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Revealing Students' Intelligence in Imam Al-Shafi'i R.H.M Poems

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Abstract

Student is one of the products that complement the educational system. They are the individuals that are being developed for the purpose of satisfying the requirement towards developing a successful and civilized nation. In order to achieve this aim, al-Quran already highlighted two foundational elements in education; knowledge and attitude. *Diwan al-Shafi'i* r.h.m presents few of Imam Shafi'i's poetic texts that are reviewing on the constructs of knowledge and attitude as how highlighted in al-Quran. All of these texts gathered from *Diwan al-Shafi'i* and categorized as the primary source. Using the textual analysis approach, this research tried to analyse few of poetic texts by the support of the secondary data that were obtained from various sources. The result of this study shows that *Diwan al-Shafi'i* r.h.m has outline four constructs of knowledge and five constructs of attitudes that are in line with the teaching of al-Quran and al-Sunnah. All of these analysed texts contribute towards empowering the intelligence of the students that is corresponding to the gist of al-Quran and al-Sunnah.

Keywords: Intelligence, Students, Diwan al-Shafi'i, Imam al-Shafi'i.

Introduction

Education is produced by the combination of interrelated five elements; teachers, students, objective, syllabus, philosophy and textbooks. All of these elements are supposed to complement each other in order to produce the intellectual and quality students. The process of empowering the students' intelligence, it has to be conducted in a holistic way, which is by merging two important components of spiritual and physical – as how outlined in al-Quran and al-Sunnah (Teh, 2018).

If its meaning is literally being studied, intelligent is a process of producing a smart, discerning, quick-learning, knowledgeable and virtuous individual. The process of empowering intelligent must be done based on two important elements from the Quran, which is knowledge and attitude. Allah forbids His servants to practice and conduct any practices without putting knowledge as the basis since all human beings should hold themselves accountable for all of their actions. Hence, the

equipoise measurement between knowledge and attitude must be conducted. This situation is being stated by Allah:

And follow not that of which you have not the knowledge; surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about that (al-Isra', 17:36)

With regard to actualize this process, al-Shafi'i also wrote few of poetic texts that put guidelines towards cultivating the intellectual community, especially amongst the students. The guidelines also can be regarded as the constructs for knowledge and attitude, as how stated in the Quranic verse:

Our Lord! and raise up in them a Messenger from among them who shall recite to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them; surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise (al-Baqarah: 129)

This verse explains the aim of sending Prophet Muhammad PBUH to this world for executing the process of building the intellectual individuals through the approach of *ta'lim* by 'read out', 'teach', and *tazkiyyah* by the exercise of self-purification.

Biography of Imam al-Shafi'i and his *Diwan*

His real name is Abu Abd Allah Muhammad bin Idris bin al-Abbas bin Uthmān bin Shafi bin al-Sayb bin Abid bin Abd al-Yazid bin Hashim bin Abd al-Muttalib bin Abd al-Manaf. He is descendent of Prophet Muhammad through the lineage of Abd al-Manaf, from his mother's side. By this family hierarchy, it can be traced that al-Shafi'i is a descendant of Ahl Bait Bani Hashim and has similar family ties with Prophet Muhammad PBUH.

He was born in Gaza, Palestine, in 150H and few narrations put that he was coming from Asqalan. Other narration said he was born in Yemen, on the day of death of Abu Hanifah in 150 H. His father died before having a chance to know and meet him. He lived with his mother in a very deprived basic of life. His mother brought him to Mecca and stayed there (al-Biqā'i, 1958: 5). He died at the age 54 years old on a Friday night, at the end of Rajab, at the beginning of 204H.

Imam al-Shafi'i r.h.m is one of the prominent and well-known scholars in the Muslim community. He is one of the Imam of madhhab that is very outstanding and also succeeded in producing many books and poems that encompassing variants of disciplines, such as fiqh, aqidah, tasawwuf, hadith and et cetera. He was also known for his proficiency in the Arabic language. In the field of Arabic literature, his magnum opus is *Diwan al-Shafi'i* that contains his spontaneous poems that were uttered during his teaching sessions (Mujahid Mustafa Bahjat, 1999). Those poems were being collected by his disciple and compiled into various versions and publications.

