

An Investigation on Ethical and Educational Theories on Family and its Pillars in Kimiyaye Saadat

Habib Saadat Bonab*¹ and Arash Moshfeqi²

¹ MA candidate Persian Language and Literature, Islamic Azad University Of Bonab, Iran

² Ph.D, faculty member, Islamic Azad University, Of Bonab, Iran

*Corresponding author's e-mail: sadatbonab@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: Educational literature encompasses a vast area. Any art piece having relation with education can be classified to be in this type of literature. Al-Ghazālī is one of the most well-known Iranian theorists in educational issues, whose theories on modern educational planning deserve to be considered. Kimiyaye Saadat or The Alchemy of Happiness is one of his valuable books which is unique in its subject, fluency of composition and eloquence. The major goal of the book has been mentioned as “the refinement of self, purification of heart, and depletion of spirit”, in which Al-Ghazālī tries to analyze ethical and educational issues and life styles in a delicate way. However due to the passage of time, some of his theories in some issues are not acceptable. His theory on women is an example in which he considers them as slaves having responsibility of serving men. He introduces an Iranian Muslim, patriarch, patrilineal, monogamy and exogamy family throughout his book. Once the definition of family is provided, then al-Ghazālī's views with regard to family and such issues as marriage, marriage customs, marriage conditions, advantages and disadvantages of marriage are discusses.

Key words: Educational Literature, Family, Al-Ghazālī, Kimiyaye Sa'adat (the Alchemy of Happiness)

INTRODUCTION

The writer of Kimiyaye Sa'adat (The Alchemy of Happiness), Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, has written this book about the principles of Islam during the late Fifth century of the Islamic calendar in Persian language. What seems wonderful is the fact that this comprehensive and 900-years old book looks lovely, sweet, and beautiful even today. The Alchemy of Happiness is an abstract from the more comprehensive book titles “The Revival of Religious Knowledge” with some additions and deletions which has been written with the same order in Ghazali's mother tongue. The book has an introduction comprising four parts: self-scrutiny, theology, knowledge of the world, knowledge of the hereafter (eschatology). The content of the books, like “The Revival of Religious Knowledge”, has been divided into four parts: Ebādāt (religious duties), Monjīāt (salvation), Mu'amalat (human relations aspect of Islam) and Mohlekāt (damnation).

With regard to the literary values of the book it is mentioned that “Ghazali's Persian prose is quite fluent, mature, impressive, and simple and we can state for sure that Ghazali wrote Persian in a correct way and not translating from Arabic” [1].

Mohammad-Taqi Bahar has mentioned a new and interesting point about Ghazali and his brother's writing style “Ghazali and his brother, Ahmad, are among those who have made a revolution in Persian prose and because of strong mentality and thought, have entered new words and expressions and revolutionized the foundations of older types of prose in an easy and accessible way for the common people” [2].

In the same book, Bahar states that “in giving examples to simplify the matters for readers, he has used a lot of redundancies and in this way, the book is more like literary work rather than scientific ones” [2].

It is clear that the customs and traditions of the people, and their culture and civilization have been intertwined with their family system. Human beings who create various cultures in the context of society by their behavior, discourse, thoughts, mentality, and the arts are members of their own family and their behavior and actions are influenced to a great extent by their family. So, the investigation of this phenomenon in various time periods can be quite beneficial in fields of sociology and anthropology because of the valuable information that it provides. Rouholamini in his book entitled “anthropology principles”, states that books written during the 3rd up to 8th Islamic centuries are the most important references for the anthropological studies of Iranian people and believes that Iranian anthropology can only be comprehensive if these precious resources be consulted [3].

In this respect, the Alchemy of Happiness, a nice example of Persian simple prose, is a pioneer in an expressive style which is culminated in the works of Attār and Rumi. The subject of discussion in the current study can be quite vast and all aspects of that cannot be included in this short article. So, it has been tried to be brief. Also,

the status of family in the Alchemy of Happiness has been investigated and concluded within the area that has been mentioned in the current study.

