in their mind. According to the *Al-Dari'ah*, one of the teachers' tasks ethically is that they should do in practice the things that teach to their students. These teacher, in Ragheb's view, can be named *Vaez*, meaning the teacher whose sayings comply with his practices.

2. Teaching ethics in the Ghazali's *Mizan-al-aml*

Not unlike Ragheb, Ghazali in his different books highlights the ethics of teaching and the rules thereof. In his view, in the book *Mizan al-ama*, the first

thing that the teacher should have in mind, is that he or she should deal with their students as their own children. So, every teacher should honor their students and behave them by compassion and sympathy. This was also emphasized by Ragheb in *Al-Dari'ah*. Also, in Ghazali's view, teachers should forbid their students from taking bad and devious ways in their life, and the teacher should point to this problem not directly but covertly and by sincerity. The reason behind forbidding student from bad way directly is that it causes the student to repeat his/her bad behaviors and refuse to correct his/her behaviors. In addition, according to the Islamic traditions, teachers should deal with the students like Prophet, because Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) did not receive any payment or fee for his moral and religious teachings. This was because the Prophet (PBUH) was not

dependent upon the world wealth and money and did not consider himself higher than other people in the society. In Ghazali's view, as Ragheb's, teacher should encourage the students that are highly interested in learning and understanding the new knowledge so that they can raise their level of learning and social behaviors. Ghazali sees the teacher as the medium for grace between people and God, so teacher should act like an ethical or moral sample. Ghazali also presents many other ethical tasks for the teachers that are very similar to the tasks that Ragheb presents in his book.

Discussion and Conclusion:

Both Ragheb Al-isfahani and Ghazali in their books highlight the similar points for teaching ethics, but they differ in a few subjects. Ghazali has critical view on the Ragheb's points in this issue and tries to combine this subject with the mystical ethics in the Islamic tradition.

In addition, both of them have considered Quran and Prophet's sayings in the ethical subjects especially in the teaching ethics, but Ghazali present this issue more in the philosophical and mystical tradition so that we can say that Ghazali's view in this issue is more in the context of ethical religious philosophy and theology.

References:

- Ragheb Esfahani (1993), *Al-Dari'ah Ela Makarem Al-Shia*, Qom, Al-Sharif Al-Mortaza.
- Ghazali, Mohammad (1996), *Al-Monghez Men Al-Zalal*, Beirut, Dar-Al-Fekr.
- _____ (2005), *Kimiaye Saadat*, Tehran, Elmi va Farhangi.
- _____ (2008), *Ehyao Olum Al-din*, Tehran, Elmi va Farhangi.
- _____ (n.d), *Mizan Al-Amal*, Cairo, Dar Al-Maaref.