

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC  
THOUGHT AND CIVILIZATION (ISTAC)

ETHICAL DIMENSION OF CHILD EDUCATION  
OF ABŪ HĀMĪD AL GHAZĀLĪ:  
AN EARLY EXAMPLE OF ISLAMIZATION  
OF CONTEMPORARY KNOWLEDGE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE INTERNATIONAL  
INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND  
CIVILIZATION (ISTAC)  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE M.A. DEGREE

ASMAA' MOHD. ARSHAD

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA  
RAMADAN 1421/DECEMBER 2000



**APPROVAL PAGE**

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master (M.A.) in Islamic Civilization

---

**Prof. Dr. Wan Mohd. Nor Wan Daud**  
Supervisor and Deputy Director

This thesis was submitted to ISTAC and is accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master (M.A.) in Islamic Civilization

---

**Prof. Dr. Syed Muhammad Naqib al-Attas**  
Founder-Director



الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية ماليزيا  
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA  
وَدِينُ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND CIVILIZATION  
(ISTAC)**

**ETHICAL DIMENSION OF CHILD EDUCATION  
OF ABŪ ḤĀMĪD AL-GHAZĀLĪ:  
AN EARLY EXAMPLE OF ISLAMIZATION  
OF CONTEMPORARY KNOWLEDGE**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE  
OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND CIVILIZATION (ISTAC)  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE M.A.DEGREE**

**ASMAA' MOHD. ARSHAD**

**KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA  
RAMADĀN 1421/ DECEMBER 2000**

*Dedicated to:*

*My Dear Husband, Mohd. Zuhairi Abd. Majid  
and My Children: Hana, Firdaus and Najwa.*

**“Did ye think that ye would enter heaven without Allah testing those of  
ye who fought hard (in His cause) and remained patient?”**

**(Sūrat Al-‘Imrān:142)**

**“Indeed, with every difficulty there is relief”**

**(Sūrat al-Inshirāh: 6)**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	vii
ABSTRACT	ix
INTRODUCTION:	1
1. Child Education in Islam: An Overview	1
2. The Need For Islamization	5
CHAPTER ONE: The Key Terms of al-Ghazālī in Child Education	13
1. <i>Ta'dīb</i> (Education)	20
2. <i>Riyāḍah</i> (Self-Discipline)	26
3. <i>Ta'lim</i> (Instruction)	30
4. <i>Tarbiyah</i> (Good Breeding)	34
5. <i>Tahdhīb</i> (Refinement)	36
CHAPTER TWO: Sources of al-Ghazālī in Child Education	41
1. Al-Qur'ān and <i>Ḥadīth</i>	51
2. <i>Ṣūfī</i> Literature	54
3. Philosophical Literature	58
CHAPTER THREE: Al-Ghazālī On The Practical Aspects of Child Education	66
1. Some Aspects of Child Development	66
A. Birth Until The Age of Discernment ( <i>Tamyīz</i> )	66

B. The Age of Discretion ( <i>Tamyiz</i> ) Until Puberty ( <i>Baligh</i> )	68
2. Character Formation: The Focus of Child Education	69
3. Influential Factors On Child Education	73
A. Heredity ( <i>Al-Nasab</i> )	73
B. Socialization ( <i>Al-Mukhâlaqah</i> )	74
C. Habituation ( <i>Al-I'tiyâd</i> )	76
D. Learning ( <i>Al-Ta'allum</i> )	81
CONCLUSION	85
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	97

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Al-hamd li'Allah...*

"...Praise be to Allah, Who hath guided us to this (path); never could we have found guidance, had it not been for the guidance of Allah...."  
(*Sūrat al-A'raf: 43*)

Every praise is due to Him Alone of Whose Knowledge we have none, save what He has taught us. In truth it is He Who is perfect in knowledge and wisdom, through which this dissertation has finally attained its present form. Peace and blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), upon his Family and all his Companions.