1. Family and its different types: Family is the most important social institute that leaves a huge effect on the destiny of individuals as well as society. Davis defines family as "a group consisting of people who have mutual relationships with each other through matrimony having established a familial relationship or certain dependencies between each other". In this definition, social bond is not considered as the main element in the formation of family [4]. Kazemi pour discusses that in demographics, family is a specific group of people which has consisted of two people at least and is based on [5].

Experts have provided various classifications of family. In the present study, it is tried to refer to the most general ones having more adaptability with Naseri ethics. In this respect, family system has two types: nuclear family and extended family [6].

1.1. Nuclear family: In a book entitled "an introduction of family sociology" it's read that "a nuclear family consists of a man and a woman and probably a child or children. This type of family usually lives apart from parents or other relatives and the major decisions in this family are being made by discussion and exchange of views between members" [4]. As it comes in the book entitled "family changes", nuclear family is considered as a common phenomenon around the world and has always been in this way. Some of the features of such a family are: a separate house for the couple, monogamy, and emotional relationships between mother and father and children" [6].

1.2. Extended family: Within this type of family, several generations of people live together [4]. Decision-making is done by the elderly and others have to obey them [7].

In addition to the above classification, nowadays family is being divided based on some other criteria. As per the matrimonial relations, families can be divided into monogamist or polygamist, matrilineal or patrilineal, matriarch or patriarch, living with father or mother or in a new place, endogamy or exogamy [6].

2. The establishment of a family

2.1. Marriage: Marriage is a divine vow and a legal and emotional relationship that is created by the wedding between a man and a woman and gives them the right to live together. Marriage is used specifically to the wedding of a man and a woman and matrimonial relationships [8].

Marriage is a type of relationship which Malinowski considers it as contract to reproduction of children and taking care of them. The Holy Quran considers the provision of friendship, mercy, and peace as the result of a marriage which is done through the natural ways. Here, the fitness of sexual organs of males and females to each other is the central idea. Islam considers a legal and canonical family as the one in which a woman has marital relationships with only one man at a time.

A family is established by the marriage of the couple. In the second chapter of the Alchemy of Happiness, the issues related to the customs of marriage and based on them, one can understand Ghazali's views regarding the customs of marriage, advantages and disadvantages of marriage, the modality of marriage and its customs, the etiquettes of living with one's wife from the beginning of the marriage up to the end, the rights of a husband over his wife, etc.

2.2. Conditions of marriage: Ghazali in the second part of the second pillar has talked about the quality and customs of wedding and has mentioned five conditions for it:

One, there must be a guardian and marriage is not valid without a guardian and for those without guardian, the king is the guardian.

Two, woman's willingness unless she is a virgin. If there is a father or a grandfather there is not any need for the woman's willingness and if a man is presented and the woman keeps silence, it would be enough.

Three, two righteous witnesses must be presented and it is better to gather a group of righteous people instead of just two. Then, if there are two witnesses and man and woman consider them as righteous, the wedding is valid.

Four, uttering sentences that make the marriage valid and legal. A man or his father or their representative must say these sentences in Arabic or Persian. It is customary for the guardian to say, "In the name of God, hereby I sentence you man and wife by certain amount of dowry" and then the husband says, "In the name of God, hereby I accept this wedding by certain amount of dowry". It is preferable for the man to have a look at the woman before wedding in order to have a deeper affection.

Five, a woman must have characteristics that are permissible for marriage [9].

2.3. The customs of marriage: Ghazali proposes that marriage is considered as one of the major rites of religion. Ghazali sees reproduction and keeping human beings' generations as one of the wants of them and considers it possible only through marriage. Then, marriage is to create existence and making it permissible in not for lust since lust has been created by God attract people to marriage and make the number of humans more and the more the number of people, the more the worshipers of God and followers of Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) would be. And it's because of this reason that Prophet Mohammed said, "marry to be more in number, and in the Domsday it, even the aborted ones will make me proud beside followers of other prophets".

Then the job of a person who gives birth to a human being to be the servant of God is valuable and praiseworthy. It is because of this fact that a father has a great status and also teachers have great status since fathers because the existence and teachers cause knowing the way. So, some say that marriage is more valuable than staying awake at nights and worshipping God [9].