Diwan Imam al-Shafi'i is a compilation of Shafi'i's poems that were collected from the earlier books of *manaqib* and *turath*. There are more than 150 poetic texts that are cited under his name, and 120 from those texts are closely referred to him. Most of his poems touch on the current issue and social polemic that happened during his life. Not only that; he also storied the moment and his experiences while seeking knowledge and became a student. Due to that revelatory points, it is understandable that the shared words are not merely a story, but it is a guideline that can be regarded as the map that can be utilized by students during their journey while seeking for knowledge. Besides, the above-mentioned descriptions also can be comprehended as a piece of advice and guideline for the society to become an optimist individual in doing the *ibadah* (worshipping practices) and seeking for knowledge.

The Element of Knowledge: A Poem Analysis in *Diwan al-Shafi'i* RHM

The knowledge element is highly being emphasized in this process. Knowledge is thus likened to a map that brings someone to the aimed place rightfully and soundly arrived. In this case, al-Shafi'i prepared four basic constructs that serve as the guideline in the process of cultivating the intelligent value amongst students.

First Construct: Choosing Knowledge

In this situation, al-Shafi'i gave the guideline in choosing the knowledge as how being described in his poem:

"All disciplines of knowledge except al-Quran, hadith and fiqh are hustling and bemusing. A knowledge that has no narrators (that is genuinely coming from Rasulullah PBUH) is misguided and comes from Satan." (Syitaywi, 2008)

From this poem, it is understandable that the knowledge has to be comprehended based on *syara'* and not associated with the element of *shirk* that may cause the students to lose their value of *taqwa* and virtuous attitude. He also mentioned, "whoever studies al-Quran he obtains the great value; whoever writes hadith, thus has a strong argument; whoever comprehends fiqh hence he is noble; whoever studies language, hence the preferences are exceedingly fine; whoever grasps the mathematics, he possesses an intellectual mind; whoever not observe self-protection, hence all of his knowledge is in vain and the possessor of all of these (knowledge) is the quality of *taqwa* (Ibn al-Subki, 1965).

Other than that, he also said that: "Knowledge is divided into two, which is fiqh to refining the religious matters and medical discipline for treating the body limbs and the rests are merely the decoration of the council". (Al-Zarnuji, 2008).

Generally, it is understandable that the referred knowledge is not only restrained to the discipline of fiqh, al-Quran and hadith, but any field of knowledge that is not against the *syara'*. Hence, the accurate knowledge and rightful to *syara'*, is surely bringing us to become a person that possesses a value of *taqwa*. In the meantime, to actualize this process will definitely consume a lengthy and constant period. Besides, al-Shafi'i attached the elements of attitude and being *taqwa* through the usage of the components of being departed from evil influences of Satan, steadfast to the value of *taqwa* and sundries.

Second Construct: Guidance from the *Murshid*

Seeking knowledge from the *murshid* is having a learning session with a right teacher that able to give the right direction and virtuous knowledge. In this case, al-Shafi'i also uttered a few of poems related to his teachers. Amongst of the poems touch on his close relationship with his teacher, Waqi' and the advice given by him that became al-Shafi'i's source of strength and guidance throughout his life.

"I confided to Waqi' (my teacher) and he advised me to abstain sins. He said: behold, the knowledge is God's light and His light will not brighten the heart of the sinner!"

He once said on the importance of teacher that is categorized as *murshid* that always guided him to the right path. He regarded that even this *murshid* able to conquer all of his knowledge, still he

hoped with the presence of *murshid*, he is able to get the *syafaat* (intercession help) from his teacher in the hereafter. This poem referring to:

"I love the solihin (plural for the righteous) but I am not amongst them. Perhaps, I will get syafaat from them."