First and foremost, I wish to record my sincere appreciation and acknowledgment to Professor Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, the Founder-Director of ISTAC, whose intellectual vision has inspired me in the pursuit of knowledge at this institution. The subject of my thesis is directly influenced by his discussions of Islamization and his great respect to the contributions of Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī which have been largely neglected by modern Muslim scholars. I am indeed privileged to have the opportunity of benefiting from his thoughts through the supervision of his Deputy Director, Professor Wan Mohd. Nor Wan Daud who willingly spent his precious time and never failed to enrich my understanding, in spite of his enormous responsibility at ISTAC. I certainly owe a debt of gratitude for his dedication and genuine counsel throughout the completion of this work. Without his words of guidance, this dissertation would have lost much of its worth.

My special acknowledgment also goes to all the professors and academic staff who help nourished my quest for knowledge; and to all the library and administrative staff, particularly to the Registrar, Haji Mat Ali Mat Daud, for all the academic facilities and financial assistance provided. I wish also to extend my appreciation to all my

colleagues and friends for their meaningful support and assistance, each in their own way. In this respect, a special note of gratitude is due to Sis. Aldila Isahak and Sis. Norzakiah Saparmin for their commitment in editing the text; to Bro. Ahmad Bazli Shafie and Bro. Mohd. Zaidi Ismail for their comments, recommendations and for some of the material needed at the beginning of this work.

Last but not least, my deepest and heartiest appreciation is reserved for my beloved husband Mohd. Zuhairi Abd. Majid. I am certainly indebted to him, for he is the real backbone of my accomplishment at ISTAC. Indeed, his enduring patience, continuous support and understanding have inspired me to persistently pursue the most challenging path of my life thus far. To him I dedicate this work, for without his endless sacrifices throughout the masters program, I would not have been able to reach this present stage. A special note of gratitude is also due to my parents, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mohd. Arshad Hj. Taib and Hjh. Fauziah Sani for their continuous prayer and support. I certainly appreciate their words of guidance, encouragement and confidence which further enlightened the path for me. A note of appreciation also goes to my daughter, Ainul Hana for her tolerance, despite of her tender age which is equivalent to the duration of my postgraduate program at this institute. Above all, only God is worthy of praise for He is the One who paves the way to the Straight Path (*al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm*).

"I put my trust in Allah, My Lord and your Lord!  
There is not a moving creature, but he hath grasp of its fore-lock,  
Verily it is my Lord that is on the Straight Path!"  
(*Sūrat Hūd*:56)



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AFD</i>	Ghazālī, <i>Al-Adab fi al-Dīn</i>
<i>AW</i>	Ghazālī, <i>Ayyuhā al-Walad</i>
<i>BOK</i>	Nabih Amin Faris, <i>The Book of Knowledge</i>
<i>CEII</i>	Al-Attas, <i>The Concept of Education in Islām</i>
<i>COI</i>	Gil'adi, <i>Children of Islām</i>
<i>Dhari'ah</i>	Al-Isfahānī, <i>Al-Dhari'ah ilā Makārim al-Sharī'ah</i>
<i>DT</i>	Qambar, <i>Al-Dirāsāt al-Turāthiyah fi al-Tarbiyyah al-Islāmiyyah</i>
<i>EG</i>	Quasem, <i>The Ethics of Ghazālī</i>
<i>EI</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Islām</i> (new edition)
<i>EPS</i>	Wan Daud, <i>The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas</i>
<i>ET</i>	Fakhry, <i>Ethical Theories in Islām</i>
<i>FF</i>	McCarthy, <i>Freedom and Fulfillment</i>
<i>FPG</i>	Watt, <i>The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazālī</i>
<i>GE</i>	Abu-Sway, <i>Al-Ghazzālīyy A Study in Islamic Epistemology</i>
<i>Ihyā'</i>	Ghazālī, <i>Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn</i>
IIIT	International Institute of Islamic Thought
<i>IS</i>	Al-Attas, <i>Islām and Secularism</i>
ISTAC	International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization
<i>Ithāf</i>	Al-Zabīdī, <i>Ithāf al-Sādat al-Muttaqīn bi Sharh Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn</i>
<i>MA</i>	Ghazālī, <i>Mizān al-'Amal</i>
<i>MD</i>	Ghazālī, <i>Al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl</i>