Ghazali argues in the importance of marriage, "After it was known that marriage is one of the ways in the religion, knowing and explaining its customs are important. There are three chapters in explaining the customs of marriage. The first one is about the advantages and disadvantages of marriage. The second chapter about customs of wedding. Finally, the third chapter talks about the customs of life and life after wedding [9].

2.4. The advantages of marriage

Ghazali mentions in the *Alchemy of Happiness*, "know that marriage is supreme because of its advantages and there are five advantages related to marriage."

The first advantage is related to having children and it has four rewards:

The first reward is because of doing something which God desires and that's human beings' existence and the survival of human generation.

The second reward is because of doing something which Prophet Mohammed desires and that is increasing the number of his followers making him proud.

The third reward relates to the children's pray. It has been mentioned that "of good deeds that has continuous reward is prays by righteous children which continues after the death of parents. The fourth reward relates to when a child dies before his or her father and because of the sufferings that the father is undergone, pleads for him in the Day of Judgment. The second advantage of marriage is to protect the religion and to remove lust, which is the instrument of devil, from oneself. And because of that Prophet Mohammed says that, "Whoever marries guarantees half of his/her religion and whoever does not often is unable to protect himself from lust".

The third advantage is the fondness of being with wives and the comfort that results from being with them and such a comfort causes a new strength for payers since continuous prayers causes boredom and such a comfort refreshes the body and soul.

The fourth advantage in marriage is that women take care of the chores in houses and do cooking and washing and cleaning and if en get involved in doing such chores they are prevented from pursuing knowledge and worship and because of this wives are assistants in the path of religion.

The fifth advantage is that to tolerate the behavior of women, providing for their needs, and keeping them on the right path is not possible unless by putting a lot of effort and this effort equals the highest degrees of worship.

Ghazali considers the alimony paid to wives as more valuable than alms and says, "Providing for the needs of wives and children from lawful sources is something that true worshipers do".

2.5. The disadvantages of marriage

The author of the *Alchemy of Happiness* refers to some of the disadvantages of marriage. Ghazali attributes three disadvantages to marriage:

The first disadvantage is when a man is unable to provide for his family through lawful resources and enters unlawful activities. Such a thing damages one's religion and his family, and himself.

The second disadvantage is that a man should behave nicely with his wife and bear the difficulties and suffer the problems and try to give counsel and reform the acts. Not everyone can do these and they might annoy their wives or give harm to them. The third advantage is that men get involved with their wives and are deprived of praying to their God and providing for the doomsday. And what prevents you from praying to God causes your perish and because of this God almighty says, "O ye who believe! Let not your wealth nor your children distract you from remembrance of God".

3.1. The characteristics of good wives in the Alchemy of Happiness

What are the characteristics of a good wife in Ghazali's view who considers them as "assistants in times of freedom"? He mentions such characteristics as piety, having a good temper, beauty, adherence to religious faith, having a small dowry, fertility, virginity, having respectable relatives, and being a close relative among the ones that are good characteristics for women in marriage [9].

The first of these is piety. If a woman betrays in the property, the man's patriarchy is damages and if she betrays in her body, the man might be silent or not. If he is silent, it is because he is not zealous and he has defects in his religion but if he is not silent, there would be no happy moments in his life.

The second characteristic is having a good temper. A bad-tempered woman is always ungrateful and a shrew and cannot be disciplined. Life is bitter with such a woman and causes effects in one's religion.

The third one is beauty which causes affection. It is a tradition to see the bride before marriage as Prophet Mohammed said, "there is something in the eyes of Ansar (supporter) women which hearts hate that and anyone who wants to marry them must see them before". Also, it has been said that "marriage without previous meeting leads to sadness and regret".

The fourth characteristic is having a small dowry because Prophet Mohammed said, "the best women are those who have a small dory and a beautiful countenance". Having a heavy dowry is detestable in Islam. Prophet Mohammed wed some couples by very small dowries and did not allow his own children to have heavy dowries.

