

Full Length Research Paper

Teachers' professional ethics from Avicenna's perspective

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The purpose of this paper is to express Avicenna's standpoints in the area of teachers' professional ethics. Making use of a qualitative approach and a descriptive-analytic method, this study attempted to describe and analyze Avicenna's viewpoints on prerequisites of teaching profession by the help of the available resources. In general, the results showed that skillful teacher needs to possess admirable ethical characteristics in his individual and social dimensions. He should attempt to educate his own soul before making any effort in educating others considering some important points. It is better for him to have prudence in all his affairs. He should not try to educate anybody before being acquainted with his/her traits. He also should be generous and faithful toward the others. Eventually, it is expected from such a kind of teacher to gain a very high level of skillfulness in advising and guiding the learners.

Key words: Muslim scholar, Avicenna, teaching ethics, and education.

INTRODUCTION

Advancement and any kind of fundamental changes in a society necessitate a modification of educational system in that society, and the main component of advances in any educational system relies on the quality of teachers' performance. Being the most prominent element of education in developing students' educational, theological, emotional, ethical, political, and social dimensions, teachers may directly exert influence by playing a crucial role in educating the human resources needed for the society (Mirheydari, 2008). The "teacher" concept essentially differs from other similar concept such as "instructor" in that, teaching students is not the mere goal

for a teacher in the classroom. His/her goal is to educate students in all aspects. Teachers deal with the students' souls and minds. Their job is to manifest and develop students' talents. If the history of education is regarded as a science of "being" human, teachers have played crucial roles in this process of formation and evolution of "being". If we consider the education as a process of providing the underlying conditions leading to humans' development and getting balance, and regarding its goals as the actualization of humans' potential talents towards divine perfection and vicinity to God, teachers and trainers have played a crucial role in this respect.

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And, if we are searching for recognizing the factors which are influencing the development of humans' personality, making balance in his/her personality, and being acquainted with his/her body and mind, we should ask teachers who have served as such influential factors contributing to providing ethical, physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development in human (Mirheydari, 2008). This issue has been considered by so many scholars since a long time ago. Philosophers such as Farabi, Mulasadra, Avicenna and...believe that the role of teacher in educating children is not only conveying the concepts but also helping the students to acquire and learn the ethic, demanded habits, and values from their teachers; therefore, teachers must be acquainted with the methods of education (Farabi, 1985; Mulasadra, 1987). Avicenna has stated that: "the teacher should not only be acquainted with the methods of education, but he must be also insightful and discerning" (AbūAlī Sina).

As a matter of fact, in the past and now, teachers have made the children's minds valuable in the teaching-learning process and have attempted to help inexperienced people turn out to be quite well-educated, researcher, expert, faithful, and artist individuals in their work by utilizing art, science, experience, and being faithful to their job and loving their trainees. On the other hand, teachers should be well aware of the environment in which they are living, not limit their minds, actions, and capabilities to the circumstances in which they are. They should be creative, innovative and skillful in their job. They also should not confine their studies to some limited textbooks or handbooks they have been acquainted with in teacher training centers or during their work. The complicated and ever-changing modern world necessitates a constant learning, sensitivity, and creativity (Mirheydari, 2008).

One of the most major concerns of teachers is how to create appropriate condition for human being employed in all professions. Teachers lead and encourage the others to be responsible in their jobs, and to have complete commitment to societal and work-related issues, and to make them observe the dominant ethical principles in their professions (Bickzad et al., 2010). Therefore, communicational and ethical prerequisites should be existed in teachers' personality in order to enable them establish logical relationships and accurate conditions for communicating with their students. Teachers are responsible in making students ready to participate actively in the near future world. Teachers with more professional ethics will be more successful in conducting the society to reach its exalted goals. Thus, professional ethics plays an essential role against social and behavioral disorders (Bickzad et al., 2010). Due to their influential role in their surrounding environment, teachers are required to be equipped with ethical science and behavior, and be familiar with its principles. They also should possess moral virtues and divine etiquettes.

