GENDERED MORALITY: MASCULINITY, MARRIAGE, AND SOCIAL RELATIONS IN PREMODERN ISLAMIC ETHICS

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ABSTRACT

ZAHRA AYUBI: Gendered Morality: Masculinity, Marriage, and Social Relations in Premodern Islamic Ethics
(Under the direction of Carl Ernst and Juliane Hammer)

This dissertation analyzes gender constructions and notions of moral gender relations in three widely influential medieval Persian treatises of Islamic ethics (akhlaq), Kimiya-i Sa‘adat by Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali (d. 1111), Akhlaq-i Nasiri by Nasir-ad Din Tusi (d. 1274), and Akhlaq-i Jalali by Jalal ad-Din Davani (d. 1502). In examining these prescriptive works that instruct Muslims on how to live ethical lives, the main question I ask is how have medieval Muslim ethicists constructed morally guided notions of masculinity, femininity, and marriage and male homosocial relations. I argue that these texts reveal a metaphysical tension between an ethical principle that all human selves (nafses) are created equal and a hierarchical organization of humanity based on intellect and spirituality, in which some men are above others based on ethical and rational capacity and all men are above women. The ethicists define ultimate masculinity in terms of power, intellectual potential, and ethical comportment in the domestic realm as well as in homosocial structures of court, civic, and community life. They define women as instrumental to men’s ethical activities since they view women themselves as lacking full rationality and limited by their biological functions.
To my family,

from whom I learn lessons in ethics everyday.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

In Ovidio Abdul Latif Salazar’s 2004 dramatized documentary, *al-Ghazali: The Alchemist of Happiness*, a young Ghazali faces a crisis of faith and conscience after witnessing Baghdad’s corrupt political climate. A dramatic recounting of his life that includes imagined verbal exchanges with his brother and Saljuq officials, is set against a staged backdrop of Ghazali’s domestic life, complete with a beautiful wife and a young son and daughter. Ghazali is depicted as a troubled genius, contemplative, and ultimately resolute in leaving home for a long journey to Damascus, Jerusalem, and Makkah. In the climactic scene, Ghazali hugs his children, pauses to look at his wife but then turns to his brother and says, “You understand that I have to leave.”1 Immediately after, the voice of Sufism scholar, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, describes the journey as, “the act, which makes Ghazali Ghazali, that’s why we are speaking about him now, 900 years later. That is, he left his position, his wealth, his family, the world, and disappeared in order to rediscover certitude, in order to be honest with himself in understanding the nature of the divine reality.”2

Ghazali’s wife, played by a famous Iranian actress, appears several times during the course of the film, praying, receiving visits from Ghazali’s doctors, delivering and pick-

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2 Seyyed Hossein Nasr in *Al-Ghazali: The Alchemist of Happiness*
ing up trays of food for Ghazali, but is always silent; the filmmakers did not write any dialogue for her, as if such an omission were staying true to Ghazali’s biographies. The climactic scene in which Ghazali embarks on his journey leaves the viewer wondering, what would she have said? Did Ghazali have private conversations with his wife about his journey, when she could expect him back, and how she should raise the children and run the home in his absence, and in case of his death? What was her role in Ghazali’s intellectual and spiritual pursuits? What were her own goals? Why not re-create what she would have said, to add to the drama?

The film is an example of contemporary reverence of Ghazali’s life and legacy. Ghazali serves as a scholarly role model, as the ultimate, famous scholar who transformed himself by identifying his place in the cosmos at the cost of sacrificing worldly comforts, including his family. He is praised for his knowledge and selflessness in pursuing the origins of man’s true happiness. But we can ask several questions in light of this reverence: Are such opportunities for self-reflection open to women? How much of the path to ultimate happiness and enacting God’s will through training of the self is gendered as male?

This dissertation analyzes gender constructions as well as moral and religious gender relations in three widely influential medieval Persian treatises of Islamic ethics (akhlaq). In examining these prescriptive works that instruct Muslims on how to live ethical lives, the main question I ask is how have medieval Muslim philosophers and ethicists constructed morally guided notions of masculinity, femininity, and gender relations. I examine how seminal scholars of the classical period in Islamic ethics, Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali (d. 1111), Nasir-ad Din Tusi (d. 1274), and Jalal ad-Din Davani (d. 1502) imagine masculinity, femininity, and ethical relations in homosocial relationships and in marriage, which is the central locus of mixed gender interaction.

3 Throughout this dissertation I define gender as social behaviors related to sex that reflect religious, cultural, political, psychological, and social understandings of masculinity and femininity.
I pursue my investigation as global Muslim gender relations slowly transition towards gender egalitarian models of society and women’s increased participation in public, political, religious, and intellectual life. Scholars of gender in Islam have been developing multiple strategies for engaging the Islam tradition in search of solutions to challenges prompted by modern transformations in gender relations and social change. They primarily have looked to developing feminist hermeneutics of the Qur’an and engagement with the legal tradition.4 Recently, many scholars such as Amina Wadud, Kecia Ali, Zayn Kassam, and Reza Shah Kazemi have also begun to use the category of “ethics” or “Islamic ethics” as a high moral standard in their calls for reform in areas of Muslim thought including hermeneutical methodologies of the Qur’an, gender relations in Islamic law, and political theory.5 Their definitions of Islamic ethics are interpretations of scriptural or jurisprudential sources from contemporary, reformist perspectives; however, their works prompt the need for greater engagement with the

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philosophical tradition of Islamic ethics.

Scholarship that engages directly with classical akhlaq texts focuses on their political content, discussions on moral governance, and advice for sultans, within the sub-genre of ethics known as fürstenspiegel or “mirrors for princes,” even when such discussions are contained within treatises that cover a broader range of topics than politics. For example, John Woods, historian of the Aqquyunlu dynasty, characterizes Davani’s Akhlaq-i Jalali as “a treatise on politics and mirror for princes,” rather than as complete ethics manual, and scholar Alam Muzaffar refers to the text’s relevance in relation to political discourses in Mughal India. Scholars of contemporary Muslim philosophy and theology such as Abdulaziz Sachedina, Amyn Sajoo, and Mohsen Kadivar point to akhlaq as sources of inspiration and evidence of the native presence of notions of justice and human rights in the Muslim scholarly tradition. While research on texts of Islamic ethics offers rich insight into Islamic political theory, the texts must be treated as more than just “mirrors for princes” in order to get at broader questions about ethical conceptions of societal relations. They must be read holistically in order to understand how gender, power, and hierarchy operate in the construction of Islamic ethics.

By focusing on the genre of classical Islamic ethics in this project, I am able to investigate cultural and deeply philosophical ideas about gender and gender roles in Muslim thought. Yet, this alternative perspective on Muslim ethics connects metaphysics and moral theories with real-life queries. This study tracks gendered and hierarchical ideologies in texts of akhlaq, a significant branch of Muslim thought. I attempt to tease out the contradictions and inconsistencies in assumptions about the metaphysical and biological natures of men and women, and their implications for Muslims’ ethical ap-

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proaches about how to live. By examining constructions of the feminine and masculine, and ethical norms of marriage and homosociality, I argue that philosophical concepts of the soul and moralistic virtues in Islamic ethics are primarily gendered as male. I contend that the ethicists organized humanity according to a hierarchy based on male primacy, their superior rational, and therefore ethical, virtues. The treatises are part of a normative Muslim discourse that dispenses practical advice about how to live morally as individuals, male heads of domestic economies, and part of society at large.

1.1 Sources

My research on gender in Islamic philosophical ethics is based on the close reading of three Persian texts from the early 12th to the late 15th centuries, which connect to one another genealogically and historically, and reveal shared notions of the ethical individual as gendered male and gender and social relations based on a hierarchy of intellect. The texts are Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali’s *Kimiya-i Sa’adat* (*The Alchemy of Happiness*), Nasir-ad Din Tusi’s *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* (*Nasirean Ethics*), and Jalal ad-Din Davani’s *Lawami’ al-Ishraq fi Makarim al-Akhlaq* (*Lustres of Illumination on the Noble Ethics*), better known as the *Akhlaq-i Jalali* (*Jalalean Ethics*). Although these three texts are a small sample of *akhlaq* treatises, they are arguably the most foundational of the field. By analyzing and synthesizing these seminal sources, my goal is to obtain a broad view of constructions of masculinity, femininity, gender relations, and gendered ethics in classical *akhlaq*. In order to appreciate the nuanced differences in the ethicists approaches on those subjects, I also tease apart the differences among

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the texts on conceptions of the *nafs*, notions of love, and gender roles in marriage and homosocial contexts.

I have chosen works by Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani, because their works are celebrated in many countries as Muslims’ primary cultural discourse on the subject of personal discipline and the record of Islamic moral heritage. From a gender perspective, Ruby Lal writes that in 19th Century India, these works served to confirm patriarchy as the Islamic order of society: “writings such as the *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*, in which the father is the focus of the worldly domains, inner and outer, were very much part of the north Indian Islamicate milieu.” More research into late pre-modern and early modern social history and gender discourses is required to fully understand how these texts influenced Muslim notions of gender roles and practices.