The fifth characteristic is related to fertility. Prophet Mohammed said, "A mat at home is better than a barren woman".

The sixth characteristic is virginity which leads to more affection. The woman who has been with another man may not get as close and affectionate as a virgin.

The seventh characteristic is to have respectable relatives which cause the protection of religion and happiness. Those who do not have a good origin are not well-behaved and civil and behaviors are transferred into children.

The eighth characteristic is not being a close relative since it has been said that the children of this marriage are weak and maybe it is because of it that sexual desires are weak towards relatives [9].

Ghazali suggests to the parents to restraint from marrying their daughters to abusing men and those who cannot provide alimony to their wives and also those who are lecherous. A guardian who allows his daughter to marry must take into account her benefits and choose a man who is qualified and restraint from marrying her to an abusing man or one who is unable to pay her alimony or a man who is lecherous. Prophet Mohammed said, "Those who marry their daughters to lecherous people become sterile" and also, "marriage is a type of service and be careful to whom you give your children as servants" [9].

3.2. The customs of living with one's wife from the beginning of marriage to the end

Ghazali mentions twelve customs related to living with women: delicious food, having a good behavior, being humorous, joyfulness (but must be moderate in playing and joyfulness so as not to lose his grandeur), being moderate in jealousy, paying alimony in sufficient amounts (not to be miserly and also not to waste), teach them religious matters, in cases of having two wives treat them equally, in cases that a wife is insubordinate try to invite her kindly to obedience, talking with them, having children, try as much as possible not to divorce her [9].

Ghazali says, "now that it become evident that marriage is one the pillars of the religion, the customs and traditions of the religion must be taken into account in doing that. If not, there is no difference between human beings' marriage and animals' mating. So, twelve customs and traditions must be observed: the first custom is inviting people to a ceremony and feeding them. Prophet Mohammed suggested to one of his companions who had married to "invite people and feed them however that you have only a sheep and if you do not have even a sheep, feed them by anything you have".

The second custom is behaving well with women. Good behavior does not mean not annoying them but to tolerate them and be silent in times of their ungratefulness. It is said that, "women have been created with weaknesses and the cure for these weaknesses is silence and immuring them at home".

The third custom is to have fun with them and not to be stern with them and treat them like themselves. There is no one like Prophet Mohammed in treating women like themselves to an extent that he raced with Aisha bint Abi Bakr and he won. Then, they raced another route and she won and he said, "Now we are equal".

The fourth custom is not making fun to the extent that a man's grandeur is lost and do not help them in unlawful matters. And if a man observes something that is contrary to reason or Sharia, he must treat that carefully since if he does not do anything, he is being influenced by them. It has been said that, "men must always be the leaders in a family". Prophet Mohammed said, "Those who are ruled by their wives are unfortunate". Women must be led by their husbands and it has been said that, "Men must consult with their wives and do the opposite of what they say". And it is a truth that women are like the desires, if you give up the control of them, they are being hard to control and provide for.

The fifth custom is keeping one's jealousy in a moderate degree and remove her wife from anything that may lead to problems and do not let her be outside or at the door or on the roof. And do not let others see her or let her see others since all problems originate from the eyes and that is not caused at home but outside. A man should not underestimate these matters and also should not be suspicious and go to the extreme in jealousy and the inspection of the inside of matters.

The sixth custom is paying a moderate amount of alimony and not be miser or wasteful in this respect and to know that the value of paying alimony is higher than that of alms. Prophet Mohammed said that, "money that a man pays in a war, and money that a man frees a slave with that, and money that is paid to the poor, and money that is paid to one's own wife- and the latter is the most valuable of all.

The seventh custom is teaching them religious matters in anything that is related to them like prayers, cleanliness, menstruation, etc. and if he does not teach her them, she has to go out and ask. And if a man does that, she should not go out and ask since if she does that, it makes the man angry. God almighty says, "Keep your family and yourself away from the hell's fire".

The Eighth custom is if a man has two wives, treat them equally since it has been said that, "If a man is oriented more to one of his wives, he will have a half-curved body in the Day of Judgment". And treat them equal with regard to being with them at nights. However, it is not necessary in friendship since it is a thing that cannot be achieved.