This guidance is corresponding to the words of Prophet Muhammad PBUH:

Human beings will be with those whom they love (Muslim, Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah, chapter *al-mar'u ala man ahabbaha*, constituent 4:2034).

Based on the hadith of Prophet Muhammad PBUH, it is understood that every student that wants to become intelligent, must seek the knowledge from the authentic source, genuine and quality teachers. This situation was not only being emphasized by al-Shafi'i but also pointed up by the Companions and *tabiin* that were known for their massive effort in studying and narrating the hadiths from the authorized and authentic source. Hence, by this determination, it put the value of *thiqah* and *dhabit* as part of the conditions to sanction the authenticity of the hadiths.

However, in order to seek knowledge from the *murshid*, a student has to be a broadminded person, prepare the physical and mental during the learning sessions and accept whatever methods of teaching by that particular teacher.

"Be patient towards the harsh manner from a teacher, due to the absorption of knowledge is merely from his teaching. A person that is not ready to feel humiliated while study, even for a second, surely, he will be experiencing the stupidity throughout this life. People that are left behind the lesson during his young age, thus remind him on the four times of takbir during his death. The adolescent period is solely through knowledge and taqwa. If both of these values are gone, hence no clarity for its essence."

Third Construct: Traveling

In the chapter of travels upon the path of knowledge, Imam al-Shafi'i composed a lot of poems regarding his motivation for the community, especially the students to explore the world and not to stay at home for the sake of knowledge. This issue is very important to be emphasized and surely in line with the recommendation of Islamic teaching as well.

Amongst the uttered poems related to the travel for seeking knowledge are:

*"Go on your journey, you will get the replacer for those forsaken you,
Get through all the exhaustion, indeed there's happiness in the weariness."*

In another poem, he said:

"Abandon the homeland for the better position, start the voyage, for every travelling journey has five benefits; liberate the sadness, finding life, knowledge, courtesy, and a good companion."

Besides, there are other poems that aim for inspiring men to not to sit silently, waiting for the

knowledge to serve them effortlessly. The students have to be proactive in seeking as much as they can to obtain the knowledge. In this construct, what is noteworthy to be highlighted is, Shafi'i emphasises the importance of seeking knowledge and the effort given towards actualizing this journey. Corresponding to this motivation, he also uttered a poem, saying that:

"Learn, since intelligence isn't something you are born with; are those who know and those who do not know alike?"

"Learn as long as your strength allows, you will be a leader, and do not be ignorant as you will be like a captive. Learn every day even a single letter and you will see all the ignorant like donkeys."

If this construct is being examined, it is found that al-Shafi'i composed more than ten poetic texts related to this aspect. Hence, it is understood that this type of construct is the most emphasised element in the process of enriching the intelligent value amongst the students.

Fourth Construct: Write and Spread the Knowledge

Writing and spreading knowledge is the last construct in the element of knowledge. This issue is really being emphasised by Shafi'i in the process of inseminating the intelligent value. This construct is in line with the hadith by Prophet Muhammad PBUH.

Syitaiwi (2003: 125) once cited the stanzas of Shafi'i's poems regarding the importance of writing and spreading the knowledge:

"Knowledge is the hunted animal, and the writings is its follower. Tie the animal up with the strong rope.

Amongst the sign of the stupidity is whenever you hunt an antelope, but you leave it unescaped from its herd."

Shafi'i also criticized the students that forget the construct of writing during the learning process. This situation depicts on the importance of writing in the way of fostering the intelligent of the students that are also regarded as the part of the civilized community (Bahjat: 1999):

"If you see a young man without ink and paper, and he is sitting without a teacher that always certifying the information in a halaqah (circle) of knowledge;

Hence get away and leave them. Indeed, they are in vain. They chose to exchange the highness of the needed himmah (spiritual aspiration)."

In referring to all above-stated constructs, it is able to be summarized that the knowledge is an element that is impossible to be grasped easily. The process of obtaining the knowledge must be accompanied by two efforts; search and give – however it has to be done within the ambit of

syariah.

The following paragraphs will present the analysis of poem that is categorized under the theme of attitude in *Diwan* al-Shafi'i r.h.m.