Teachers with professional ethics will make attempts to

enhance such factors as physical, mental, intellectual health, social responsibility, commitment, modesty, honesty, creativity, accuracy, bravery, generosity, and flexibility among their students. Moreover, such teachers will contribute to build security in their students, encourage them to make efforts in modern matters, help them recognize their values, pay attention to their issues courageously, establish good relationships, and eventually, lead them to a good faith in God, the Majesty. Accordingly, professional ethics among teachers may cause such ethics to transmit to students automatically, and the students will follow such teachers as a model in their affairs, and make efforts in prospering and elevating themselves and their future working conditions. So that, this leading to an enhancement of schools, and at a higher level educational organizations, and still beyond, in the society as well. Thus, possession of professional ethics may be considered as a success (Shakeri, 2011), since the teachers with such ethics will contribute to the societal development.

Hence, because of the highly important role and stance of teachers or trainers in an orientation toward educational activities, the present research attempted to examine the characteristics and prerequisites possessed by teachers from Avicenna's perspective, since nowadays it is felt essential to rethink of the works of great thinkers as an original Islamic-Persian model much more than before. Since he was the greatest Persian philosopher and physician in the Islamic world, his effect is more than other Islamic-Persian philosophers. Considering the role and importance of teachers' traits and characteristics, many books have been written by Islamic scholars; among them the book titled "Maniat Al Morid" by Shahid Sani lays emphasis on this issue (Hojati, 1987: 68). Avicenna is more influential in the field of education among Islamic scholars (Arafi and others 2007: 231). His ideas in the field of education and teachers as one of its important elements are so comprehensive including both personal and social aspects (Arafi et al., 2007: 231). Different educational systems, according to their cultural-historic contexts, try to establish desired educational strategies by relying on the scholars' view in their societies. Study and research on Avicenna's standpoints, as one of the main original Islamic-Iranian philosopher, may be highly important. Thus, the present research sought to answer the question "What are the characteristics of teachers' professional ethics from Avicenna's perspective?" Purposive sampling and documentary method of data collection and descriptive-analytic method of data analysis were used. A reference has been made to Avicenna's books in writing this research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was undertaken to find out teachers' professional ethics from Avicenna's perspective. This study is a kind of qualitative research. To collect the data, all of the related written works such

as books, essays, were studied. Therefore, researchers use purposive sampling and documentary method of data collection and interpretive-descriptive method of data analysis. Authorities believe that documentary method of data collection is the most comprehensive method among qualitative researches (Marshall and Rossman, 1998: 119).

Documentary method of data collection was done as follows.

Primary analysis

This step is the organization step in which, researcher firstly chooses and becomes familiar with the documents that will be analyzed later on through free reading and studying (Bardn, 1996: 107).

Extracting from documents and excavating meaning from the content

In this step, the categories and classes of related information should be gathered according to the general aims and unrelated information should be omitted (Flick, 2002: 240).

Descriptive content analysis:

In this step, the ambiguities will be clarified through the contextual materials and the context of analysis.

THE ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS:

In the last step, the constructive content analysis will be done through investigating the results and descriptive content analysis and the questions will be answered based on the goals (Flick, 2002: 241). Therefore, in this study first of all Avicenna's written books will be investigated and through which the subjects related to the teachers' ethics will be taken in to consideration. In the next step, the articles which had been written by the others will be referred to and finally teachers' professional ethics will be described and presented.

Avicenna's biography

AbūAlī Sina Husayn ibn Abd Allāh (Avicenna) (980-1037), a Persian polymath who is regarded as one of the most significant thinkers and writers of the Islamic Golden Age, was born in Bokhara. Having acquired Holy Quran and Arabic literature at the age of ten, he attempted to learn some introductory sciences under the supervision of some teachers from his birthplace, Nateli. He improved his knowledge of philosophy and logic through study, and he turned out to be a professor in the medicine field after a short period of time. He achieved fame because of treating Amir Nuh Ibn Samandis. Afterward, he turned to some office work and joined Khwarazmian dynasty almost in 1003. Thus, he was appointed as minister in