- MDI* Ghazālī, *Al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl fī Majmū'at al-Rasā'il al-Imām al-Ghazālī*
- MEQ* *Muslim Education Quarterly*
- RC* Zurayk, *The Refinement of Character*
- RN* Winter, *Kitāb Riyādat al-Nafs & Kasr al-Shahwatayn: Al-Ghazālī on Disciplining The Soul & Breaking The Two Desires: Books XXII and XXIII of the Revival of The Religious Sciences*
- RT* Ghazālī, *Rauḍat al-Ṭālibīn fī Majmū'at al-Rasā'il al-Imām al-Ghazālī*
- Tahdhib* Miskawayh, *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq wa Tathir al-A'rāq*

## ABSTRACT

Imām Abū Ḥānīd Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 505A.H./1111 C.E.) was one of the most prominent Muslim theologians and thinkers in the history of Islam, whose endeavors to revive the Islamic Sciences rightly earned him recognition as the *mujaddid* (reformer) of the fifth century A.H. This spirit of revivification was later pursued by his successors including Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and al-Ījī and eventually became the impetus for the Islamization of knowledge movement of this century, propounded by Al-Attas, the first holder of the Al-Ghazālī Chair of Islamic Thought (1414 A.H./1993 C.E.), conferred at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), Malaysia.

Thus, it is the aim of this thesis to study the methodological approach of Ghazālī's revivification which is instrumental for Al-Attas' conception of Islamization. For this purpose, we will be focusing on Ghazālī's ethical dimension of child education, extensively adopted from Miskawayh who was greatly influenced by the Hellenistic intellectual tradition. This analysis is divided into three chapters. We will firstly introduce the underlying problems and background to the issue before discussing the key terms and concepts used by Ghazālī in projecting his underlying Ṣūfī spirit in the first chapter. The second chapter deals with his sources of reference in child education; and finally in the third chapter, we will further study some of the practical aspects in Ghazālī's child upbringing in comparison to those of Miskawayh. Finally, it is hoped that our humble preliminary attempt will contribute in a small but meaningful way for educators, scholars, researchers and policy makers who are involved directly in this particular field. Indeed, it is ultimately intended to serve as the groundwork that paves the way for the Islamization process in relation to the existing Islamic elementary educational system.

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Child Education In Islam: An Overview

The family institution is the most fundamental part of Muslim society. With regards to its definition, Hammūdah 'Abd al-'Atī emphasizes the term 'family' as referring to:

a special kind of structure whose principles are related to one another through blood ties and/or marital relationships, and whose relatedness is of such a nature to entail "mutual expectations" that are prescribed by religion, reinforced by law, and internalized by the individual.<sup>1</sup>

In Islam, mutual expectations in terms of rights and responsibilities among the family members, pertaining to lineal identity and maintenance, succession and affection, socialization of the young, security for the aged and maximization of effort to ensure family continuity and welfare are certainly prescribed by the religion.<sup>2</sup> Due to the limited scope of our inquiry, the discussion will thus, focus on the religious and ethical domain of childhood education as one of the most crucial aspects of parental responsibility.

The family institution plays a pivotal role in transmitting the religious and ethical values of Islam particularly at the early stage of a person's life. One of the rights of children, according to the Prophet (s.a.w.), is the right to a proper education:

It is the duty of the father to inculcate proper education (*yuhṣina adabahu*) in his son.<sup>3</sup>

In al-Attas' interpretation, *adab* implies knowledge and right action.<sup>4</sup> *Adab* thus, refers

<sup>1</sup> See Hammūdah 'Abd al-'Atī, *The Family Structure in Islam* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1977), 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>3</sup> See Sayyid Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Itḥāf al-Sikāt al-Muttaqin bi Sharḥ Ihṣā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 10 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d), 6:317, cited hereafter as *Itḥāf*.