The Element of Attitude: A Poem Analysis in *Diwan* al-Shafi'i RHM

Prophet Muhammad was sent down to restore mankind to the path that is accepted by Allah. The approach of "*ta'lim*" and "*tazkiyah*" that is being implemented in al-Quran, complementing the process of inculcating the nature of intelligent amongst mankind towards God. Other than the poems related to knowledge, Shafi'i r.h.m also reciting the *tazkiyah* conceptual poem in order to shape the attitude of Muslim students. He put five important constructs in the process of empowering the intelligent of students within the element of attitude; integration between fiqh and sufism, abstaining the stupidity, *tawakkal*, forgiveness and self-abstaining from the disease of *wahn* (love of the world).

First Construct: Integration Between Fiqh and Sufism

A construct is a guideline that aims to complement the process of empowering the intelligent amongst the students. In searching for knowledge, al-Shafi'i also emphasized the aspect of attitude. He motivated the students to be *faqih* (knowledgeable) and as a Sufi (good-attitude). For him, becoming a sufi and *faqih*, an individual may taste the sweetness of *taqwa* within one-self cum turn out to be the virtuous students. Amongst of his recommendation as how stated in his *Diwan*:

"Indeed, a faqih is sanctioned as knowledgeable for his actions, not due to his words and writings.

*A ruler is endorsed as the one for his attitude, not due to his people or soldiers.
Hence the wealth is owing to himself, not because of power and his properties."*

He also stated in his *Diwan*:

"A faqih is likened to safih (ignorant), both of them are depending to each other (from the angle of giving and obtaining the knowledge). The safih will turn into zuhd whenever he gets closer to a faqih."

He was extremely against the group of people that are pretending to be seen as a devout worshipper but having a weak understanding of knowledge. He exemplified those people as a wolf in sheep's clothing¹.

*"Abstain those people that are confronting you with their fake character of the devout worshipper,
Whenever they afar from you, they are likened to a wolf in sheep's skin."*

¹ The English idiom "wolf in sheep's clothing" means a character who disguises themselves as nicer or more harmless than they really are to secrete their true character.

Second Construct: Abstaining the Stupidity

Foolishness or stupidity is a character that has to be desist. Continuous living in this kind of character will engulf someone into the endless darkness. Prophet Muhammad taught his Companions to always pray for facilitating them to receive guidance and knowledge, hence they will not forever reside in the darkness of ignorance. In the way of abstaining the stupidity, al-Shafi'i suggested students to stay silent and not associated with the *safih* (stupid).

"If I notice that there is no taqwa amongst friends, hence alone is far exciting than freely associating with them.

I sit alone for getting calmness in worshipping compared to being associated with people that I have to be in cautious."

(Bahjat, 1998: 74)

He also stated that keeping silent is the best way to respond with those ignorant and refuse to receive advice since constant quarrel with them will only demerit our own self-quality.

"A safih quarrel wickedly with me, I hate to respond to it. By that, his ignorant will increase and my appearance will be seen better (being silent) – like the fragrant smell from burnt sandalwood."

In another poem, he said:

"Say whatever you want to mock me, my silent is an answer for the despicable. It is not that I have no answer but the lion will not be affected by the barking of the dogs."

Third Construct: Tawakkal

Tawakkal is an order that is specifically mentioned in al-Quran. One of the revelations regarding *tawakkal* stated in Ali Imran verse 159:

"So when you have decided, then place your trust in Allah; surely Allah loves those who trust."

In executing this order, Shafi'i stated few of the poems pertaining *tawakkal* in daily life. This recommendation needs to be grasped by each of the students. These are amongst the related poems by Shafi'i:

"I put my tawakkal in the quest for rezq, to Allah my Creator and I certain that Allah will give me rezq."

The matters that becoming my rezq will not get away from me, though it underlies beneath the sea. The bless of rezq from Allah will be given to me, even though my tongue is silent. Why I have to feel a loss, since Allah has divided all of His sustenance to all of His creatures."