Further, I chose Persian language treatises instead of Arabic ones because in addition to serving as key points in Muslim intellectual history and Islamic ethics, they also enjoyed wide historical influence. Brian Spooner and William Hannaway explain that within a century and a half after the Arabo-Islamic expansion into Persian lands in 651, Persian was reintroduced to court and administration using Arabic script, “supplant[ing] Arabic into a niche.” Starting in the eighth and ninth centuries until the British occupation of South Asia in the nineteenth century, Persian was a language of administration and literature from the Balkans to China. Spooner and Hannaway argue that, “No other language has ever maintained such a monopoly of the medium of writing over so large a territory for so long a period,” adding that, “Persian provided

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8 Alam, 50-51, 60.


11 Spooner and Hanaway, 1.
the vocabulary that served as the medium not only for the continuation of protocols of administration, diplomacy, and public life [...] but also for important cultural features relating to administration and social norms for the whole society [...]”

The ethics texts of Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani are part of that expansive cultural literature in the Persian language that establishes norms for both administration and society as a whole.

In his introduction to the *Kimiya*, Ghazali himself comments that,

> In this book, we explain these topics [...] for Persian speakers [...] if someone wishes more methodical and fine [information] above this, he should seek out Arabic books [...] For the scope of this book is the general population who have begged for such a work in Persian and the language has been produced for the boundaries of their understanding.

Even Ghazali felt the pressure to cater to the demographics of his audience, for whom Arabic was a Qur’anic language but not necessarily the language in which to learn about ethics. Ghazali also intended the work to be for a lay audience, not just a Persian speaking one. Within the text itself, Ghazali provides his own Persian translations and comments in the instances he uses lengthy Arabic quotations from hadiths or non-prophetic sayings. He does not assume that the Persian language reader knows Arabic, as was expected of all intellectuals of his age.

Like Ghazali, Tusi wrote his first treatise on ethics, the *Akhlaj-i Muhtashimi*, in Arabic, but surviving manuscripts include a Persian translation with the original Arabic.

His second ethics work, the more famous *Akhlaj-i Nasiri* is in Persian. Writing in Persian created a wider readership for these ethics texts, extending their accessi-

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12. Spooner and Hanaway, 3.

13. The word Ghazali uses for Arabic is *tazi*, the middle Persian word for Arab persons and the Arabic language.


bility beyond the Arabic speaking intellectuals to the predominantly Persian speaking population of central Muslim lands, or at least the elite among them, such as the court patricians who were interested in scholarship. Hamid Dabashi and Farhad Daftary credit Tusi with a major expansion of technical prose in the Persian language because of the unprecedented Nizari move to make Persian their religious language; Tusi’s writings encouraged others to write on philosophical and theological topics in Persian.16

Davani also chose Persian over Arabic to write about ethics. Most of Davani’s works were written in Arabic with a few exceptions such as the Akhlaq-i Jalali, which, incidentally, became his most famous work. The text itself contains more references to Persian stories and anecdotes that were circulating at the time, suggesting an even more expansive audience than that of the Kimiya and Akhlaq-i Nasiri. The work continued to be popular in its original Persian for centuries to come in Mughal India. With all three texts, making the genre of akhlaq itself accessible to Persian speakers was a result of the fact that the Islamic milieu was no longer dominated by Arabic, as Persian became an important Islamicate language of learning.

In the last 35 years alone, these texts have been republished in Iran, India, and Pakistan in the original Persian many times. The edited manuscript of Kimiya-i Sa’adat by Hossein Khadivjam has been printed 14 times and sold over 42,000 copies in Iran. Mojtaba Minvi and Alireza Haydari’s 1977 edition of Akhlaq-i Nasiri is less popular among lay people in Iran, but has been reprinted 6 times and sold 20,000 copies, an impressive number for a pre-modern work. In India and Pakistan, one can speculate that several thousand reprinted copies of Akhlaq-i Jalali exist, but mostly as reproductions of 100 year-old lithograph versions. A Persian and Urdu edition by Hafiz Shabir Ahmad Haidery was completed in 2007; he states there is sustained interest in the work in India, which prompted him to re-translate it into Urdu and publish it as a


Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani, primarily discuss ethics through the male individual and the male individual’s role in his household and society. The goal of the texts is to uplift the individual through mediation of his nafs or soul so that he may act ethically in personal, domestic, social, and political spheres, according to the best, most rightly guided standards that make up the scholars’ sense of ethics. The texts only address men about how to act ethically with other men and with women. With citations to the Qur’an, and sayings by the Prophet Muhammad, the Muslim philosophical and legal traditions, and Plato and Aristotle in the case of Tusi and Davani, these texts address a range of ethical prescriptions for sharpening one’s spiritual acumen by dealing ethically in politics, distribution of wealth, household management, friendship, and marriage. In all three texts, the ethical subject strives to control the faculties of the soul and perfect the ethical virtues conducive to bringing about maximum happiness, defined as knowledge of the Divine, physical health, material wealth and influence, virtue and reputation, and prosperity, or simply as success in both this world and in the hereafter. In addition to lessons on metaphysics, the texts provide a detailed code of ethics, ranging from the lofty goals of achieving spiritual discipline, down to the ethics of daily minutiae, such as walking and sitting, eating and drinking, finding a wife, social etiquette, or giving career advice to one’s children, which are all acts that both demonstrate and constitute spiritual discipline. At times, the texts read like psychological-spiritual self-diagnosis manuals, especially when the ethicists enumerate the vices that arise from individual faculties of the soul and describe the mental logic involved when the nafs fools individuals into believing they are acting virtuously.

The audience of the texts is exclusively male. As I discuss in greater detail in Chap-

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17Haidery, 6 and 18.
ter Two, we know this because the ethicists speak of women only in the third person throughout the texts and discuss order of the *nafs* using examples that only pertain to men. As a comparative genre, the Sufi manuals of male chivalry, *Sui-futuwawt*, explicitly excluded women: “And there is no *futuwawt* for women because the Prophet said, ‘They are incomplete in intelligence and in religion.’”¹⁸ Although the *akhlaq* texts never explicitly say that ethics are not for women, or quote the hadith mentioned here, especially since they recognize women’s *nafses* and also discuss women’s roles, they share the notion that women are deficient in rationality, which in essence has the same effect of excluding them from the science of ethics, *tahdhib-i akhlaq*.

The contexts of Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani’s works are not just the normative discourses of ethics, which I discuss in the previous section, but also their real-life observations of men and women’s behaviors at home, in the city, and at court. In doing so, they attempt to solve ethical dilemmas of their times and address corrections to problematic behaviors they observe. Nonetheless, all three ethicists create an imagined ethical world, by way of constructing personal and social mores. In the ethical world, men and women are meant to behave in certain ways, giving us a sense of how all ethical subjects, and their social interactions, are gendered.

The quotations from the three treatises I use throughout this dissertation are my own translations from the original Persian, unless otherwise noted. The extant English translations of the *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* and *Akhlaq-i Jalali* are Orientalist ones that assume the these texts are copies of the Nicomachean Ethics. In undertaking my own translation, my goal is to pay particular attention to intertextual references to the Qur’an, hadith, *kalam*, and *fiqh*. The only full translation of the *Kimiya Sa’adat* is a contemporary one done from the perspective of a pious Muslim, Jay Crook, who is sensitive to

references to other Islamic texts, but assumes that Ghazali meant to address both men and women in his text. Thus, his translation of the *Kimiya*, as well as the Orientalist translations of the other two texts, miss gendered nuances of terms that may prove important for my analysis. For these reasons, I found it useful to parse the Persian texts myself.

### 1.1.1 *Kimiya-i Saʿadat*

Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali was born in 1058 in Tus, which is now a small suburb of Mashhad in Iran’s province of Khorasan. Scholars have been captivated by Ghazali’s intellectual biography for many years. In the last decade alone, there have been a number of monographs on his works from various phases of his career, as he transitioned from the political to philosophical and theological, and finally to the mystical elements of Islamic thought. As one of his last works, the *Kimiya-i Saʿadat*, serves as a culmination of lifelong reflections on the state of the world and the personal ethics one needs in order to attain true happiness.

At the height of his career at the Saljuq court and *mudarris* of Baghdad’s Nizamiyyah, Ghazali renounced his life in Baghdad and went away on a distant journey. In his autobiography, Ghazali explains that to the caliph and his friends, he explained his desire to go on an extended pilgrimage, but really he resigned on account of becoming aware of his greed for the material trappings of success. Yet, scholars have noted that given the historical events surrounding his departure, this was unlikely.

