

THE RULES OF LIVING WITH WOMEN IN THE MARRIAGE IDEALISM OF GHAZALI

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ABSTRACT

Living between the years 1058 – 1111, Ghazali is one of the greatest authorities of Islamic world. Just like St. Augustin or St. Thomas of Christianity represent strong figures, so does Ghazali for the Islamic world. Ghazali is very strong figure scientists who were regarded as an authority in some controversial issues. He is also known as a scientist sought by students coming from very far distances in order to learn from him and a very loyal sufi individually. His basic aim is to make religion be understood in a better way. For that reason, he wrote tens of works and tried to enlighten both people and students studying science. Again, the purpose of works other than religious ones was also to serve for the religion. The reason why he was interested in philosophy and logic is the same. He wanted to prevent the possible harmful effects on the religion. In his religious works, he dealt with almost any subject related to Islam. The rule of living with women at marriage, which is the main topic of the current study is one of them. As in other issues, he dealt with these subjects in order to enlighten people and with a sufi perspective with regard to marriage and he offered Islamic jurisprudent judgments depending on ayahs and hadiths when necessary. Also, he made metaphysical explanations in the light of intuitional information when needed. In the current study, the information given by Ghazali with regard to living with women was evaluated in a critical way and using the document evaluation technique depending on his work Kimya-yı Saadet.

Keywords: Kimya-yı Saadet, Niqah (spousal act), edeb (The rules of good manners)

INTRODUCTION

His original name is “Ebu Hamid Muhammed bin Muhammed al-Ghazali” and he was born in the Taberan city of the state of Tus, in Horasan in 450 (hijri) / 1058 (Gregorian). There are two explanations with regard to the origin of his name. First one is that his father was wool spinner (gazzal). His name was given because of his father’s profession in that way. The second view is that a village of in the place Tus, where he was born, was called Gazale. In this view, Ghazali took his name from his village Gazale (Dombaycı and Demircioğlu, 2010: 61). We use his name as Ghazali depending on the second view.

Ghazali is an authority representing classical Islamic thought. He made the strongest defenses and attacks over some controversial issues on behalf of Islamic thoughts against criticism targeting Islam by non-Muslim people. Due to his success in defending and teaching Islam, he was renowned as *Hucet-ul Islam* which means the proof of Islam (Orman, 2000, 237-238).

The basic struggling purpose of Ghazali was to provide that Islam should remain as it is. According to him, the groups harming Islam in some amount on purpose or unintendedly with the idea of teaching about Islam are theologians, philosophers, Batnis (esoteric) and Sufis (Ghazali, 1998: 34). During his struggle, he made an exception for those who were wrong, making a distinction between them and he adopted Sufism as his route and method. According to him (Kutluer, 2000: 261 – 262), the instrument that would be able to eliminate the distortion in morality, tradition and religious sciences is Sufism that should be applied compatible with its originality.

His views uttered while both defending Islamic belief in controversial issues and enlightening people in common religious thoughts are the Sufi comments of Islam. In this context, the ideas given about the manners and rules of the ideology of marriage comprising the topic of the current study and its sub-dimension of living with women are views uttered within the framework of Ghazali's perception of Sufi thought.

THE EDEBS OF LIVING TOGETHER WITH WOMEN FROM THE BEGINNING OF MARRIAGE

Ghazali stated that the true case of the power of lustfulness is the one away from excessiveness but the medium one. According to this kind of lustfulness is chastity. Chastity is the basis of good morality. Allah loves chastity and the owners of chastity. Chastity means to have wishes for legitimate, halal and clean things (Ghazali, 2004b: 308).

The protection of chastity would be possible with marriage. Therefore, marriage is one of the principles of the religion. Marriage should be made in compatible with religious purposes and rules. This purpose is not copulation as in animals. Those getting married should obey edeb in twelve points. These are (Ghazali, 2004a: 284 – 293):

1. Fest of Wedding (Valimah): This view of Ghazali depends on a saying the Prophet (p.u.h.) to Abdurrahman bin Awf while he was getting married. The Prophet told him to “Make a fest of wedding even only with a sheep”.

He wanted those who cannot afford it to do this in their budgets. He, himself, made a fest comprised of barley bread and dates while getting married to Hazrat Safiyah. According to Ghazali (2004a: 284 – 285), the fest food should not be postponed too much and be given in three days following the Niqah.

In addition, Ghazali stated that singing at wedding fests and entertaining by playing tambourine depending on the practice in the wedding of Rabia bint Muawwed bin Cafer (Ghazali, 2004a: 284 – 293).

With the examples from the history of Islam and the life of the Prophet, Ghazali tried to explain that the

basic aim with this rule is to announce the wedding within the social rules and customs of the society. In this sense, there are a few details in the issue:

The first one is that the food chosen for the wedding is meat which is always liked in every culture.