<sup>4</sup> See Syed Muḥammad Naquib al-Attas, *Prolegomena to The Metaphysics of Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1995), 16, 18. An earlier and more elaborate discussion on *adab* has been elaborated by al-Attas in *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*.

to the "right action that springs from self-discipline founded upon knowledge whose source is wisdom."<sup>5</sup> Education is certainly impaired unless the knowledge that is acquired includes a moral purpose that activates in the seeker of knowledge, the above conception of *adab*.<sup>6</sup> With regards to the elementary level of education (*ta'dib*), there are at least three major features of *adab* as mentioned by the Prophet (s.a.w.), which indicate a symbiotic relationship between the Islamic creed (*'aqidah*) as the foundation of education and good character (*akhlaq*) as the ultimate objective and result of the education itself: (1) love of the Prophet (s.a.w.), (2) love of his family members and (3) love of reciting the Qur'an.<sup>7</sup> These three qualities are mentioned in one of his *hadiths*:

Educate your children (*addibū awlādakum*) in possessing three qualities: love of your prophet (*ḥubb nabīyyikum*), love of his family (*ḥubb ahī baytīhī*) and the Qur'anic recitation (*qirā'at al-Qur'ān*)....<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, love of the Prophet (s.a.w.) is based on a true conviction that he is the perfect man (*insān al-kāmil*), and the best model of conduct (*Sunnah*) who not only received the Revelation (al-Qur'an) but was also guided by it. Al-Qur'an and Sunnah then serve as a foundational framework for every sphere of human life, including the familial rights and responsibilities. Early socialization in a good environment, proper education and upbringing are undoubtedly the main parental responsibilities, acknowledged in the Qur'an and *Hadiths*. Proper education at an early age should begin with the inculcation of the Islamic creed (*'aqidah*) as the foundation of good ethical conduct, which is portrayed in the Qur'an through the admonition of Luqmān al-Hakīm to his son:

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> See 'Alī' al-Dīn 'Alī al-Muttaqī, *Kanz al-'Ummal fī Sunan al-Aghwāl wa al-Af'āl*, 18 vols. (Dairat: Ma'assasat al-Risālah, 1993), 456, *hadith* no. 45409, cited hereafter as *KU*.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

Behold, Luqman said to his son admonishing him, "O my son! Join not in worship (others) with Allah: for false worship is indeed the highest wrongdoing."<sup>9</sup>

It is followed by the inculcation of good ethical conduct and behavior through the enjoinder of good deeds and avoidance of misdeeds:

My son! (said Luqman), If there be (but) the weight of a mustard-seed and it were (hidden) in a rock, or (anywhere) in the heavens or on earth, Allah will bring it forth: for Allah is subtle and aware. O my son! Establish regular prayer, enjoin what is just, and forbid what is wrong: and bear with patient constancy whatever betide thee, for this is firmness (of purpose) in (the conduct of) affairs. And swell not thy cheek (for pride) against men. Nor walk in insolence through the earth: For Allah loveth not any arrogant boaster. And be moderate in thy pace, and lower thy voice; for the harshest of sounds without doubt is the braying of the ass.<sup>10</sup>

In one of his *hadiths*, the Prophet (s.a.w.) said:

A father can confer upon his child no more valuable gift than good education (*adab hasan*).<sup>11</sup>

In another *hadith*, he said:

It is better that a man should secure an education (*yu'addib*) for his child than that he bestow a *sa'* in charity.<sup>12</sup>

The family is thus, the foundation on which an individual develops the religious values and certain standards of ethical conduct in the process of forming an ideal personality which represents the identity of the society as a whole.

The prophetic instruction pertaining to child education stems from its underlying conception of children as a trust (*al-amanah*)<sup>13</sup> and parents as the trustees of God. Every child is naturally born in the state of *fitrah*,<sup>14</sup> an innate disposition and

<sup>9</sup> *Sirat Luqman*: 13.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, (13: 16-19).

<sup>11</sup> See *KU*, 16: 456, *hadith* no. 45411; see J. Wensick and J. P. Mensing, *Concordance et Indices de la Tradition Musulmane*, 7 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1936), 1:36, cited hereafter as *Concordance*.

<sup>12</sup> *Concordance*, 1:36.