Numerous

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20Safi, 108.
scholars have theorized Ghazali’s reasons leaving, including fear of being assassinated at the hands of the Isma’ilis, tensions with the Saljuqs, and his craving to lead a recluse, ascetic life.  

Safi proposes that since Nizam al-Mulk established the madrasa system as network of reconnaissance and surveillance of scholars, students, and their ideas, “Al-Ghazali’s escape is not simply that of one yearning for a spiritual life, it is also the desire to escape the gaze he was under at the madrasa.” As I illustrate throughout my discussions of *Kimiya-i Sa’adat* in this dissertation, both his newfound focus on spirituality and his reassessment of public and political expressions of Islam are reflected in his major treatises on ethics, which he wrote after semi-retiring to Tus in 1099. Unable to completely recuse himself from politically involved institutions, in 1106 Ghazali joined the Nizamiyya in Nishapur, far away from the watchful eye of the caliphate in Baghdad but still close to his home in Khorasan, where his wife and children resided.

Safi further argues that in his political treatises “[Ghazali] gradually shifts from talking about the caliphate to a cooperation of the caliphate and the sultanate and ends with a frank justification of Saljuq Turks as being the people to whom God has given ‘raw power’ (*shawka*)” His move away from caliphal power as ultimate human authority to legitimizing sultanates as the chosen powers of God, in my estimation, also signifies a shift away from an approach to ethics based solely on religious or divine authority, for which his early polemics are famous, towards a philosophical, rationalized approach to authority, and ethics by extension. Legitimacy came to those who were just rulers, and thus were favored by God, an idea that becomes central to Davani’s political ethics a few centuries later. With regard to sources of morality and the origins of ethics, the devaluation of the caliph also created a greater emphasis upon an

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21 Safi outlines all of these positions in *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam*, 108.

22 Safi, 109.

23 Safi, 111.
individual’s own reasoned ethics.

Although some scholars cite Ghazali’s rejection of Mu‘tazilite ideas, which emphasized reason-derived ethics, and his outright rejection of philosophy as a method of thinking, I prefer to think of Ghazali’s work as Ebrahim Moosa describes, as a dihliz, “the intermediate space or the threshold space that Ghazali identified—one with intersecting boundaries and heterogeneous notions of practices and time.”

Accordingly, in the *Kimiya-i Sa‘adat*, we see the convergence of reason and revelation as the way of ethics, which even uses the methodologies of the philosophers. The marriage of reason and divine authority is apparent in *Kimiya-i Sa‘adat*, and connects the text to Tusi and Davani’s falsafa-oriented treatises more closely than many scholars are willing to consider. Although in his other texts, he explicitly disavows the philosophical tradition, and therefore, does not have specific references to Aristotle or Plato as do Tusi and Davani, I show that much of the *Kimiya* conforms to the Greek-inspired Muslim philosophical tradition in relation to understandings of the nafs and its training.

Ghazali wrote his magnum opus, the *Ihya’ Ulum ad-Din*, an encyclopedic ethico-legal compendium, between 1096 and 1102, during his hiatus from public life when he was traveling in Damascus, Jerusalem, Makkah, and Medina. Scholars estimate that he wrote the much shorter, Persian language ethics manual, *Kimiya-i Sa‘adat*, some time during the end of that period, but certainly after the *Ihya’*. Although Ghazali describes the *Kimiya* as an abridged Persian rendering of his more expansive and famous *Ihya’*, the presentation of topics on how to live ethically is, on the whole, more based on metaphysical notion of moral being, rather than the law, as a result of his omission of technical legal explanations and fiqh-oriented details. Ghazali even states that those seeking “complicated explanations and fine and difficult points” should seek

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out his other works.\textsuperscript{25} The stated purpose of the \textit{Kimiya}, by contrast, is to familiarize the readers with the figurative “alchemy, which brings the virtues of the human from lowliness of brutishness toward purity and excellence of the state of angels until he/she obtains everlasting happiness.”\textsuperscript{26} The \textit{Kimiya} is not just Ghazali’s move away from the letter of the law to its spirit, but also a focus on an individual’s spirituality and role in the world in relation to that spirituality. Not unlike its falsafa-based ethics counterparts the \textit{Akhlaq-i Nasiri} and \textit{Akhlaq-i Davani}, the \textit{Kimiya}’s stated goal is finding happiness through correcting the \textit{nafs} with methods prescribed by virtue ethics.

After a prologue about the nature of the self or the \textit{nafs}, followed by a discussion of the nature of God, the world, and the hereafter, the \textit{Kimiya} has two main parts, issues that are \textit{zahir} or apparent, which include acts of worship and social transactions (‘iba-dat and \textit{mu’amulat} respectively), and issues that are \textit{batin} or hidden, which include \textit{pak kardan-i dil} (purification of the heart) and \textit{arastan-i dil} (adornment of heart). In the first parts of the text, he speaks as a philosopher imparting wisdom about the \textit{nafs} and the behavioral pitfalls of the \textit{nafs}. Then in speaking on ethical behavior, Ghazali takes on the voice of an advisor on matters ranging from what to do in case of marital discord to how to comport oneself socially in pubic and at court.

\subsection{1.1.2 \textit{Akhlaq-i Nasiri}}

As his name suggests, Nasir ad-Din Tusi was born in Tus on February 17th, 1201. Tusi was most probably raised in a Twelver Shi‘i environment. He states in his autobiography-cum-treatise defending his beliefs in Isma‘ili ideas, that his family followed the exoteric aspects of the \textit{shari‘a}, which prompted him to search for more

\textsuperscript{25}Ghazali, 9.
\textsuperscript{26}Ghazali, 5.
mystical and esoteric understandings of Islam. Some scholars believe he was Isma’ili to begin with because in this biography, he discusses coming out and declaring his true feelings, as if emerging from *taqiyya*. However, according to Tusi scholar, S. J. Badakhchani, that does not account for his discussion of his transformation to deliberately choosing Isma’ili ideas in *Sayr wa Suluk*. Wilfred Madelung suggests that he converted to Isma’ilism on philosophical grounds. Simultaneously, some Imami Shi’i historians have either forgiven his association with Isma’ilis, while others claim that his conversion to Isma’ilism was only temporary.

Early in his career, after reading a compilation of sermons and essays by the Nizari Isma’ili Imam, Hasan ‘Ala Dhikrihi al-Salam (d. 1166), Tusi was convinced of the need for learning the inner meanings of the Shari’a through a teacher, and more specifically, a living imam. He unsuccessfully pleaded with the Isma’ili governor of Quhistan to join the Isma’ili community. Finally after 1224, during the rule of the next *muhtashim* or (leader) of the Qhistani Nizaris, Nasir ad-Din ‘Abd al-Rahim, he was admitted as a *mustajib* (novice). He entered into service at the muhtashim’s court and wrote several treatises on a wide range of subjects including astronomy, mathematics, medicine, physics, jurisprudence, philosophy and theology.

As a vizier and intellectual *hakim*, Tusi oversaw surgeries, provided astrological calculations of auspiciousness of dates, and advised on matters of patronage. Appro-

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29 Badakhchani, 1.


31 A summary of the various arguments speculating Tusi’s true faith can be found in Daftary, 173.

32 Badakhchani, 4.
priately, the term *hakim* is used as a title for the polymaths who were philosophers, physicians, and more. The title *hakim* continues to be used in modern South Asia for those who practice traditional *yunani tibb* or “Greek” medicine because its origin came from practitioners who were trained in this natural science as part of the applied knowledge branch of philosophy.\(^{33}\) As *hakim*, Tusi was surrounded by the politics and happenings of the court, which forms the backdrop of social reality to which his *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* responds.

Tusi is notorious for his participation in sectarian polemics, his conversions from Imami to Isma‘ili Shi‘ism and back, and ultimately for his role as advisor to Chingiz Khan’s grandson, Hulegu, after the Mongol invasion in 1256. Hulegu rewarded Tusi with great trust, patronage, and employment in his service, following his role in convincing the Isma‘ili leadership in Alamut to surrender to the Mongols. He then accompanied Hulegu as his advisor onwards to sack Baghdad. Some versions of the story relay that the Mongols’ famous method of the caliph’s execution, namely rolling him up in a carpet and slowly beating him to death, was allegedly Tusi’s idea to test whether an astrologer’s prediction of Hulegu’s illness luck would come true following the caliph’s execution.\(^{34}\) Eventually, he continued his intellectual activities and became the head of the Maraghah observatory library commissioned by Hulegu.

Presumably, it is at Maraghah that he edited the *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*, which had become widely circulated by then, to fit the sectarian politics of the day. He removed the passages in praise of Ismai‘ilism and the leadership of Alamut from the treatise and replaced them with a disclaimer in the introduction stating that the ideas presented in the book are non-sectarian.\(^{35}\) Ultimately, his writings and ability to transfer allegiances

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\(^{34}\)Dabashi, 532.