The second one is that the amount of the meat that should be offered for those who are not so poor is at least a sheep, which accounts for 8 – 12 kilograms of meat.

The third one is that the type and amount of the food to be offered is varied depending on the economic situation of the person.

The fourth one is that the fest food should not be delayed and be given in three days.

The fifth one is that entertainment is allowed on condition that it is not against basic principles of Islam and compatible with the customs of the age.

2. Having a justified morality: Ghazali defines the term of “justified morality” as enduring the troubles given by women rather than offending women. According to Ghazali (2004a: 285), the Prophet recommended men to live with their spouses in a good manner and endure the troubles coming from them; He, himself, did so. After narrating a number of Hadiths in this issue, Ghazali told an event the Prophet experienced as an example. One of the spouses of the Prophet hit him on the chest with anger once. The mother of her told her off after seeing this event. The Prophet replied his mother in law saying “Let her do it. They did it so many times and I am patient about this behavior”.

It is an interesting comment that Ghazali defines justified morality as “enduring the troubles coming from women”; since it is possible to define justified morality in different ways. What should be given attention is that the Prophet experienced the same intra-family troubles in his life with his spouses which other ordinary people experience.

3. Playing with his spouse: Man should have a smiley face for his wife. The prophet would make a running race with his wife Aisha, who was much younger than him. One day Hazrat Aisha wanted to watch dancing black men, the Prophet took her there. She leaned her face on the arm of the Prophet and they watched the performance in that position for a long time (Ghazali, 2004a: 286).

The essence of this rule Ghazali narrated from the life of the Prophet with some examples is that man should behave in a way to make his wife happy. These behaviors should be chosen according to the expectations of the woman depending on the principle of Islam. Another detail that should be taken into consideration in the event of the Prophet’s watching the performance is that he exhibited “romantic” behaviors towards his wife in today’s concept.

4. Not to exceed in joking and playing: Even though man’s playing with his wife was praised in the former item, it should not be exaggerated; since exceeding in this behavior would reduce the solemnity of the man. It is not true for the man to behave out of Islamic belief in order to please his wife. According to Ghazali (2004a: 286 – 287), women are like the own wishes of men. If you leave them alone, they will extravagante. These extravagancy of women could be treated sometimes through enduring their coquetry and sometimes

by smoothing these behaviors. During this treatment, patience and endurance should be preferred, since it is said in a Hadith that “Women are like a curved rib, and it would break if you tried it to straighten it”.

In this article, it was recommended that man should follow a middle way towards his spouse. In fact, Islam has always adopted this manner away from such extremism in any issue. What is important is that man behaves well against his wife and at the same time hinders the demands that are incompatible with the religion in a non-offending way.

5. Not to exceed in jealousy: Man should always maintain his position of moderation for jealousy. He should neither envy her much, nor should he stay away from jealousy. However, he should keep his wife away from the events having a potential of incitement. Therefore, he should not allow her to talk to other men as much as possible (Ghazali, 2004a: 287). Ghazali narrated the following story between the Prophet and his daughter Hazrat

Fatima. The prophet asked his daughter what is the most favorable thing for women, and she replied “It is the fact that men should not see women, and women should not see men”. According to Ghazali (2004a: 288), this saying of his daughter made the Prophet happy.

In the age of the Prophet, women would cover themselves neatly and enter the jamaah, pray with men standing at the back row. The Prophet allowed such a thing. However, after the demise of the Prophet, this habit changed a bit. Women started to pray by adorning themselves and looking around. Hazrat Aisha stated with regard to this case of women that “the Prophet would ban on women’s going to mosque, if he had seen these manners of women” (Ghazali, 2004a: 288).

The conclusion to be drawn from what Ghazali narrated in this issue is that man should not exceed in envying his wife; woman should also avoid from the behaviors that might lead her husband to envy her and cause gossiping. In addition, the examples given should be taken into consideration depending on the age and social conditions of the period when the Prophet lived.

6. Not to be stingy or wasteful in earning the living of children: In this article, a moderate practice is observed, since he was recommended both not to be stingy and not to be wasteful in earning the living of the family. Islam praised a person spending for his family. The Prophet narrated in a Hadith that “the most valuable of the gold coins spent for jihad, for children, for freeing a slave and given to the poor is the one spend for children” (Ghazali, 2004a: 288).

If a person wants to eat a good food, he should bring the same for his children. Ghazali quoted from Ibn Sirin like that: “A person should bring his family halva or another sweet once a week, since it is not true to avoid from sweet completely”. Ghazali added this saying of Ibn Sirin that the most important thing is to earn the halal livelihood for his children. According to him (2004a: 288), there is no other bad behavior than making his family eat ill-gotten food.

Here are some golden rules to be taken out of these narrations:

The first one is that a person should earn halal livelihood and spend them there. This is a good thing that Allah will love.