The ninth custom is to kindly invite her to obedience in times that one's wife is not obeying her husband. If she does not obey him, sleep away from her and turn his back on her. If she continues that, do that for three days.

The tenth custom is in talking. A man should pay attention to his wife and be playful with her. Prophet Mohammed said. "A man should not treat his wife like animals and there must be a messenger in times of talking", when asked what is the messenger? He answered, "Kissing".

The eleventh custom is in children's birth. A man should whisper prayers' call in the right and left ears of his children. It has been mentioned that anyone who does that, saves his children from many diseases. Also, it has been suggested to choose them good names and it has been said that the most favorable names before God Almighty is Abdullah, Abdulrahman, and names like that.

The twelfth custom is avoiding divorce as much as possible since divorce inadmissible before God. It has been suggested not to annoy anybody unless in times of necessity [9].

3.3. The rights of a husband over his wife

What went above were the rights that a woman has over his husband. However, the rights of a husband over his wife are much greater since a woman is the servant of his husband, indeed. It has been said that if human beings were allowed to bow before anyone other than God, it was for women to bow before men. The rights of a man over his wife include staying at home and not leaving it without his permission, and not go outside and climb to the roof of the house, and do not mix so much with the neighbors, and do not get close to them unless in times of urgency, and do not talk about her husband except about his best qualities, and do not talk publicly about their problems, and be eager in anything related to his success and happiness, and do not betray in his properties, and seek his success in anything, and to keep compassion, and whenever a friend of his husband knocks on the door answer in a way not to be identified, and to cover herself among the acquaintances of her husband, and to have contentment in what his husband has and do not be an excessive one, and to prioritize her husband over other relatives, and always keep herself clean and tidy to attract his husband to start a conversation and communication, and to do any kind of service that she is capable of, and do not be proud towards her husband about her beauty, and be grateful to his kindness and do not say, "What have I seen of you?", and without any reason do not impeach him and get angry at him and seek divorce since prophet Mohammed has said, "In the Hell, I observed so many women. I asked why that is the case? An answer came that they have taunted their husbands so much and have been ungrateful towards them" [9].

4. The type of family in the Alchemy of Happiness

Based on what went before it can be concluded that the type of family that Ghazali describes first of all in a Persian and Islamic family and is like a nuclear family rather than an extended one since in an extended family several generations live together and the decision-making is being done by the elderly. However, these characteristics are not observed in the Alchemy of Happiness and the old people do not have a considerable right to rule in this book. With regard to power, the family illustrated in this book is based on patriarchy. Because of this the rights of a father are great and the rights of a teacher are great, too. That is because the father is the cause of existence and the master is the cause for finding the way [9].

In the Alchemy of Happiness, discussions about the role and status of mothers and how to behave with them has been illustrated more specifically rather than other roles of women. With respect to lineage, this family is a patrilineal since matrilineal families have been common in earlier times and it has not been the case in the time that Ghazali lived. With respect to location, it is a Neolocal one – the couple lives in an independent house. Ghazali has included such sentences as "The fourth benefit is for women to keep the house tidy and orderly" [9] and also "The fourth characteristic is not to be barren since prophet Mohammed said, a mat in the corner of the house is better than a barren woman" in order to emphasize that [9].

With respect to the choice of the partner, it is exogamous. Finally, it yields towards a monogamous family rather than a polygamous one. However, in some parts of the book some mentions have been made to the phenomenon of bigamy. In the eighth custom of living with women, Ghazali mentions that, "If he has two wives, treat them equally since it has been said that anyone who yields more towards one of his spouses would have a half-curved body in the Day of Judgment" [9]. Ghazali's emphasis on marrying people other than one's own relatives reveals that he has in mind the happiness of the couple together with other aims that are being met through this type of marriage. The writer of the Alchemy of Happiness thinks of the conversion of strangers into relatives and the increase in the number of relatives. In this way, the children are more powerful and in times of difficulty can seek help not only from their kins but also from their in-laws. Ghazali says that, "The marriage between relatives causes weak children and weak sexual attraction among the spouses" [9]. The authors of the book "General Anthropology" believe that within societies that a family is very powerful controls the members, getting financial and political privileges is considered in a great extent [7].