\(^{35}\)G.M. Wickens. “Akhlaq-e Naseri,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 725. Badakhchani argues that the work
so easily indicate that Tusi was more concerned with the ideas, rather than what sect they came from. Even with the Mongol invasion, his safeguarding of libraries, observatories, and the like shows that regardless of the political regime of the day, knowledge was the thing worth saving.

Tusi wrote the *Akhlq-i Nasiri* while at the court of the Nizari Isma’ili governor of Quhistan around 1235. His first notable treatise on ethics, called *Akhlq-i Muhtashimi*, was an Isma’ili-oriented approach to the question of how to live a virtuous life and based on the muhtashim’s own outline of ethical topics, his favorite subject. In addition to Qur’anic verses and hadiths, the text is based on sayings of the early Shi’i imams and later Isma’ili imams and thinkers.\(^{36}\) The *Akhlq-i Nasiri*, also named after his benefactor, was a much more philosophical approach to ethics, partly modeled after Ibn Miskawayh’s 11th century Buyid period treatise *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq*, though the original version contained several passages in the introduction and conclusion in praise of the Isma’ilism and the Isma’ili political regime, which he later removed.\(^{37}\)

As Tusi himself describes, the goal of his treatise builds on the “Practical Philosophy” of Ibn Miskawayh’s, *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq*, with the significant addition of chapters on management of the domestic economy and the craft of running households, for the purpose of “complete revival of goodness” among “people of today, who are mostly bereft of the adornment of ethics, [...so they can] beautify themselves with the study of the bejeweled ideas of this collection [of ethics].”\(^{38}\) Perhaps partly in response to wayward politics, unethical behaviors, and troublesome observations of status of per-


\(^{38}\)Tusi, 34.
sonal affairs of people at court, this is a text that is meant to instruct elite men on matters of how to live the most virtuous, ethical life possible that is in accordance with the ways of God as known through the science of theology, rationality as known through the methods of logic and reasoning, and wisdom as known through the science of philosophy. As with all pre-modern philosophical treatises, the audience of Akhlaq-i Nasiri is exclusively male.

The book is divided into three discourses, couched between an introduction that classifies fields of knowledge and sciences and a conclusion that contains relevant references and sayings attributed to Plato and Aristotle. The ultimate goal of the akhlaq-i nasiri is for man to realize true happiness by becoming a vicegerent of God by balancing his nafs in order to act ethically in the domestic and public realms. The first discourse, Dar Tahdhib al-Akhlaq or “On the Refinement of Character,” is a theoretical explanation of principles of human existence and happiness, together with a subsection on objectives and methods for individuals to refine their virtues and tame their vices. The second discourse, Tadbir-i Manazil or “Domestic Economy,” zooms out from individual ethics to the family and immediate community and focuses on the ethics of domestic life and household affairs. The third, Siyasat-i Mudun or “Urban Politics,” zooms out even further to the ethics of managing, governing, and living in a city, province, or other larger region. Central to the latter two discourses is the ethics of relationships between people encountered in both the domestic and public realms.

1.1.3 Akhlaq-i Jalali

Jalal ad-Din Muhammad bin Asad Davani was born in 1426 in the village of Davan, near Kazerun, located in the Fars Province of modern day Iran, west of the city of Shiraz. As a young man, he moved to Shiraz, where he studied the Islamic sciences
such as theology, philosophy, logic, jurisprudence, and mysticism. During his lifetime, he witnessed the expansion of the Ottoman Empire to the West of his location; he lived through Sultan Mehmet II’s conquest of Constantinople, the founding of Istanbul, and even the official establishment of the Safavids in Isfahan by the very end of his life. Patronized by local courts in Shiraz, he first held the post of sadr or religious supervisor for the Qaraquyunlu but quickly resigned out of dislike for court-sponsored scholarship. His subsequent patrons were the rulers from the Sunni dynasty of the Aqquyunlus, under whose patronage he wrote the Akhlaq-i Jalali and served as the main qadi (judge) of Fars until his escape during the Safavid encroachment.39

Davani wrote numerous Arabic treatises on philosophy and law and wrote poetry for a number of different patrons throughout his life. However, his most famous work is the Persian language ethics treatise Akhlaq-i Jalali, written while he was employed by the Aqquyunlu Sultan, Uzun Hasan, at the request of Hasan’s son between 1467-1477. Although Akhlaq-i Jalali is from a much later time and different context than the Kimiya-i Sa’adat and Akhlaq-i Nasiri, with Davani, we are able to get a glimpse of how ideas transformed or endured in Islamic ethical thought. In particular, he retains much of the peripatetic formats of Ibn Miskawayh and Tusi, citations of Plato and Aristotle, but adds more detail in the way of practical advice and focuses on the idioms and folklore of his time and place to convey his ethics. He quotes Persian sages and mystics like Ghazali does, and refers to Ghazali himself, and Tusi as well.

Scholars such as G.M. Wickens and John Cooper have dismissed Akhlaq-i Jalali as prisoner to a fashionably verbose and circuitous writing style and inferior to the Akhlaq-i Nasiri.40 However, its long lasting influence in Persian scholarly curricula speaks to


its importance in the corpus of Islamic ethics. With Davani we see the formation of continuous ideas about the sources of Islamic ethics and variations in codes of social conduct and gender relations with respect to historical changes.

The Akhlaq-i Jalali has similar chapter divisions to the Akhlaq-i Nasiri—the individual, the domestic, and the political states, followed by an appendix of quotations by Plato and Aristotle on ethics and politics. However, the topics covered within each section are significantly different. In the first discourse, in addition to the divine impetus for ethical action and the virtuous soul and its vices, Davani presents full outlines of the notion of divine proportion, equity as the epitome of all virtues, and even a discussion of human beings’ mental capacity and illness. In the second discourse on the domestic state, Davani adds nuance to Tusi’s discussion on the divine and philosophical purposes of marriage, the rights and responsibilities of husband and wife, and the ethics of divorce. Davani’s chapter on the domestic economy reads like a complete manual on how to act as the leader of a household who is responsible for his spouse, children, parents, and employees and slaves. Davani includes a detailed list of preparations one must make before marrying, such as accumulating food, and putting the home in order. On the subject of raising children, he discusses the education of both boys and girls, choosing the best instructor for them, and teaching them manners—all mechanisms to pass on akhlaq. Finally, in the discourse on the political state, Davani adds to Tusi’s discussion by including anecdotes as parables on friendship, love, governance, sovereignty, and social interaction with inferior classes.

Unlike Ghazali and Tusi, Davani remained somewhat of a free agent in that he was not always employed in direct service to a royal court. The Aqquyunlu sultans sought his support because he was a respected scholar, but he did not always lend them that support.41 He wrote commentaries on works by his favorite philosopher, Suhrawardi

(d. 1191) and treatises on politics and law for various courts, including the Timurids, Ottomans, and sultans in India, which speaks to the ubiquity of the Persianate Muslim intellectual tradition in pre-modern times. It is unclear whether Davani was Shi'i or Sunni himself, since he wrote works from both perspectives, but sectarian polemics are less prominent in the Akhlaq-i Jalali, which is a melding of ideas from peripatetic and Ishraqi illuminationist schools.

1.2 Chapter Outline

Premodern akhlaq texts provide important insights into Muslim ethical thought on gender relations, how marriage works, and how social relations ought to be conducted. Ethical social and gender relations prescribed in the texts are a dynamic and shifting response to normative behaviors observed by the philosopher-ethicists, as much as they are part of the Qur'anic, religio-legal, and philosophical traditions. Throughout this dissertation, my argument is that in classical Islamic ethics, humanity is organized as a hierarchy of intellect and spirituality that is rooted in male power and class differences. In the remainder of this introductory chapter, I outline the socio-political history relevant to the ethics texts. I then contextualize akhlaq as a genre of Islamic ethics and explore the definitions and boundaries of Muslim ethical discourses. I end the chapter with a discussion of the theoretical lenses I employ in studying the ethics texts.

In the second chapter, “Ethical Perfection and Power of the (Hu)man’s Soul,” I present Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani’s conceptions of the nafs and their approaches to the science of virtue ethics. I argue that the soul under consideration in the discourses of ethical perfection and the potential power of the nafs belongs to the normative male. The way the ethicists discuss the soul establishes the individual man’s power over others, in addition to power over himself to perfect himself. Because man is ethical only
in relation to other people, the constituents of nafs and their virtues are not just the building blocks of an ethically perfected male soul, but rather, they are the building blocks of man’s ethically ordered power of overs.