Buyid dynasty in Hamadan and Isfahan for many years, not being safe from the troubles due to such challenging appointment (Bayhaqi, 1932, pp 38-58). In all, Avicenna's life was replete with efforts, activities and changes; he was continually busy with studying, teaching and writing books having a wide range of works. In Juzjani's words, while not holding any textbooks or reference books with him on some trips, Avicenna wrote about 50 pieces of paper a day representing his powerful memory, creativity and persevering efforts in writing. In the bibliographies, Avicenna is considered as possessing 100 books or more than this. In a comprehensive outline made by Mahdavi; a number of 131 original writings written by him and 111 works attributed to him have been stated (Mahdavi, 1934). His most famous works are *The Book of Healing* which is a vast philosophical and scientific encyclopedia and *The Canon of Medicine*, an overview of all aspects of medicine that became a standard medical text in many medieval universities. Teaching, studying continuously, enjoying entertainment, traveling, going to prison and authoring, sometime excessively, made him unable to keep himself healthy in such a way that at the time of being affected by adult colic, he was incapable of resisting against it and he suffered a relapse on his way to Hamadan. He attempted to provide himself with self-cure for some time. However, at the time of entering Hamadan, he abandoned self-cure, and after some days, he passed away on the first Friday of Ramadan Month in 1037 at the age of 58 and was buried there (Ibn Athir, 1987; the 8th Vol. p. 225; Safa, 1952; the 1st Vol. pp 37-38).

The concept of professional ethics

In the past, professional ethics were used as job and work ethics. Today various definitions have been presented for this concept:

- A) Work ethic which is the commitment of individual or group's mental, psychological and physical energy the idea of community in order to obtain power and talent within the group and individual for the reason of development.
- B) Professional ethics is one of the branches of the new morality that seeks to answer various professions and ethical issues and considers certain principles for that.
- C) Professional ethics precedes the issues and questions of ethics and principles and moral values in a system of professional ethics in the professional environment.
- D) The purpose of professional ethics is a set of rules which should be followed voluntarily and based on conscience.
- E) Individual ethics is an individual responsibility for his/her behavior.
- F) Professional ethics includes a series of value judgments, orders to carry out one's duties and behavior

(Gharamaleki, 2001: 39).

The definition of professional ethics is as follows:

1. Professional ethics is a common behavior among professional people.
2. Professional ethics is time management of human attitudes and behavior when doing professional work.
3. Professional ethics is a field of study that deals with the study of the employment relationship.
4. Professional ethics is a set of rules derived primarily from the nature of profession (Hosseini, 2006: 59)

There are two characteristics common in most professional ethics definitions:

- a) The existence and importance of individual approach in carrying out their responsibilities;
- b) the individual's job responsibilities and moral obligations. These characteristics, are both very important and each person requires to follow it in order to do his/her job and duty.

The importance of having a teacher and professional ethics in the process of education is one of the important needs of society.

Teachers' professional ethics

From Avicenna's perspective, anyone who wants to educate others must know what characteristics a trainer should possess, and which capabilities he/she should own and which activities he/she should do in order to be successful in educating the trainees. Such characteristics have been examined below:

Teachers' temperamental characteristics

Avicenna believed that not anyone deserved to be an educator, the educators should possess multiple characteristics and features, as mentioned below:

In terms of individual ethics, educators should possess good qualities and avoid vices. "They should be modest, patient, generous, have pure soul, and be free from light-headedness" (Avicenna, 1929: pp 37-38). It is obvious that anyone who is deprived of good and deserving ethics will fail to train such ethics in trainees.

Regarding social ethics of the trainers, Avicenna pointed out:

"Trainers should possess excellent ethics not only individually but also in relation to other people. They should communicate with the major figures being cognizant of their behaviors and codes of life and of others' life styles. Also, they should know manners of

eating, manners of companionship and rules of etiquette" (Avicenna, 1929: p. 38).

Probably, in this way he wanted to make us aware of the fact that trainers are obliged to make children ready for their future social life and training them according to social traditions and customs.