The second one is that the person should be careful in spending but he should avoid being stinginess.

The third one is that consuming sweet which is regarded as a luxurious food in the mentioned age with family once a week is not regarded as a wasteful behavior

7. Teaching necessary religious knowledge to women: According to Ghazali (2004a: 288) man should teach his wife how to pray, how to cleanse herself and such basic issues as menstruation. Unless he teaches them, the woman should go out to learn these things. In that case, the man would be the culprit, since Allah willed men “O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones” (Koran

66/6). Ghazali gives an interesting example about the things to be learned. A woman should know that if her menstruation ends before the sunset, she should pray the salat asr as a qaza and if it ends before the sunrise she should pray salat is ha as a qaza; since most of the women are unaware of this fact according to him(2004a: 289).

The comments of Ghazali in this issue should be regarded as the fact that this task was given to the spouse in such cases where women cannot have an official education periodically; since it is fard to have basic knowledge for both man and woman in order to be able to carry on their prayers.

8. Treating equally between the wives: Ghazali started by narrating this Hadith: “If a person has two wives and has a tendency towards one of them, he will come out in the qiyamah bending towards one side”. Ghazali made a comment on this Hadith in an interesting way. According to him, (2004a: 289), the case of equality mentioned in the Hadith is true only for some materialistic things and sleeping with them. It is not compulsory to treat them equally in terms of love and the level of relation with them, since these are not the things a man could balance. Ghazali gives the example of the Prophet as an evidence. The prophet said that he slept with one of his wives each night but he loved Aisah the most. Ghazali quoted this Hadith in this sense: “O my Lord! I am trying to do my best, please do not make me responsible for the thing in my heart, I can't help it” (Ghazali, 2004a: 289).

According to Ghazali (2004a: 289), if a man doesn't love his spouse anymore and does not want to sleep with her, the only thing that he should do is to get divorced. It would be injustice for a woman both staying married to her and not sleeping with her. The Prophet wanted to get divorced with his wife Sevde, who was an old woman, for that reason. After Sevde said that she did not want to sleep together and she could give her right to Aisha, the Prophet gave up his idea of divorce.

This article was written in order to arrange this case for the communities and in the ages when plural marriage was legitimate. Ghazali gave the problems that were likely to have in a plural marriage present at that time and the precautions to be taken for them. There is not praise for plural marriages in the explanations dealing with this article.

9. Trying to convince the women in a good way when she showed a bad temper: According to Ghazali, the things that men could do gradually in order to make the spouses showing a bad temper or doing things wrong give up their behaviors are as follows:

The first one is that he should try to convince her with gender words in a good way.

The second one is that he should not touch her in the bed and turn to the opposite side.

The third one is that he should sleep in a different bed for three days.

The fourth one is that he should beat her slightly. However, he should not hit her on the face and not exceed in this practice.

The fifth one is that if the woman is lazy in praying and in other prayers he should get cross with her for one month. If this laziness keeps going on, he should also keep the time longer not to talk her. It is known that the Prophet got cross with his wives for about one month.

The things that Ghazali gives here are in an order. In other words, in the case of woman's insistence in the mistake, man practices the next step. Besides that, the most controversial one among these precautions is the fourth one that allows him to beat his wife. It is necessary to clarify it like this: **unfortunately, violence** against women has always existed in almost every community illegitimately. In a period when Islam was introduced, there was such a reality and Islam wanted to rehabilitate it and forbade the violence against woman. The term *beating slightly* given in Fiqh books is different from the perception of violence in the current time, since it was limited in order not to harm woman with hitting her slightly and not hitting on the face or just hitting on the buttocks. On other words, hitting women was forbidden not only in theory, but also in practice. In addition, the Prophet, the leader and messenger of Islam, never hit one of his wives. This example is the most important thing that should be taken into consideration in terms of Islam's perspective.

11. His face should be toward Qiblah during a sexual relation: As sexual relation is a part of marriage and the relation between man and woman, it was designed according to Islamic rules. Ghazali explained the manner of sexual relation as follows: Before sexual intercourse the face of man should be towards the Qiblah. In addition, he should not start sexual intercourse directly, but he should kiss his wife first, play with her and tell her sweet words.

Ghazali bases his view in this issue on this Hadith: "Man should not attack on woman suddenly like an animal, he should play with her and kiss" (Ghazali 2004a: 290 – 291).

It is likely to make a comment on these words of Ghazali in two headings:

The first one is that the beds should be placed in a way that the heads should be towards the Qiblah. However, it is not so easy to practice it in modern communities and towns due to both the architectural features of the house and inconvenience of the furniture.

The second thing mentioned by Ghazali is a condition that is recommended by current psychological and sexual health books and marriage consultants as *pre-love*. Before sexual intercourse, jokes of couples, their touching to each other would make them ready for sexual intercourse both physically and physiologically. This case that has recently been taken into consideration in modern science is an age long idea that was put forward by Ghazali almost one thousand year ago.