In Chapter Three, “Ethics of Marriage and the Domestic Economy,” I explore the ethicists’ understandings of masculinity and femininity in relation to one another by examining prescribed ethical behaviors across the three texts in the domestic arena of marriage, divorce, running a household, and raising children. Although addressing only men, Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani outline both men’s and women’s roles and responsibilities in marriage. The differences in their roles are indicative of the ethicists’ biological and ontological assumptions about the nature of masculinity and femininity. In extending the claim from Chapter Two that the nafs the ethicists are interested in ordering is normative male, I argue that within the household, ethicists treat men as the primary ethical subject and women as ethical objects. Men partially dispense their ethical duties by heading the domestic economy and being in charge of disciplining the nafses of their wives and children as much as possible. The ethicists construct women’s roles as being amenable to their husbands’ instruction and being instrumental running their households. Man’s role as primary and woman’s role as instrumental stemmed from the ethicists understanding of men as rational and spiritual souls and women as embodied and limited by biological function. Thus, with respect to women, a metaphysical tension arises in the texts whereby the ethicists recognize women’s humanity through their possession of the nafs, yet the ethicists are encumbered with prevalent assumptions about the nature of women and femininity.

Chapter Four, “Homosocial Masculinity and the Ethics of Living in a Community,” examines the ethicists’ understanding of masculinity in homosocial relationships of friendship, love, and interactions with other men in government and public activities. By looking at ethical prescriptions regarding how men are supposed to act in social
relationships outside the home, I argue that in addition to training of the self and ordering the domestic realm, man completes his moral responsibilities by simultaneously being a member of the broader society, in which ultimate masculinity is defined in terms of power, hierarchy of intellect, and ethical comportment in homosocial structures of court, civic, and community life.

In the Concluding Chapter, by way of summarizing my arguments about the gendered and hierarchical nature of akhlaq that I make in this dissertation, I offer a preliminary discussion on what is the place of akhlaq in contemporary approaches to Islamic ethics. Specifically, I discuss three major issues. First, I discuss the place of akhlaq among other genres with which Muslim feminist scholars engage. I ask question of what counts as religious text. Second, I problematize the unjust definitions of justice in the texts in which the ethic of moderation, balance, and justice both maintains and justifies patriarchy and the status quo. Third, I address the ways in which focus on the nafs and its training in ethical discourse allows for accounting for emotions and situational factors in gender relations in the construction of Islamic ethics of gender relations.

1.3 Socio-Political Context of the Middle Periods

The three texts I am studying in this dissertation, the Kimiya-i Sa‘adat by Ghazali, the Akhlaq-i Nasiri by Tusi, and the Akhlaq-i Jalali by Davani are each separated by at least a century; they are from the 12th, 13th, and 15th centuries, respectively. Yet, not only do Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani draw on shared intellectual traditions, but their ethics respond to shared patterns of life, culture, and customs that made up the pre-modern Islamicate and Persianate milieu. Hodgson demarcates the period in history of Islamdom that this dissertation covers as the middle and late phases of the “middle periods,” from 950-1500, which he divides into the early middle period, which saw the
expansion of a cosmopolitan Muslim Persianate civilization, and the later middle period, marked by crisis caused by Mongol destruction and reconstruction.”42

In this section, I will discuss the socio-political backdrop of Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani’s writings on ethics. Despite their own religious affiliations and political allegiances, the ethicists Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani were able to transcend or transition between sectarian and political boundaries because they were part of a pre-modern intellectual tradition that both endured historical upsets and contributed to a cohesive Islamicate culture, despite the political uncertainty of the times. As such, the three texts share several common themes including pre-modern Islamicate patterns of social structures, criticism of corrupt government and a society that complicated man’s responsibility for being ethical and providing an ethical life for his charges and wards (wife, children, slaves, servants, apprentices, underlings) in and outside the home.

There are two histories relevant to contextualizing Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani’s works. I first outline the military and dynastic histories of the Saljuqs, Nizari Isma’ilis, and Aqquyunlus, which contextualize political critiques and sectarian tensions in the treatises. This gives a sense of the political uncertainty to which the texts respond by prescribing men to adopt particular ethics in the public realm and at court. Then I will discuss narratives about women and gender in pre-modern Persianate Muslim society to give a historical context for the ideal gender roles and relations the ethicists prescribe. I am aware that presenting women’s history separate from the political and intellectual history is problematic because it contributes to the false idea that noteworthy history belongs to and is created only by men. Yet, women’s historiography from the Saljuq, Nizari Isma’ili, and Aqquyunlu periods is so scant that I combine it with women’s histories from other premodern Muslim societies to present a fuller narrative of women’s lives, private, public, and political activities from the 11th to the 15th cen-


1.3.1 Political History

In the five centuries following 945, when the Abbasid caliphate deteriorated to the point of survival only in name, several independent governments and series of rival empires took power in the central Muslim lands between the Nile and Oxus rivers, while the diverse Muslim societies continued to grow culturally and linguistically, within and outside this region. The central Muslim lands came to be dominated by successive amirates or sultanates made up of Turkic tribes with strong militaries, which relied upon support from religious institutions but were independent from them. As the classical Abbasid patterns of life began to diminish, new ways of fashioning political legitimization, aesthetic creativity, religious understanding, and the social role of science and philosophy emerged. With Islamdom extending from Europe to India and from the northern steppes to the Southern Seas, Hodgson explains that “there came to be considerable differentiation from one Muslim region to another, each area having its own local schools of Islamicate thought, art, and so forth.” More specifically, distinct “patterns of home life, such as cuisine or house building, but also formative features like agricultural technique, and even much of administrative and legal practice” created substantial differences across Muslim lands.

Despite differences, Islamdom, was held together in virtue of a common Islamicate social pattern which, by enabling members of any part of the society to be accepted as members of it

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43I hope to integrate women’s history with the broader political and intellectual histories of the period as this project develops.


anywhere else, assured [sic] the circulation of ideas and manners throughout its area. Muslims always felt themselves to be citizens of the whole Dar al-Islam.”

Scholars, including Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani, benefitted from the existence of this shared identity:

Representatives of the various arts and sciences moved freely, as a munificent ruler or an unkind one beckoned or pressed, from one Muslim land to another; and any man of great stature in one area was likely to be soon recognized everywhere else [...] There continued to exist a single body of interrelated traditions, developed in mutual interaction throughout Islamdom.

Governing courts demanded the knowledge of the hakim, learned doctor, or scholar of Islamic sciences. A famous example of this was the 14th century explorer Ibn Battuta, who seamlessly transitioned between royal courts and religious institutions during his 24-year-long traveling career across the modern equivalent of 44 countries in Islamdom—his qualifications as a specialist in Islamic law always earned him a welcome stay and income along the way. Likewise, at various points in their lives, Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani were also state sponsored scholars or court advisors on special matters such as producing the language of legitimacy of their regimes for popular consumption, enlisting political support from members of the scholarly class and ‘ulama’, and managing institutions of learning under their patronage. Ghazali and Tusi were employed by the Saljuqs and Nizari Isma‘ills, respectively, and produced works meant to lend legitimacy to their brand of sectarian rule. However, political uncertainty and injustice reached such heights that by the time Davani wrote the Akhlaq-i Jalali, he argued for

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just leadership, no matter what sect ruled.

The Saljuqs

The Buyids, who were Persians from the Caspian area, were the first empire that took over rule from the Abbasid caliphs, decentralized power across several states, and established military dominance across the central Islamic lands as the main political order for centuries to come. The Buyid dynasty of amirs was Shi‘i, even though they kept the Abbasid caliphs alive as figureheads, and encouraged a flowering of Imami Shi‘i ideas, festivals, and institutions. The Buyids patronized works of falsafa (Greek inspired philosophy) and mu‘tazili kalam (rationalist theology), the latter of which eventually became part of a crystallized Shi‘i theology. In this period, Ibn Miskawayh wrote his influential Tahdhib al-Akhlaq, which established the ethical framework upon which Tusi and Davani expand. Together with developments sponsored by Shi‘i rule of the Fatimids in Egypt, Shi‘i ideas became well formed during this time. However, the Shi‘i dominance was not to last; as Hodgson points out, since Shi‘i rule in various regions were of disparate origins, lacked unity, and failed to convert the masses, their political order declined.49

The Saljuqs, a Turkic military force which descended from north of the Oxus into Khorasan, overpowered Mas‘ud of Ghaznah and defeated the Buyids. At first, they took Buyid regions piecemeal but conquered the dynasty with finality in 1055 under Tughril-beg. The surviving Abbasid caliph and his associates did what they could to support the Sunni Saljuqs’ takeover of the Shi‘i Buyids.

The Saljuqs were successful in unifying Muslims, as Omid Safi explains, “for over a

century, a long time by the standards of the turbulent world of premodern Islamdom.”