<sup>13</sup> See Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4 vols (Beirut: Dār Ihyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabīy, n.d.), 3:72, cited hereafter as *Ihyā'*.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:74.

potentiality to recognize and acknowledge the true Lordship of God, and in turn to bear the responsibility or trust (*al-amānah*) of acknowledgment, which is ingrained in every heart of the descendants of Ādam (a.s.).<sup>15</sup> *Al-amānah*, in this sense, has been interpreted by al-Ghazālī, as the gnosis and the unity of God (*wa tilka al-amānah hiya al-aw'rāfah wa al-tawhīd*).<sup>16</sup> The actualization of this inner potentiality requires a comprehensive educational process (*ta'dīb*) which includes the transmission of knowledge (*ta'lim*), good breeding (*tarbiyah*), self-discipline (*riyā'ah*), purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) and the refinement of character (*tahdhīb al-akhlaq*). *Ta'dīb*, in the framework of al-Ghazālī, is a process of disciplining the physical and spiritual aspects of man which involves the acquisition of knowledge and the transformation of the personality in order to possess good character traits (*husn al-khuluq*), i.e., the condition of the soul that conforms to the Intellect and Religious Law ('*aql wa Shar'*).<sup>17</sup> Character formation thus, becomes the focal point of education (*ta'dīb*) particularly in the early years, due to the child's imitative nature and his immaturity in reasoning.

Muslim scholars unanimously agree on the importance of character formation during childhood, and dealt with it from various aspects: ethical-pedagogical, theological-juridical as well as from the medical point of view. Philosophers like Abū 'Alī al-Husayn Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), followed by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 1274) and Jalāl Dīn al-Dawwānī (d. 1502-3) dealt with this subject under the discipline of household management. Moral philosophers and Ṣūfis like Aḥmad bin Muḥammad Ibn Miskawayh (d. 1030) and Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) discussed childhood in their explication of ethics and morality, while the jurists like Shams al-Dīn al-Sarakḥī (d. 899), Qāḍī Khān

<sup>15</sup> See *Ibid.*, 7:232.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> See *Ibid.*, 3:53.

(d. 1196), Ibn Hajar al-Haytami (d. 1567) and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 1350) highlighted their juristic point of view through the legal opinions (*fatwas*) concerning the rights of children, aspects of nursing and childhood rites. On the other hand, physicians like Abū al-Qāsim Khalaf al-Zahrāwī (d.1013), Ibn al-Jazzār al-Qayrawānī (d. 979/980) and 'Arīb bin Sa'd (d. 980) commented on this subject from the pediatric point of view.<sup>18</sup> Despite their distinct approaches, they unanimously agree on the fact that character formation is the utmost priority to be seriously focused on during childhood. In fact, Muslim philosophers like Ibn Sīnā, al-Tūsī and al-Dawwānī suggest that the process of character formation should begin as soon as a child starts to wean himself.<sup>19</sup>

## 2. The Need For Islamization

As the influence of Westernization began to make itself felt in the Muslim world, the religious and spiritual essence of character formation was no longer the major focus of childhood education. Westernization, in this context, refers to the influence of Western religion and civilization that has surreptitiously crept into the Muslim mind. Thus, as articulated by al-Attas, the Muslim vision of truth and reality in the present age is not formulated through revealed knowledge and religious belief. It is conceived rather through cultural tradition reinforced strictly by philosophical premises based on speculation pertaining mainly to secular life centered upon man as a physical entity and rational animal. This secular humanist outlook sets great store on man's rational capacity alone to unravel the mysteries of his total environment and involvement in existence, and

<sup>18</sup> See Avner Gil'adi, *Children of Islam: Concepts of Childhood in Medieval Muslim Society* (Oxford: Macmillan, 1992), 1-10, cited hereafter as *COI*.

<sup>19</sup> Abū 'Alī al-Ḥusayn Ibn Sīnā, *Tadhkirat al-Munāzil aw al-Siyāsāt al-Aḥliyyah* (Baghdād: Maṭba'ah al-Fallāḥ, 1929), 36; Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī, *The Nasirean Ethics, Akhlaq-i-Nāṣirī*, trans. from Persian by G. M. Wickens (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1964), 167; Fakir Husay Muhammad Asad,



further conceives out of the results of speculation based on such philosophical premises, his evolutionary ethical and moral values to guide and order his life accordingly.<sup>20</sup> Despite humanistic belief in a certain degree of relationship between religion and morality, Durkheim<sup>21</sup> for instance, argues that the two need to be separated for educational purposes. It is only when this separation is firmly established that the moral domain can and should be included in a public educational curriculum.<sup>22</sup> In advocating the idea of secular morality,<sup>23</sup> he further declares:

We decided to give our children in our state-supported schools a purely moral education. It is essential to understand that this means an education that is not derived from revealed religion, but that rests exclusively on ideas, sentiments and practices accountable to reason only - in short, a purely rationalistic education.<sup>24</sup>

He claims that morality could be constructed independently from any theological conception.<sup>25</sup> In fact, this secularizing process of education has been in progress for centuries.<sup>26</sup> The task to secularize education according to Durkheim, is a complex transformation which involves a rational substitution for the religious notions that for a long time have served as the vehicle for the most essential moral ideas.<sup>27</sup> Thus, he

---

*Akhlāq-i-Jalīlī, Practical Philosophy of the Muhammadan People*, trans. W. F. Thomson, 1st ed. (Karachi: Karimsons, 1977), 276.

<sup>20</sup> See S. M. N. Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, (Kuala Lumpur: ABIM, 1978; repr., Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1993), 135, cited hereafter as *IS*.

<sup>21</sup> Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), was a well-known French educational sociologist. Deeply influenced by Rousseau's educational thought, he propounded the idea of secular morality and supported the antithesis that man is subservient to nature and yet has to transform it and even transcend it. He argued against Devolvé, a positivist philosopher who expounded the religious moral system that is supported by an authority, the end of which was God. See W. S. F. Pickering, *Durkheim: Essays on Morals and Education*, trans. H. L. Sutcliffe (London, Boston & Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 110, 113, 139, cited hereafter as *Durkheim*.

<sup>22</sup> See Robert T. Hall & John U. Davis, *Moral Education in Theory and Practice* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1975), 21-22.

<sup>23</sup> See Emile Durkheim, *Moral Education: A Study In The Theory and Application of The Sociology of Education*, trans. and ed. Everett K. Wilson and Herman Schurmer (New York & London: The Free Press, 1973), 1-14, cited hereafter as *Moral*.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-9.

eliminates the church as an agent of moral education, because a sound morality must be founded in reason, but not in revelation.<sup>28</sup> Simultaneously, he excludes the family institution from being an educational agent of morality. Despite his admiration for the family as an institution, Durkheim held it to be unsuitable for educating children beyond their early years, due to its indulgent warmth of kinship ties, as compared to the sterner demands of morality.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, the child requires a more rigorous discipline than that which the family could provide. Hence, Durkheim believes that school is the real setting for his disciplinary and educational process. Education, viewed from his sociological standpoint, is:

the influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not yet ready for social life. Its object is to arouse and develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states, which are demanded of him by both political society as a whole and the social milieu for which he is destined.<sup>30</sup>

Durkheim's approach to morality is mainly sociological. Society is ultimately the preeminent authority of a moral system. He sought authority in the *sui generis* nature of society which he held was endowed with the sacred.<sup>31</sup> In locating the authority in society, he maintains that "to act morally is to act in terms of collective interest" and the "moral goals are those the object of which is society."<sup>32</sup> As an ethical relativist, he believes that the content of morality changes with the passing of time, since each society has its own particular system which is never the same as that of another society. Nor is it possible to prove which set of morals is superior, for each seems to work well for its particular society.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 146-147.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>31</sup> See *Durkheim*, 118-119.

<sup>32</sup> See *Moral*, 59.

<sup>33</sup> See *Durkheim*, 116.

The Durkheimian sociological influence is clearly discernible in his disciple, Ziya Gökalp, the ideologue of the Kemalist movement. He formulated a scheme which attempted to provide an ideological underpinning for the emergence of the modern Turkish family, which he referred to as the 'national' or 'new' family.<sup>34</sup> In the words of Gökalp:

There is no doubt that the Turkish family will be modernized by the introduction of new conceptions from European civilization. But the Turkish family will neither be a copy of the French or English nor of the German family.<sup>35</sup>