Soul purification

Considering teachers' professional ethics, it is obligatory for the teachers to purify and train themselves before doing any efforts in educating and training their learners. Avicenna said:

"the very first activity humans are advised to begin with, is to purify themselves; that is, they should initially make efforts in purifying their own souls, make use of their considerations and policies in that, and make themselves pure and sincere because human soul in the nearest and the most respected matter to him/her, and amongst other things, it most deserves attention and concern. It means that anyone who is capable of performing good ethics and of purifying himself/herself, he/she may be allowed to go beyond this and attempt at a government of lands and society; i.e. the one who has managed to purify himself/herself can go further and contrive the people's affairs" (Avicenna, 1946: p.17).

Therefore, in order for anybody to be qualified enough to be a teacher and to educate others in such a way and making them be aware of their duties and helping them reach prosperity, they themselves should be worthy of a high proportion of knowledge, wisdom, good ethics and deeds. As a matter of fact, it is not at all an easy task to become a boss, manager and purifier of one's family and its members; it is indeed a challenging task and a very invaluable position. Trainees' extent of intellectual development, righteousness, nobility and prosperity is dependent on the scientific and practical qualifications of that person attempting to train them. One major cause of wretchedness amongst several trainees is the absence of such fine characteristics in their trainers. Anyone attempting to educate and nurture trainees must possess such necessary qualifications and competencies. Thus, just as a self-purified person is able to, i.e. is deserved to, take actions to purify others, anyone having failed to purify themselves are not capable of purifying and improving others.

Certainly, self-purification itself necessitates some prerequisites which will be examined below:

Dominance of intellect over soul

Avicenna said:

“It is necessary for anyone who wants to perform ethics to know, amongst other things and in the first place, that he/she owns intellect which is responsible for governing his/her whole body, and he/she also owns a soul which often incites him/her to evil deeds, and that such soul, in its nature and its initial creation, has many deficiencies and evil features, and this soul must be governed by intellect” (Avicenna, 1946: p.18).

In fact, it can be said that in case humans leave their souls alone away with itself and do not govern it with intellect, such soul will lead them toward evil deeds. The cause behind this is quite clear in that when soul does not obey the intellect, it will definitely follow passions, anger and desires. The influence exerted by following one’s whim of soul on his/her leading to possession of recalcitrance and evil qualities and to wretchedness is quite obvious for everyone.

Recognition of the soul’s negative properties

Recognition of soul’s negative properties has been regarded as a prerequisite to soul purification from Avicenna’s perspective. He stated:

“For anyone who wants to attempt in self-purification and performs ethics, it is not logical to do that unless he/she managed to recognize all negative and evil properties of soul, otherwise if ignoring some of them, this resembles the situation in which there is a wound in the body which has been apparently repaired, but in fact, some infection still remains in it; and such infection would be strengthened again leading to a relapse of that wound, the infection hidden under skin would again refresh and become evident on the surface of skin”(Avicenna: 1946: p.19).

Accordingly, teachers are initially required, in an attempt to soul purification, to recognize the negative properties of their souls. As a matter of fact, soul purification is fully achieved whenever it accompanies a thorough recognition of soul’s negative properties. So that if one is to perform soul purification, he/she must first know his/her negative properties, this will make them concerned about such properties and encourage them to overcome and remove them.

Recognition of good and bad ethics and making a comparison of them with those of oneself

Trainers or any other one, attempting to purify their soul must first well recognize good and bad ethics and go through an assessment of them. Avicenna wrote:

“anyone who wants to modify his/her ethics and habits

should get aware of other individuals’ ethics and properties and comparing them with those of himself/herself and knowing that he/she is just the same as the others. The human beings are all similar to each other. If they recognized any good ethics in others, they should be sure of the point that such ethics exist in themselves whether obviously or secretly. If they are obvious, they should take care of them in order not to lose them; and if they are hidden, they should make them appear and active and avoid any ignorance; thus, such ethics will be at their service at any time needed or demanded” (Avicenna; 1946: p.27).