DISCUSSION

Family is established by the marriage between a woman and a man. Ghazali in his book, the Alchemy of Happiness, considers marriage as one of the customs of the religion. He believes that the religions seek the maintenance of generations and this is not possible without marriage. Ghazali considers marriage as the cause of the origin of existence. In his view, girls who are uneducated, uncultivated, incompetent, and ignorant should be married as soon as possible. He thinks that a woman is like a servant for her wife and her merits or faults are evaluated by considering her absolute obedience towards her husband's orders.

The writer of the book, "The Alchemy of Happiness" mentions some characteristics for women that should be considered in time of marriage. They are being a religious person and having faith in God, piety, good behavior, beauty, light dowry, fertility, virginity, having a respectable family, and being a close relative. He suggests parents not to wed their daughters to men who are ill-tempered and ugly, those who are not able to pay alimony, and those who are lecherous. Ghazali has mentioned some customs for living with a woman such as feeding other people in a ceremony, having a good behavior, being humorous, jealousy, paying a moderate amount of alimony, education, inviting one's wife to obedience in a kind way, and not refusal to divorce. Ghazali views children as trusts kept by parents and has described their innocent heart as a valuable and shapeable gems. He points to the faults and shortcomings of women's opinions and warns men to choose exactly the opposite of what their wives say. In Ghazali's view, men should consult with women and do the opposite of what they mention. In the Alchemy of Happiness, there is no mention of understating, cooperation, or consulting and it is meaningless to follow his wife's ideas and opinions in any way, however they might be more accurate and logical. Ghazali regards religiosity (no other factors such as name or properties or beauty) as the only criterion for the selection of a woman as one's wife.

REFERENCES

1. Homayi, J. 1939. Ghazali Nameh. Tehran: Homa .
2. Bahar, M. T. 1980. Stylistics. Tehran: Amir Kabir .
3. Roh-al Amin, M. 1993. Principles of Anthropology. Tehran: Attar .
4. Sarokhani, B. 1991. An Introduction to the Sociology of the Family. Tehran: Soroush .
5. Kazemi pour, SH. 2005. Basic Demographics. Tehran: Center for Population Studies and Research for Asia and Pacific .
6. Behnam, J. 2004. Developments Families. Tehran mahi .
7. Askari Khanqah, A. Kamali & Mohammad S. 2001. General Anthropology. Tehran: samt .
8. Jafari Langroodi, M. J. 1998. Right Terminology. Tehran: Ganjrh Danesh .
9. Al-Ghazālī, M. 2001. Kimiyaye SA'adat (the Alchemy of Happiness). Tehran: Cultural and Scientific Publishing Company .
10. Asadi, M. 2011. Families Qaboos Nameh. Tehran: Magazine Garden Literature .
11. Ezazi, Sh. 2002. Sociology with an Emphasis on the Role of Family Structure and Family Functioning in Contemporary. Tehran: intellectuals and women's studies .
12. Piaget, J. and Aynhldr, B. 2007. Child Psychology. Tehran: Ney .
13. Khadiv Jam, H. 2001. Kimiyaye Saadat (Muhammad al-Ghazālī). Tehran: Cultural and Scientific Publishing Company .
14. Sgaln, M. 1981. Historical Sociology. Translated by H. Elias, Tehran: Markaz .
15. Saif, S. and Alderman, P. et al. 2004. Developmental psychology. Tehran: samt .
16. Sadr, F. 2002. Journal of Qur'anic Studies, Tehran: Quranic Sciences Press .
17. Safa, Z. 1990. Literary History of Persia. Tehran: Ferdowsi .
18. Malinowski, B. 2000. Scientific and Cultural Theory. Tehran: Gam Noo .
19. Goodmi, W. 1973. Family and Community Nasehi translation. Tehran: Vida Translation and Publication Board .
20. Najati, H. 1995. Educational Role of Fathers in Families. Tehran: Zharf.