In that poem, al-Shafi'i advised us to be certain with the fate that is destined by Allah, after all of the struggle and effort. However, we have to remember that whatever decided by Allah is the best, even though the heart of the creatures is unsatisfied with the disposed fate. Allah says:

"And it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you, and Allah knows, while you do not know." (Al-Baqarah, 2: 216)

Imam al-Shafi'i also composed his poems that means:

"Every person wishes that their demands will be granted, Allah is not giving them except what He wishes to happen.

Every person says that my benefit and wealth (are everything), despite the taqwa to Allah is the utmost benefit for them."

In completing the value of *tawakkal* of creatures to their Creator, al-Shafi'i once composed a poem that describes the character of servant that need to be with each Muslim. By that, the full certainty will be developed. The referred poem is stated as follow:

"You are sufficient for me and my heart and You are everything.

I don't mind when You want to illustrate Your love, as long as You show me Your care."

Fourth Construct: Forgiving

Giving forgiveness is one of the important constructs in the process of shaping a genuine attitude. Prophet Muhammad PBUH said, he always forgives the mistakes of others, even his foes. Besides, There are many accounts show how forgiving Prophet Muhammad PBUH throughout his life (Bukhari, 2001: 39). Allah also praises the forgiving individuals as how stated in chapter al-Fussilat, verse 34-35:

"And not alike are the good and the evil. Repel (evil) with what is best, when lo! he between whom and you was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend.

And none are made to receive it but those who are patient, and none are made to receive it but those who have a mighty good fortune."

In delivering the advice regarding forgiveness, al-Shafi'i had composed poems related to this issue:

"When I give my forgiveness and no grievance towards others, I feel so calm from the worrisome enmity.

Indeed, I give my greeting to my enemies whenever I meet him, hence by that salutation, I can abstain from the wickedness upon me.

I portray my delightful face towards the people that I hate as if my heart is blossoming with happiness.

Human beings are the diseases and a human's disease are by approaching it while being away from them will lose the feeling of love."

Other than the above-mentioned poem, al-Shafi'i also motivated the community regarding the same aspect through his other two poems – as how cited by Syitaywi:

Accept forgiveness from whoever seek from you, either conducted in praiseworthy or blameworthy.

Surely the person who has made you feel good has obeyed you, and the person hiding from opposing you has submitted to you."

The second poem of Syitaywi (2003: 164) denotes the meaning:

"Improve the relationship and forgive whoever do bad, and response to the with the better ways."

Fifth Construct: Abstaining from the Disease of Love of The World

Detach from the love of the world is the peak point in the element of attitude. This construct will drive a Muslim, especially the student to become a good and practising religious individual, cum transferring the nation towards the better current life and hereafter. The excessive love of the world is the tendency of heart and thought solely towards this world (Abu Hilal al-Askari, 1988: 122). This aspect is truly opposed in Islam. However, this matter always is a prioritize amongst human beings until they willing to shut their eyes, refuse to admit the truth. Al-Shafi'i also criticized the character of the rulers that put their excessive love of the world in his poems:

*"The judges in this epoch have gone astray and clearly showing their disheartenment,
They sell the religion with the price of this world, thus there is no profit for their business."*

His anger shows that he extremely opposes the rulers that are willing to sell out the value of the hereafter just for the pleasure of this world. His anger can be also referred to the Quranic verse from chapter al-Ghafir, verse 39:

"O my people! this life of the world is only a (passing) enjoyment, and surely the hereafter is the abode to settle."

Meanwhile, Prophet Muhammad also said:

"Be you in this world, as a stranger or a traveller."

Both of the aforementioned Quranic verse and the hadith illustrate to us that to love this world excessively and negate the value of hereafter will make us as a real loser.

Conclusion

Revealing the above-stated poems composed by al-Shafi'i proves its synchronization with the process of empowering the intellect amongst students with the recommendation found in al-Quran and al-Sunnah. This process connects the features of intellect and moral with the concept of faith will produce a successful and civilized nation.

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