On the other hand, if they see any bad or evil properties, they should be well aware that a tendency toward such properties does exist in them too whether overtly or covertly. If they see them as being obvious and clearly noticeable, they should try to overcome them absolutely and eliminate them from their soul through a scarce use of them and a frequent attempt to forget them; and if they recognize them as being hidden, they should try to keep them unnoticed, avoiding them to be obvious through taking care of their soul (Avicenna; 1946)

Accordingly, successful trainers need to make an evaluation and assessment of their properties and moods. They should make the good properties evident in their personalities and avoid the evil ones. Since the teachers play a crucial role in education, they may exert huge influence on trainees; besides, trainees will regard their trainers as a model in their lives. Accordingly, before making any attempt in purification of others, trainers must make efforts to purify themselves trying to reach or approach those criteria expected to exist in any perfect human.

Regarding reward and chastisement for soul actions

The consideration of reward and chastisement for actions originated from soul is among other factors influencing soul purification from Avicenna’s perspective. Avicenna believed that:

“It is desirable for humans to regard both reward and punishment for their soul in order to make them able to govern their soul. In this way, if their soul showed a good obedience in acceptance of virtues and avoidance of evil qualities and was easily guided to the straight path, it will receive good rewards through being praised fluently and allowed to make profit of some pleasures.” (Avicenna; 1946: p.28)

Of course, it is obvious that praising soul for its attempt at a good deed and acceptance of virtues is regarded reasonable to the extent leading to an encouraging one to move toward more development and purification; nonetheless, if it resulted in proud and egotism, it will not

be a good exercise. A wise and watchful person should be, in all respects and situations, well aware of the all blessings are granted by God, and know that all virtues or scientific and practical success they will achieve or any prosperity they will reach are granted by God to them; besides, reaching prosperity is one of the major blessings granted from God.

However, if the soul avoids the acceptance of good qualities and deeds, and does not obey well, and shows disobedience and prefers evil qualities over good ones, one should punish it through a frequent criticism, severe regret and avoidance of pleasures in order to make it obedient (Avicenna; 1946). Thus, to perform correction, it is better to make one's disobedient soul occupied with some religiously-allowed ascetic discipline and good and profitable deeds, since such self-discipline will make humans move toward righteousness and prosperity.

Seeking help from a knowledgeable friend to purify the soul

In many cases, anybody attempting to perform soul purification will fail to recognize his/her own negative characteristics of the soul to remove them. Regarding this, Avicenna said:

"one's recognition about of his/her soul may not be assured of, since humans are not clever enough to come to a recognition of their own negative characteristics; they are indeed slow in this respect; moreover, they are not accurate and exact enough in self-examination of their good or evil characteristics and they may ignore them to some extent. Still, there exists another reason behind this, which helps much to this lack of assuredness that is the humans' intellect which remains unsafe of being interfered with whim of soul whenever regarding their inner qualities and moods. Thus, with the reasons stated above, anyone who wants to recognize his/her good or evil characteristics and to search for his/her evil qualities needs to have a wise friend who is able, just as a mirror, to show his/her good and evil deeds as they really are" (Avicenna; 1946: p.20).

For finding such a friend, there still exist another very important prerequisite that is to be a religious one. One may have more confidence in the mind, intellect and emotions of those individuals being wise and faithful to religion than those being atheist, not believing in God and the Hereafter. Besides, such atheist individuals will not consider any divine effect in the Hereafter exerted by any goodness or badness except that merely occurred here in the earthy world. How can one say that the passions, anger and whim of soul of such people will not influence their reason, emotions and feelings? Religion, knowledge, wisdom and experience all confirm the fact that atheism is an origin of ethical corruption and lack of wisdom and

reason on one hand, and the strengthening of passions in the soul on the other hand. Thus, the talks of anybody being not faithful to any religion about soul purification, just as in many other aspects of material and divine life, may not be reliable. Thus, one major prerequisite regarded for anybody to be a profitable friend of us is to be a religious. "One important point to be made here is that the religion which is making friends' reason and speech worthy of being relied on, is the true one, not that of falsehood or of superstition. Since a void and false religion will cause reason, perceptions and emotions go astray and lead to corruption, it must be avoided. Religious individuals must be a follower of a real religion and gain some knowledge in it; i.e. they should be familiar with truths existed in a true religion" (Avicenna; 1946).