Under the influence of Gökalp, the 'national' family,<sup>36</sup> placed the greatest emphasis on maternal duties and socializing children, which were elevated by him to major roles for building the Turkish nation for the future.<sup>37</sup> In spite of his attempt to preserve the traditional Turkish family values, it was the Western family model ultimately became more dominant.<sup>38</sup> The concept of the 'national' family was in fact a variant of the European conjugal family, nuclear in structure, based on gender equality and the so-called indigenous Turkish moral values.<sup>39</sup> During the early Republican years, the state was to take a direct role in trying to remould the Turkish family under the influence of Gokalpian thought. The most important move in this direction was the Civil Code 1926, which was a clear indication of the Europeanization of Turkish institutions, particularly in relation to family and personal life. The new Civil Code which was ironically based on the Swiss Civil Code 1912, superseded the Sharf'ah code by entrusting the Islamic provision of marriage and divorce entirely to the secular modern state. Its establishment

<sup>34</sup> See Alan Duben & Cem Behar, *Istanbul Households Marriage, Family and Fertility 1880-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 212.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 201 citing Ziya Gökalp, "The Foundations of the Turkish Family" in *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization*, N. Berkes, ed. (New York, 1959), 252.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

in Turkey, indeed, symbolically represented an official secularization of a westernized family orientation. In his remark, Mahmud Esat, the Minister of Justice of that time, announced that:

...with this law, Turkey will close the doors on an old civilization, and will have entered into a contemporary [here read, European] civilization.<sup>40</sup>

Simultaneously, in the growing nationalism of the Young Turk years, child-rearing was seen as a political duty. It is in fact, the theme reiterated by Gökalp that child-rearing 'is one of the most important duties towards the nation,' which later was to become a cornerstone of Kemalist ideology in the nineteen twenties and thirties.<sup>41</sup> The influence of new contemporary secular approaches to primary education in Europe, was felt quite directly in Istanbul in the 1830s, with the founding of primary schools by missionaries, at first only for the Greeks and Armenians. Such efforts of modernization reached their climax during the period of Sultan Mahmud II, who established similar primary schools for Turkish children. It was the first time in Turkish history that primary education was to take place outside the religious establishment.<sup>42</sup>

Republican Turkey was in fact, an extreme case of secular implementation in a modern educational system in the Muslim world in which the *Kuttâb*, religious primary schools were disestablished in 1924 and closed in 1926 --- though some did continue to function surreptitiously in remote villages.<sup>43</sup> However, such instances of modern secular influence are by no means unique to Turkey. With the intervention of colonization, the *Kuttâb* stood in competition with the newly-imported Western-type primary schools elsewhere throughout the Muslim countries.<sup>44</sup> Since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the *Kuttâb* had

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 232.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>43</sup> See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986) s.v. "Kuttâb."

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 568.

been declining in countries undergoing modernization like Turkey, Sudan, Zanzibar, India, and Syria especially in urban areas. Unfortunately, they suffered most wherever Muslims were in the minority, i.e., in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia where all these schools were closed by the authorities.<sup>45</sup> In Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia and the most newly-independent Arab states however, the *Kuttāb* have been incorporated and integrated into the national school system.<sup>46</sup> These developments are indeed part and parcel of the agenda of Westernization. Under the label of 'modernization' which is really synonymous with westernization, and a fervent nationalism, education in most of the Muslim countries has become the means for national revival, prosperity and progress.<sup>47</sup>

The ultimate cultural purpose of Western colonialism, according to al-Attas, is not to disseminate the Christian religion, but the secular, Western worldview with its conception of knowledge and other related matters.<sup>48</sup> In this regard, al-Attas was the first to discover the challenge of Westernized and secularized knowledge, disseminated through modern educational systems, as the greatest challenge and the real crux of the deplorable condition of the Muslims:

In most Muslim countries today many Muslims think that their problems stem from economic or scientific and technological inadequacy. Although it seems that at first glance this is true, and yet, however, the real crux of the problem, from which stems all other problems, is the problem of knowledge.<sup>49</sup>

The fundamental challenge of knowledge, in this sense, referred to knowledge and its

---

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 569.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> See Wan Mohd. Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1998), 70-73, cited hereafter as *EPS*. See also al-Attas' explanation on the concept of 'progress', pp. 157-159.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 73 citing al-Attas, *Risalah Untuk Kaum Muslimin*, an unpublished monograph, 280 pp., dated May, 1973; para. 17, pp. 60-62, cited hereafter as *Risalah*.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 71 citing al-Attas's letter to the Islamic Secretariat of Jeddah dated 15 May, 1973.