Ghazali has a basis for his ideas about sexual relation on the practice and words of the Prophet. So, one should start it with a basmalah and he should recite surah Ikhlas. Again, one should recite the praying "O my

Lord, keep us away from Satan and keep Satan from my livelihood” before sexual intercourse. It was said in a Hadith that “a child born from the person reciting this praying will be far from the evils of Satan”. He should think of this praying during an early ejaculation “ The praise is for Allah who created human being from water and made people relative to each other”. Man should wait for the ejaculation of his spouse after he ejaculated and he should not leave the bed immediately. The prophet stated this case as follows: “Three things come from the stupidity and weakness of man: the first one is that he doesn’t ask for his friends name even though they come together, the second one is to refuse the goodness and offer of his Muslim brother; the third one is having a sexual intercourse without playing and kissing and not waiting for his wife to finish it” (Ghazali, 2004a: 291).

Ghazali told his ideas in very detailed way about sexual relation. However, since this relation does not comprise the essence of the issue, he doesn’t give it in more detail. What should be focused here is that a person like

Ghazali who is known as the representative of classical Islamic thought has a very comfortable behavior in such a hard topic as sexuality which is difficult to talk and write and that he writes very detailed thing about private life.

11. The manners related to bringing a child: When the child is born, azan is recited on his/her ear first and he was named after. It is a sunnah even if a woman has an abortion to name the baby after. It is also sunnah for the person having the baby to sacrifice an animal. The name of this application, which is practices as two animals for boy and one animal for girl, is *aqiqah*. Handing out syrup when the child is born, cutting the hair when it is one week old and giving gold or silver in the weight of the hair cut are recommended behaviors (Ghazali, 2004a: 291).

Ghazali criticizes the behavior of being happy when a son is born and becoming sad when a daughter is born in male-dominant communities. According to him (2004a: 291), which child would become a good person is not determined according to his gender. He also indicates depending on the Hadith of the Prophet that it is so good to raise a daughter and she would bring the house abundance or barakah.

12. Trying hard not to divorce as much as possible: The last thing Ghazali deals with marriage is the issue of divorce. According to him (2004a: 292), divorce is a behavior that is allowed but not liked by Allah. Therefore, one should try hard to keep the marriage go on.

However, when the divorce is inevitable, it is necessary to obey some rules. The rules can be given as follows (2004a: 291):

The first one is that the divorce utterance that is necessary to be repeat three times should not be repeated at the same time.

The second is that divorce should not be made during the menstruation of the woman.

The third one is that one should not divorce after a sexual intercourse with the woman.

The fourth one is that one should be kind to the spouse while divorcing and he should apologize and give

some gifts.

The fifth one is that one should not reveal the secrets of the spouse after divorcing.

Ghazali takes the divorce from the man's point of view in line with traditions. In this sense, the side divorcing is mostly the man. Even though Islamic thought gives a right for women to get divorced, using this right has never been so easy in many communities.

CONCLUSION

It is likely to say that this study in which Ghazali basically deals with the rules to be obeyed at marriage bases upon two resources. One of them is the religion. In this context, he used ayahs and hadiths as a basis so often. The second one is the traditions and customs. Ghazali bases his ideas on customs as long as they don't contradict with the religion. The parts related to fests, getting married with more wives, things to be made after the birth of the child are all based on customs and traditions. While explaining some of these issues, he makes us feel his personal ideas but in some others he does not make any comment and prefers the way of naql. As an example, he makes us feel his ideas saying that "... one should not hit on the face or not hit so hard" by not confirming such a behavior while talking about the traditional practice giving a consent to hit woman.

One point that makes Ghazali so important is that he is so comfortable in telling such taboo issues as sexual matter, the fact that a great scientist like Ghazali is able to deal with these issues in a very detailed way is of great importance for Muslims in the eleventh century when no concept existed such as sexual education or it was hard to reach very limited resources given information about sexuality. It is likely to say that Ghazali is an agelong scientist in this feature of him.

Ghazali adopts the moderate way as his common attitude that was praised in ayahs and hadiths. His expressions mentioned in this study support his ideas, since it was recommended that men should not exceed in their relations with their wives with regard to marriage and should always follow the moderate way. In this context, it is likely to say that he recommends so as he depends his ideas on the traditional habits of a male-dominant community in his time. This could be criticized with today's point of view. However, when it comes to the social structure of the eleventh century, it varies.

Ghazali has a trouble with giving references as in many other Islamic thinkers. He sometimes gives the numbers of the ayahs and hadiths and sometimes does not. It is the same for hadiths as well. He sometimes gives the names of the narrators, sometimes does not. This problematic case in the current time was also problematic in his time.

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