Hence, the following note delivered by Avicenna clarifies his view of having a religious friend: "If one establishes his/her speeches and interactions on the basis of religion and generosity and finds his/her way through by their light, he/she will never go astray" (Avicenna; 1946: p.28). Thus, it may be stated that trainers or any other individuals attempting to exercise righteousness and purification in the others, firstly must make efforts to purify themselves. Since self-purification often comes to failure in many cases due to some ignorance or any other reasons, individuals are required to seek help of their wise friends in searching for their own evil characteristics and select a friend as guide in such a way that can be relied on his/her help and guidance on their way toward soul purification. From Avicenna's perspective, such a friend is that of faithful to a real and true religion.

Good prudence

Since Avicenna held the view that good prudence is an essential element for anybody, one may state that one prerequisite for teachers is good prudence in their administrating the classrooms. He said:

"After kings and commanders, those having some blessings and the favorites and their servants governed by them, should observe good prudence more than others in their affairs; likewise, the managers of families; i.e. the fathers of a given family for example, should follow good prudence in their deeds and affairs." (Avicenna, 1946: p.8)

In other words, good prudence is essential for everybody regarding his/her working conditions, and it is a kind of duty for anyone. "In fact, the smallest and the least important member of a society need a good politics, good administration, much thinking, correction, modification, guidance toward the Straight Path and restraint from the Wrong Path, just as a mayor or governor needs to" (Avicenna, 1946).

Therefore, since teachers' job is to educate trainees and to activate their potentials according to the predetermined goals, and they are under the supervision of teachers, it is really more essential for them, than for any other people, to perform good prudence with respect to their stance and important position.

Reaching a comprehensive recognition of the trainees

From Avicenna's viewpoint, the third element trainers must possess in purifying the others' soul is recognition of trainees. He said: "anyone attempting to remove and correct any evil quality is required to recognize and know such qualities completely. If such a person lacks these qualifications, his/her act of purification will not be regarded as reliable" (Avicenna, 1946: p.18).

Further he stated:

"a professor teaching figures of speech should know that he/she cannot teach any given student any type of figure of speech; indeed, each of students has the capability of learning a particular figure of speech quite distinct from that of to be learned by others; thus, any of them should be taught a special figure of speech appropriate to his/her talents and interests; otherwise, this task will fail to result in a desirable outcome. The reason for this is that if all individuals were capable of learning all figures of speech, they all would possess knowledge of literature and figure of speech. Still, the other reason is that the learning of some traditions and sciences is easy for some tribes or societies, while it may be challenging for some other people. Hence, one may see that some individuals seek to learn rhetoric, some other try to learn syntax, still some other seeking poetry and again other individuals seeking oration. Anybody follows a major related to his/her interests; and going beyond linguistics-related majors, we again see that some are interested in medicine, some other in geometry. Here again it is observed that all people in any social class adopt a major consistent with their talents and interests to study and follow" (Avicenna, 1946: pp 47-48).

The real reason for such adoptions or selections is quite unknown to humans and human understanding fails to grasp it; it is something incomparable and invisible, no one knows it except God. Accordingly, before any attempt at teaching, teachers should first try to assess their students' talents and interests and examine their intelligence. Then, they can select those arts and figures of speech appropriate for them according to their interests and talents. Next, they should gain some information about how their students are interested in that field selected for them. Furthermore, teachers should come to the awareness whether they have any background knowledge in that field or they are totally

inexperienced in that, and whether the available equipment or technology is consistent with their moods or not? Then, teachers do their best; in this way, they will concentrate on the principles of reason and thought (Avicenna, 1946).

According to the above, one may conclude that the role of teacher or trainer in trainees' education and fate is quite evident in all of their developmental stages. Trainers, in order to educate and purify trainees and to help them move toward prosperity, need to establish a deep relationship with them and reach a comprehensive recognition of them.

Whenever teachers gain success in recognizing the students' characteristics and talents, they will be capable of attempting at their guidance in the best way possible through exact administration. Therefore, any constructive effort toward educating trainees is merely possible through a comprehensive recognition.