educational system as conceived and disseminated by Western civilization. Thus, knowledge, according to al-Attas, is not truly neutral since it is infused with a certain worldview, the religious and cultural elements and experiences of a particular person, and by extension, his culture and civilization. Indeed, there exist such profound and absolute differences between Islam and Western culture and civilization that the two cannot be reconciled.<sup>30</sup> Henceforth, the proper revival of the Muslims should start with greater emphasis on the right conception of knowledge, starting from the university level all the way down to the secondary and primary levels of education.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, al-Attas' idea of the Islamization of contemporary knowledge is fundamental to the revivification of Islamic sciences that al-Ghazālī had tried to achieve nine centuries ago.<sup>32</sup>

As far as this study is concerned, it is intended to serve as the groundwork for Islamization at the primary level of education. Whilst it is not as imperative as higher education, it is our conviction that elementary education is one of the most critical aspects which needs to be revised and islamized, since the modern systematic child-centered programs adopted and utilized by Muslims nowadays are originally Western.<sup>33</sup> These programs are definitely based on an absolutely alien worldview especially its concept of human nature and existence. For this purpose, al-Attas' definition and conceptualization of Islamization will be the basis for our analysis of al-Ghazālī's methodological approach towards child education, which was originally adopted from Miskawayh's Hellenistic sources. In this respect, we will firstly study the key terms used by al-Ghazālī in projecting his underlying Şufī framework pertaining to this subject.

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>33</sup> See *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1985) s.v. "preschool education," cited hereafter as *Preschool*.

The five key terms : *ta'dib* (education), *riyāḥah* (discipline), *ta'lim* (instruction), *tarbiyan* (upbringing) and *tahdhib* (refinement) will be discussed in the first chapter. The second chapter will deal with his sources of reference in this field; and finally in the third chapter, we will further analyze al-Ghazālī's ṣūfistic method of child upbringing in comparison with Miskawayh's philosophical approach pertaining to this matter.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE KEY TERMS OF AL-GHAZĀLĪ IN CHILD EDUCATION

In spite of the fact that al-Ghazālī, like other Muslim scholars before and after him, borrowed and interweaved foreign and particularly Hellenic philosophical and ethical-ideas into their writings, Gil'adi's<sup>1</sup> suggestion that the Muslim's conception of the significance of the childhood period has its roots in the Hellenistic heritage is not accurate. This is especially true with respect to al-Ghazālī's conception of the significance of the childhood period. Though Gil'adi did not go as far as Max Horten who described al-Ghazālī as a partisan of Platonic doctrines or a well-schooled Hellenistic philosopher,<sup>2</sup> his cynicism is apparently discernible. For instance, in one of his earlier pieces of research,<sup>3</sup> Gil'adi highlighted his position by quoting Abū Bakr ibn al-'Arabi's statement that al-Ghazālī, "having entered the philosopher's circle, never succeeded in extricating himself despite his efforts to do so."<sup>4</sup> In this work, he asserted that al-Ghazālī had elaborated on the points which he selectively borrowed from Greek philosophy and interweaved them - *behind a veil of Muslim terminology* - into his mystical writings.<sup>5</sup> He further claimed that the Aristotelian system affected even the terminology used in *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* which represents the most comprehensive presentation of orthodox Sufism.<sup>6</sup> However, in his later work i.e. *Children of*

<sup>1</sup> *COI*, 117.

<sup>2</sup> See Max Horten, "Moral Philosophers in Islam," trans. from German by V. June Hager, *Islamic Studies* 13, no. 1 (March 1974): 18, cited hereafter as *MP*.

<sup>3</sup> In this research, he studied the influence of the Aristotelian scheme on al-Ghazālī's classification of sciences in *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*. See A. Gil'adi, "On the Origin of Two Key-Terms in al-Ghazālī's *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*," *Arabica* 36, no. 1 (1989): 81 and 90, cited hereafter as *Origin*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, Gil'adi could not ignore the fact that al-Ghazālī refers to the Qur'ān, *Ḥadīth* and other Muslim ethical literature as his sources of child-rearing practice, particularly in relation to the welfare of the child, his rights and the treatment he deserves.

<sup>6</sup> See *Origin*, 87.