Caliphal authority was restored, but political power remained with the Saljuq sultans, who because of their Sunni orientation, and special relationship with the caliphs, enjoyed favor as legitimate leaders of their slice of Islamdom in the Persian lands. They established yet another unprecedented model of rulership in which a hereditary sultanate remained aligned with, but independent from, the religious authority of the caliphate, though they belonged to same sect. This was a new political order that separated religious and political powers, but the two were co-dependent on each other for their long-term survival. The arrangement was not without tensions between the sultanate and the caliphate over who held ultimate power. Safi argues that, “Saljuqs were in reality yet another pillaging Central Asian tribe marching onto the Iranian plateau [...] While the Saljuqs paid lip service to their support of the Abbasid Caliphate, [there were] tensions and hostilities between the two, even leading to Saljuq attempts to do away with the caliphate altogether.” Safi states that the Saljuqs established their political legitimacy through coercive ideological state apparatuses which defined and perpetuated Sunni orthodoxy through the complex network of institutions, such as madrasas and khanqahs, alliances with scholars and sufis, and often, devious tactics. Ghazali was a key player in this religio-political strategy of the Saljuqs by representing the support of the ‘ulema’ and producing polemical works.

The great political architect and bureaucrat, Nizam al-Mulk, who played a prominent role in Ghazali’s scholarly life, was the Saljuq vizier during the reigns of the Saljuq Sultans, Alp-Arslan (d. 1072) and Malikshah (d. 1092). Trained in the Ghaznavi court, where administrative systems from the high caliphal period (Samanid and even Sasa-

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51 Hodgson, Vol. 2, 43.

nian systems of late antiquity) were preserved, his goal was to restore ancient Persian models of centralized administration and justice. He attempted to do so through a number of institutional projects. Although he was ultimately unsuccessful in this endeavor, the lasting legacy of his endeavors was that two classes of people, the amirs (military commanders) and the ‘ulama’ (religious scholars) had greater participation in establishing political legitimacy than ever before.\footnote{Hodgson, Vol. 2, 46.}

Nizam al-Mulk had the Saljuqs establish madrasas in all of the major cultural centers across their empire. Students were furnished with fellowships and stipends and graduates were employed throughout the empire as qadis, judges and specialists in Shari‘a, and administrators with religious training. The madrasas also functioned as centers for propagating particular sectarian, Sunni ideas (especially Shafi‘i) over Isma‘ili and Imami doctrines. They provided a cultural and intellectual unity among Muslims, that Hodgson argues had not existed anywhere for any extended period of time since the lost unity of the Prophet’s community in Medina.\footnote{Hodgson, Vol. 2, 48.} The education across these institutions was fairly standard, creating homogeneity of ideas and goals. Also unlike before, the training included wide discussions and debates over various intellectual problems through the prisms of philosophy and Sufism, which, to some extent, became incorporated in the overall madrasa tradition. Intellectuals wrote in multiple modes including sufi, philosophical, theological, and legal among other issues like matters of speculative sciences.

The most important of these madrasas was the Nizamiyya in Baghdad, where Nizam al-Mulk appointed Ghazali as the head scholar, or mudarris. However, even more important than occupying this prestigious post, Ghazali was responsible for “propagation of the Saljuq-sponsored interpretation of Islam” and “the task of defining the prob-
lematical and perpetually changing relationship between the Saljuq Sultanate (holders of power) and the Abbasid Caliphate (symbol of religious authority).”\textsuperscript{55} Nizam al-Mulk and Ghazali together provided “the theoretical justification of the sultanate on Islamic and Sassanian grounds as well as seeking of saintly barakah (transferrable power-grace).”\textsuperscript{56} Ghazali’s polemical contrast with his political and religious nemeses, the Isma’īlis, also provided the Saljuqs a cachet of authority amongst locals and justification from the ‘ulama’ to fight them militarily.

Within a few generations of Nizam al-Mulk’s assassination and Malikshah’s death, Saljuq power disintegrated, with several regional amirs and Saljuq princes claiming power. Eventually, a split between military and civilian institutions took place in which ‘ulama’, intellectuals, and literati were on one side and the military was on the other, establishing yet another political order. Across Islamdom, this created a linguistic and racial divide since the militaries were largely Turkic (or Berber in the case of the Mediterranean Muslim lands) and ruled mostly Persian and Arab, or Indian peoples. The Turkic military tribes ceased to have civil institutions, culture, or tradition directly legitimizing their political rule through institutional alliances. This standard of rule of various Turkic tribes such as the Khwarazmians, along with the Isma’īlis, lasted through the Mongol invasion to the 15th century.

\section*{The Isma’īlis}

The caliphal-sultanate system established by the Saljuqs across Persian lands under the ideal of Muslim unity began to break down within Ghazali’s lifetime. At first, the Nizari Isma’īlis attempted to seize individual Saljuq fortresses and claimed to be local

\textsuperscript{55}Safi, \textit{The Politics of Knowledge}, 107 and xxv.

\textsuperscript{56}Safi, \textit{The Politics of Knowledge}, xxv.
amirs who could pay homage and taxes to the Saljuq central power.\textsuperscript{57} However, the Saljuq ‘ulama’ determined them to be apostates and rejected their proposals.\textsuperscript{58} After a series of revolts and a gradual, bloody conquest of selected mountains under Saljuq control across Quhistan, from eastern Persia to Syria, a geographically disjointed Isma’ili state was established in 1090, under the Isma’ili imamate of the descendants of Nizar, the Egyptian Fatimid heir of caliph al-Mustansir that was cast aside by the Fatimids.\textsuperscript{59} The Nizari Isma’ilis held onto power at their capital in Alamut until 1256 when the Mongols invaded.

By the time the Nizari Isma’ilis secured power, sectarian tensions among the people and political powers ran high; this was reflected in scholarship too. Both Ghazali, who died as the Isma’ili revolts were beginning, and Tusi, who lived through the end of the Nizari state, engaged in sectarian polemics in their works. For Ghazali, this meant writing against the Shi‘i ideas from a decidedly Sunni perspective during his political career. For Tusi, the Shi‘i-Sunni tensions included the added layer of intra-Shi‘i politics.

Farhad Daftary describes that although the Nizari state is considered to be a triumphant period in Ismaili history (in conjunction with the Fatimid period in Egypt), the persecution of Ismailis at the hands of other Muslim groups caused them to strictly adhere to Shi‘i principles of \textit{taqiyya}, or concealment of one’s beliefs in the case of danger.\textsuperscript{60} Thus,

\begin{quote}
Isma’ilis were not prepared to divulge any details about their movement which, if fallen into the hands of their enemies, might endanger the survival of their co-religionists [...] It is, therefore, not surprising that the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{57}The Nizari Isma’ilis are derogatorily referred to in Orientalist scholarship as the Assassins.

\textsuperscript{58}Hodgson, Vol. 2, 59.


\textsuperscript{60}Daftary, 108.
Ismailis, like similarly situated religious communities, have generally lacked a tradition of historiography."\textsuperscript{61}

While there was a dearth of scholarly production in the early years of the Nizari state, marked by the prominence of military campaigns, the Nizaris later became key patrons of the mountain region’s intellectual life. At first, the Nizari state was ruled by da‘īs, missionary-scholars who were specialists in Ismaili doctrines, philosophy, and jurisprudence, and later by the Nizari imams. As such, they maintained extensive libraries and attracted regional scholars to their court at Alamut. Nasir ad-Din Tusi, who converted to Isma‘ili Shi‘ism for a time before reverting to Imami Shi‘ism, was the most prominent among them and produced several Ismaili treatises at the Nizaris’ behest. Finally, when the Mongols invaded in 1256, they destroyed most of the scholarly writings from the Nizari period.

\textbf{The Aqquyunlu Confederacy}

In the wake of the Mongol invasion of Muslim lands, the Persianate region suffered economic depression. With institutions destroyed, along with world trade brought to a standstill as a result of European black death plague of 1346-48, several cities declined and there was a massive re-ruralization of once thriving townships. During the rebuilding period after the physical devastation that the Mongols caused to urban and cultural life, no one city in particular emerged as a cultural center (as Baghdad was prior to the invasion). However, despite the decentralization of Islamicate culture, according to Hodgson, the two centuries after the Mongol invasion, the later middle period,\textsuperscript{62} the conversion and absorption of pagan Mongols into Islam and Islamicate culture were

\textsuperscript{61}Daftary, 108.

\textsuperscript{62}This is after the invasion but before the well known gun powder empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals take shape.
characterized by continuity in social, political, and cultural expressions from the earlier middle period. He argues that the thesis of decline and stasis of Muslim culture as a result of the invasion is difficult to substantiate. Rather, he maintains that new aesthetics, artistic, and cultural expressions emerged as a result of Mongol patronage. Thus, study of the later middle periods reveal how patterns established by the earlier middle period continued but without the political interruptions of the earlier middle period.

Hulegu and his descendants, called the Ilkhanids, ruled the Tigris-Euphrates valley, over-lorded the Saljuqs in Anatolia, the Iranian mountains, and much of the central Persianate lands, with a capital at Maraghah, Azerbaijan. At first, scholars legitimized their rule by supporting non-Muslim rule over corrupt Muslim ones. Eventually, the Mongols looked to Islam to anchor themselves within the Muslim populations they were ruling and converted, partly after seeing value in Islamic legal policy for the state. However, the Illkhanids soon began disputing with other Mongol states, and Turkic tribes once again became prominent.