Behavior based on religion and generosity

Avicenna himself was faithful to religion, since whenever encountering a challenging issue, he went to mosque and said prayers seeking help from God in order to resolve his problems (Safa, 1913: pp 29-30). Thus, in his opinion, it was essential for trainers to exhibit behaviors according to religion and generosity in education and purifying the trainees. Regarding this, he said:

"Whenever you base any of your speeches, meetings or parties upon religion and generosity, your duty will be to observe the limits and rules of religion and generosity, and behave according to them not anything against them. With such supposed basis and its light used on your way onward, they will never go astray, or come across challenging issues and obstacles, since, in this case, your partner is nobody except one of the types below: he/she may be confident, and may communicate with those friends being far away from imprudence and impetuosity. If you give such people pieces of advice and make them aware of their evil properties, you do a good deed for them and they will appreciate it. Even if such individuals show some proud at the beginning, they will like you after thinking carefully and thoroughly about it and recognizing its importance because of your advising behavior. On the other hand, if you face an impetuous and aggressive person, you will fail to make a friendship with such an individual whether you agree with them or not" (Avicenna, 1946; p.24).

Accordingly, within a system based upon Avicenna instruction, religion is expected to dominate all structures of educational system and all teachers or trainers are required to behave toward learners or trainees according to religion and generosity in educating and purifying them.

Recognizing how to give advice

The great wisdom of education lies inherent in advices. Guidance and advice are of positive and valuable administrations of education. Educators and parents, reformers and authorities of an Islamic society will make profit of guidance and advice in educating their children. No one can claim to be free from want of guidance and advice. One of the human's responsibilities and rights toward each other is giving the others advice and remembrance.

In addition to consider the importance of guidance, Avicenna has noted how to perform guidance in his works. He stated:

" to give guidance is not to do it without caring about its appropriate methods and ways; indeed, it is wise to select counseling method in giving a wise person advice. One should make a smooth friendship with such people, as though he/she is treating with a wound in his/her body; in such a case, he/she will cleanse the wound very smoothly. Moreover, we should talk to them in the most private and convenient places in giving them advice. In making them aware of their evil characteristics, inference and indirect talk will work much better than explicit talk; exemplification in speech is much more beautiful than saying it obviously. Having taken this way, if you see the person receiving guidance is eagerly listening to your talks and accepts them, attempt to give him/her your advice completely trying not to leave anything essential untold. However, do not forget to avoid any talkativeness or exaggeration or making them bored. Moreover, do not try to highlight your own idea and let your opinion incorporated in their heart allowing them to think about it carefully guessing what will happen in the end. On the other hand, if you see your partner and friend does not pay attention to your talks, stop your talks making them think that you do not intend to stop talking; indeed, you have something to do, for example; and postpone giving them advice to a later time whenever they are eagerly ready to receive that" (Avicenna, 1946: pp 25-26).

A right and profitable speech always influences hearts. Human are fond of trueness and profits in nature. If speakers give others advice with good intent, fair thought and good-temperedness and on time, it will definitely work. Even if the listeners are not ready to accept it at the time of receiving it, such advice will absolutely influence their heart; just as a seed hidden in soil will waits for a suitable time for growing up. Such true and profitable speech will be placed in their heart waiting for an appropriate time to flourish and attempt at purifying and correcting their heart, mind, action and behavior. The strength and abilities of a true and profitable speech is not less than those of a seed hidden in the soil under the ground (Avicenna, 1946).

Accordingly, speakers should try to speak a true and

Profitable talk delivering it through good intent, good-temperedness and smoothness.

Thus, educators and trainers should try to purify and correct their trainees' heart, mind and behaviors by being familiar with principles and methods of how to give guidance and advice.

Conclusion

Development of any given society owes to education system of that society. The flourishing and dynamicity of education also depends on the performance quality of teachers in that society. With regard to the pivotal role played by teachers in constructing society, it is appropriate for authorities of education to select teachers with a particular sensitivity. They should try to select the teachers having special scientific, ethical and personal characteristics, so that they will succeed in educating the next generation. Educational authorities in charge should evaluate teacher performance at a suitable time doing their best in removing their weaknesses and in strengthening their performance. Accordingly, in the present research, researchers attempted to examine the teachers' professional ethics from Avicenna's views in order to elucidate what criteria he considered a teacher must possess in educating the learners or the trainees. The results obtained are as follows:

1. From the very beginning, in terms of personal ethics, teachers or trainers must possess good qualities and be free from evil qualities. They should be generous and have pure soul. In terms of social ethics, they are required to exhibit desired ethics in facing others in the society to be aware of the way and quality of other individuals' life style, ethics and behavior and gain a high level of skill in interacting with others. Avicenna believed that the role of teacher in educating children is not only conveying the concepts and meaning but also helping the students to acquire the demanded ethics, habits, and values. He believed that the teacher must be insightful and discerning. Therefore the education system must be careful in choosing a teacher. This idea is so agreeable with Gazali's number¹ view on education. Gazali believed that a teacher is responsible for the students' prosperity and adversity (Gazali, 1947: 67). He also stated that: "a teacher must be patient, tolerant and modest toward the weak students (Ali, 2005: 120).

2. It is necessary for teachers or trainers to make efforts to purify and correct their own soul before any attempt at purifying and correcting others. This idea is so agreeable with Suhrawardi² and Mullasadra's³ view on education.

¹ Gazali, Mohammad is one of the great muslim philosopher.

² Yahyo Ibn Habash Shahab Al-Din Suhrawardi opened his eyes to the world in the North of Iran in 1153 (Corbin 2003, 30). He has passed most of his life in

Suhrawardi believed that a good teacher should have a pure and wakeful soul to make him able in guiding the students (Suhrawardi, 2001: 249). Teacher should purify his apparent and interior parts of his character from contaminations (Mulasadra, 1987: 299). Therefore purification is achieved whenever the teachers consider some points, do some actions and follow certain steps such as:

- a. Soul must be merely governed under control and administration of intellect to keep it safe from passions, anger and whim of the soul.
- b. Getting familiar with soul's satanic features and evil qualities and trying to remove them.
- c. Recognizing good and bad ethics in the others' personality and comparing them with those of themselves, and trying to establish good ethics in their soul.
- d. Regarding some reward and punishment for good and bad deeds of the soul.
- e. Seeking for a knowledgeable friend's help in the process of soul purification and regarding that one's cognition of his/her soul is not worthy of being trusted; thus, it is essential to seek for a friend's help who is faithful to religion and reliant on trueness and wisdom.

3. Good prudence is another prerequisite in teaching profession; in other words, good prudence is essential for them, than for any other people, to perform good prudence with respect to their important position in the society.

4. Teachers need to establish a deep relationship with the learners and reach a comprehensive recognition of them in order to educate and purify them. Any constructive effort toward educating the learners is merely possible through a comprehensive knowledge about their points of weakness and strength.

5. Teachers' behavior must be based upon rules of religion and generosity. Religion is expected to dominate all structures of educational system and all teachers or trainers are required to behave toward learners or trainees according to religion and generosity in educating and purifying them.

Therefore Avicenna's above ideas and thoughts are so much agreeable with other Muslim scholars such as Farabi, Gazali, Suhrawardi, and Mulasadra. All of these philosophers brought up subjects about human being growth and education from which many detail prescriptions can be concluded. They also put emphasis on the importance of the teacher role and his/her moral traits.

haplessness and anxiety away from his hometown caused by the crusades (Abvariyan 1993, L10).

³ Sadroddin Mohammad known as Mulasadra (1561-1632) is one of the great Muslim philosopher.

They considered teacher as an influential and important example of truthfulness, honesty, trustee, purity a being congruent in speech and act (Farabi, 1985; Gazali, 1947; Suhrawardi, 2001; Mulasadra, 1987). What makes Avicenna different from the other Muslim philosophers and scholars in this field is that he has allocated a separate chapter to this issue in his writings.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflicts of interest.

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