Davani lived exactly in the period of time between the decline of Mongol rule in the central Persian lands and the true flowering of the powers known as the gunpowder empires in Turkey, Iran, and India. The period was marked by dominance of Turkmen warlords, who organized themselves in sultanates through alliances with one another. Although the Aqquyunlu (literally named white sheep Turkmen) had ruled territory in eastern Anatolia since the mid 14th century, they emerged as a major regional power under Qara 'Usman Aqquyunlu in 1467 by defeating the rival Qaraquynlus (black sheep Turkmen). Davani initially was a religious advisor to the Qaraquyunuls but resigned

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64Hodgson Vol.2, 410. Hodgson explains three additional Mongol states were established. Second were the Chaghatay Mongols to the North and North East, Kabul, Punjab. Third were Golden Horde, Khazar State, north of the Caspian and Black seas at the Volga and westward, and fourth were the White Horde to west of Mongolia. Syria became part of the Egyptian Mamluks.
for a teaching post in Shiraz. Following this, he wrote the *Akhlaq-i Jalali* at the request of Aqquyunlu Sultan, Ozun Hasan, but largely stayed an independent scholar whose support the Aqquyunlu leaders continuously sought.65

At their zenith, the Aqquyunlus ruled Eastern Anatolia, present day Iraq, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and central Iran, both directly and through alliances with other ruling clans in a confederation. The Aqquyunlus claimed descent from the Bayandur clan, one out of the twenty-four branches of the family of the mythical Turkmen folk-hero, Oghuz (the Ottomans and Qaraquyunlus claimed decent from other branches of the Oghuz line).66 The confederacy was headed by an Aqquyunlu sultan from Qara ‘Usman’s family; however there were no specific laws of succession. Any member of the sultan’s family had valid and equal claims to the throne, which often led to battles amongst various family factions.67 Nonetheless, power remained within the Aqquyunlu family until alliances with other clans splintered and the Safavids defeated them at the beginning of the 16th century under Isma’il Safavi, grandson of the famous Aqquyunlu Sultan, Uzun Hasan, by his daughter, Halima, who married the Persian, Haydar Safavi Sultan.

According to historian John Woods, the Aqquyunlu were far more successful in weaving together “Islamic elements [...] paving the way for a gradual reconciliation of parts of the universal nomadic ideology with the Sacred Law” than their Ilkhanid predecessors.68 Hodgson and Woods both describe the Aqquyunlu period as one of great political innovation in which the sultan became not just God’s sovereign representative on earth, but also God’s envoy of justice. Given the instability of political and military

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67 Woods, 19.

68 Woods, 9.
rule, Davani emphasizes just rulership in the later middle periods as the main criteria for legitimacy. Built upon the notion of Divine favor for the just ruler which emerged with the Mongol upset, the idea that God would install and favor only a just sovereign dominates Davani’s political discourse in *Akhlaq-i Jalali*, as opposed to notions of the “right” sectarian persuasion as argued in the time of Ghazali or Tusi. Instead, the fall of a sultanate would signal the sultan’s corruption and injustice.69 Further, the title ‘ghazi’ “had a distinct ideological significance exploited throughout the Later Middle Period of Islamic history by those Muslim rulers who sought to endow their regimes with a semblance of religio-political legitimacy.”70 Thus Davani’s use of the term “Ghazi in the path of God” and description of his patron’s just rulership in *Akhlaq-i Jalali* was an important show of his support.71

### 1.3.2 Women and Gender in Pre-modern Persianate Muslim Society

Scholarship on middle period Muslim women is characterized by a tension between understanding the scarcity of sources on women’s lives, which indicates their relative unimportance to male scholars of their time, and making sense of normative texts about women’s behavior that indicate women were responsible for upholding the moral character of society. Much of the scholarship attempts to make sense of their public lives gleaned from court records, deeds, other official documents, and commentary on women’s lives by male scholars, in light of the prescribed gender segregation in normative texts. The scholarship also reveals significant class-based differences in women’s

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69 Woods, 6.

70 Woods, 89.

71 Davani quoted in Woods, 89.
experiences in both public and private spheres.

In her essay on women in the Saljuq era, Carole Hillenbrand relates that urban, rural, Persian, and nomadic Turkish women all primarily played roles of wife and mother and kept house, while rural women had additional responsibilities of working the land.\textsuperscript{72} Women’s pastimes were handicrafts. Those who held employment were craftswomen, servants, nurses, midwives, singers, dancers, or prostitutes.\textsuperscript{73} Yet, women from all social classes seemed to be present in public life, much to the chagrin of Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani, who advise men to seclude their wives as much as possible.\textsuperscript{74} From pre-modern court records across Muslim lands, we know that women owned property, were litigants in business and family disputes and that divorce was not entirely uncommon.\textsuperscript{75} This is also evident from Tusi and Davani’s discussion of what qualities to look for in a wife; they find it permissible to marry a woman for her money, as long as she has other qualities.\textsuperscript{76}

Most mentions of specific women in biographical indices from the middle periods exist only for women who were elite in some way, whether by wealth, social rank, association with powerful men in politics or government, or even by accomplishments in learning or piety, such as those in Sufi hagiographies. Even in that last category, women known for their spiritual accomplishments were often included in biographical catalogues as a result of association with notable Sufi saints or \textit{`ulama’}.\textsuperscript{77} Although the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{73}Hillenbrand, 107.
\item \textsuperscript{74}Tusi, 217. Davani, 190. Ghazali, 316-317.
\item \textsuperscript{75}Judith Tucker. \textit{Women, Family, and Gender in Islamic Law} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
\item \textsuperscript{76}Tusi, Davani 188-189.
\item \textsuperscript{77}For example in the index of pre-modern Chishti saints, women’s entries are located at the very end of the text of hagiographies and almost all of them are mothers or sisters of the male saints, Nizamuddin, Shaykh Fariduddin Ganj Shakar, and Shaykh Nizamuddin Abul Muayyad. See `Abd
\end{itemize}
ethicists I study here came across men and women from all walks of life, they probably mainly operated within two social classes: the scholarly ‘ulama’ class to which they belonged themselves and the elites from court and government, in whose service they were employed.

With regard to women from ‘ulama’ families, Richard Bulliet writes that in pre-Mongol, 11th century Nishapur, Baghdad, and Gorgan, biographical dictionaries of ‘ulama’ show minimal presence of women in the context of praising their educational accomplishments. Since education was hereditary, the women in the household of ‘ulama’ families acquired the same education as their male siblings or relations. They had the same Qur’an and Hadith lessons, excelled in writing and Arabic, and also gave instruction to their children. Bulliet concludes that among the Nishapur patricians, women were equal to men in the realm of education.

Asma Sayeed describes hadith scholarship as the main area in which female scholars excelled. The classical period, which she defines as the 10th-15th centuries, saw the first revival of women’s hadith scholarship since the period immediately after the Prophet’s death. She argues that there were two main reasons for revival. The first was that

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al-Haqq Muhaddith Dihlawi al-Bukhari, Akhbar al-Akhyar fi Asrar al-Abrar, ed. ‘Alim Ashraf Khan, (Tehran: Anjuman-i Athar o Mafakhar-i Farhangi, 2004). There are a few exceptional women who are known for their own spiritual accomplishments. Examples of these women can be found in the 11th century index of hagiographies, Abdur Rahman al-Sulami, Dhikr an-Niswa al-Muta’abbidat as-Sufiyyat, trans. Rkia Cornell, (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 1999); and the 12th century collections of reports on sufi women, Abu al-Faraj ibn al-Jawzi’s Sifat al-Safwa, which Laury Silvers is translating in her forthcoming book, Early Pious, Mystic, and Sufi Women: The Lives, Thought, and Practices of Early Pious and Sufi Women.


canonization and written form of transmission of hadith literature from the preceding male dominated centuries opened the field back to non-specialists, including women. The second reason she argues is that kinship networks of ‘ulama’ families benefited from women’s participation in knowledge transmission, became part of their cultural and social capital and even led the ‘ulama’ to relax the “legal and normative aversion to contact between non-mahram men and women.”

Often, these were women of the scholars’ own households. In the sections on the ethics of relations with one’s mother, all three thinkers credit mothers for being their children’s first teacher, which may have been true in their own experiences, but their biographies only mention their fathers or other male tutors as their first teachers.

With regards to concubines or female slaves, Kecia Ali’s work on marriage and slavery in early Islamic jurisprudence demonstrates that slavery posed important legal, social, and ethical dimensions for consideration for scholars creating an Islamic code of conduct. While royals certainly owned slaves, it was common for the middle class and families of the ‘ulama’ to have slaves for both sexual purposes and household work. However, this historically common presence of female slaves does not translate to substantive mentions in ethics as it does in legal works. All three ethicists mention good conduct with household servants and slaves as a general principle, without distinguishing between male and female slaves. Although they do not mention sexual activity outside of marriage, one can assume that they would advise against having concubines because all three ethicists advocate for the curtailment of excessive sexual activity and explicitly discourage men from taking multiple wives; only sultans may have more than

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82 Sayeed, 114.


one wife in order to ensure birth of heirs.\textsuperscript{85}

Pre-modern Muslim women associated with royalty in the harems in various dynasties from the middle periods in Persia (and elsewhere) were famed to live largely secluded lives but were also notorious for their involvement and influence on court politics.\textsuperscript{86} Elite women were patrons of mosques, schools, and other institutions; they attended women’s sections of mosques and the court and left the city to broker peace or welcome brides from other cities.\textsuperscript{87} Powerful mothers, wives, sisters, or even influential concubines were concerned with succession and who held power in the courts. Mothers of heirs advocated for their sons’ claims to power or conspired to re-direct succession. Based on Bayhaqi’s history of the Ghaznavid court, Julie Meisami writes that in the 11th century, the elite women:

\begin{quote}
play[ed] a variety of roles—major and minor [...] they (like men) act[ed] as advisors whose counsel [was], often as not, disregarded; they (like men) may [have been] pawns in larger political games whose outcome may be positive or negative; they (like men) may [have] fallen[en] victim to court intrigues; they (like men) may [have] function[ed] as exemplars whose words and deeds provide[ed] moral comment on the events in which they figure[d].\textsuperscript{88}
\end{quote}

Even women’s court activities mirrored that of men’s.

In the Saljuq context, Nizam al-Mulk famously lamented in his \textit{Siyasatnamah} or \textit{Book of Government} women’s meddling in court affairs: “when the wives of the king begin to play the role of rulers, they base their orders on what interested parties tell

\textsuperscript{85}Ghazali, 302-303. Tusi, 120. Davani, 189-190.

\textsuperscript{86}I mention Saljuq, Ghaznavid, and Timurid examples below since they are contemporary to the ethicists. Leslie Peirce’s \textit{The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire} (New York, 1993) discusses the intricacies of women’s involvement in court politics in great detail but focusing on the Ottomans analyzes a later period.


them because they are not able to see things with their own eyes [...] in all ages nothing but disgrace, infamy, discord and corruption have resulted when kings have been dominated by their wives.” 89 Here Nizam al-Mulk is writing against the political participation of Tarkan Khatun and other elite turkic women because of the actual power they yielded. 90 This indicates that not only did women attempt to participate in politics, but that in order to affect a particular outcome at court, interest groups approached wives of the king, who were known to hold audience with such parties. Hillenbrand argues that in addition to the Saljuq Turkish women who were not veiled, according to their nomadic traditions, medieval paintings from the time suggests that women at court were not always veiled either. 91 Yet, Nizam al-Mulk’s satiate men that women are “not able to see things with their own eyes” also suggests that they may have had partial access to court, or that they attempted to influence affairs from the sidelines instead of in the open.

According to Beatrice Manz, Timurid women were even more involved in politics:

women were not a class apart but active members of a ruling group [...] Marriage neither overrode a woman’s ties to her own family nor limited her circle to the household of her husband [...] Dynastic women had ties among [the dynasty’s followers and top military commanders] and could apparently deal directly with them. 92

However, regardless of their active participation in politics, the ‘ulema’ frowned upon

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90 Tarkan Khatun, which literally means "Queen of the Turks" was the title for all Saljuq queens. Nizam al-Mulk was famously at odds with Sultan Malikshah’s Tarkan Khatun over the line of succession. Hamid Dabashi, _Truth and Narrative: The Untimely Thoughts of ‘Ayn al-Qudat al-Hamadani_ (London: Curzon, 1999), 78-79.

91 Hillenbrand, 108.

independent action by elite women without sanction from men. In citing legal texts by fuqaha, or jurists, which supported women’s confinement from men, Hillenbrand characterizes elite women’s participation in public life as their strategies to “loosen constraints of their male-dominated society.” Real women from all social classes were much more integrated in society than what texts on Islamic behavior prescribed. Likewise, the ethical treatises I study in this dissertation create an imagined world which upheld gender segregation as the ethical social order and assumed public realm was male, and accordingly ethics of society, siyasat-i mudun or the ordering of cities, was entirely about ethics of male homosocial relations.

Roxanne Euben highlights some extant attitudes held generally towards women in Premodern Muslim contexts that traverse the public and private conceptions of women’s roles. In her close reading of commentary about women in Ibn Battuta’s Rihla, a narrative of his thirty year journey, she explains that, at first, he “conforms to [the] convention” that women belong in the private sphere, and thus are not noteworthy. This common attitude from the middle periods is responsible for the scarcity of rich narrative sources about women’s lives.

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93 Ali Asani describes a notable exception to this pattern in pre-modern Muslim lands was Saljuq descendent, Razia Sultana (d. 1240), the only woman sovereign, not regent queen, of a Muslim region in pre-modern times. She was selected as heir to the Manluk Sultanate of Delhi by her dying father, Shams-ud-din Iltutmish, for her military and administrative experience, and the lack of qualified sons at the time of his death. There were no legal objections to a woman’s rule from the ‘ulema’ until centuries after her rule. She reigned for four years before a governor of Bhatinda, Altunyya, revolted against her rule. Altunyya captured her and surrendered her to her younger half brother who usurped the throne. Altunyya later married her to and campaigned for her return to the throne but Razia’s half brother had them both killed. See Ali Asani, “Razia Sultana” in Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia ed. Joseph Meri, (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2006), 674-675.

94 Hillenbrand, 104 and 116.

95 The ethicists use the term siyasat throughout their works to signify the related concepts of ordering, management, governance, and politics.


97 Euben, 80-81.
On the other hand, discussion about women in normative texts seems to indicate that women’s behavior and men’s control of their behavior, were essential in identity formation and establishing moral character of people. We see this tendency in the Rihla too as, Euben explains, Ibn Battuta makes more frequent remarks about women as he travels further away from his point of origin; his comments “function has a kind of legend, as on a map, by which his male audience can decode the Rihla’s taxonomy of peoples and cultures.”98 He describes women through binaries, “veiled and naked, visible and secluded, aristocrats and slaves, learned and illiterate, rich and poor, autonomous and obedient—that overlap and intertwine.”99 Unsurprisingly, he praises pious women, properly veiled women, and certain aristocratic women who show him generosity and favors, a sign of their piety. Euben explains, “Ibn Battuta’s focus on what he regards as proper religious observance also fuels a consistent preoccupation with women’s sexual behavior and appearance, and a concomitant tendency to transform women into an index of the virus or value of an entire people, as when he deems the citizens of Shiraz particularly pious because of the modesty and purity of their women.”100 Yet he also, “frequently represents women as objects of sexual pleasure, indices of piety, or both at once” as indicated by his praise of Meccan women, who are “strikingly beautiful, pious, and chaste” and the women of Marhata (Bangladesh) “as having ‘in sexual intercourse a deliciousness and a knowledge of erotic movements that other women do not have.”101 Although the ethicists deemphasize the erotic rela-

98Euben, 80.
99Euben, 81.
100Euben, 81.
101Euben, 81. Carl Ernst and I, along with my colleagues Mathew Hotham and Mathew Lynch, have counted Ibn Battuta as having contracted 10 marriages throughout his journeys as published in Ross Dunn’s volume. Euben states that he married 4 women from Maldives at the same time and “swears that he lived only on coconuts known as aphrodisiacs for his entire year and a half stay there.” Euben, 81.

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tionship a man can have a with a woman, they recognize women’s sexuality (as part of their fertility), as well as their piety as important qualities in a wife.

In her essay on Cairene women from 14th century Mamluk Egypt, Huda Lutfi also discusses images of women that were bound up in normative narratives about women’s roles. She examines the ethico-legal treatise, *al-Madkhal* by scholar Ibn al-Hajj (d. 1336) to glean data about daily life of married women and argues that a significant “discrepancy between the theoretical and actual restrictions on women” particularly because the texts attempted to “correct” women’s behaviors. Lutfi explains that Mamluk women actively participated in public life with frequent visits to Sufi shrines, mosques, bazars, public baths and more. Ibn al-Hajj responds directly to what he viewed as “unislamic practices and extravagances” that were a result of women women’s presence in public, which he saw as a male domain. Further, Ibn al-Hajj laments improper breakdown gender segregation in the home when women received visits from male neighbors and relatives. He held men responsible: “Throughout *al-Madkhal*, Ibn al-Hajj stresses repeatedly that the Muslim man should be responsible for the proper shar‘i behavior of his females, and he complains that in actuality women were left unguided and unrestricted, inviting and following their own ways.”

Male responsibility over wives is a key theme in the ethics treatises of Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani, who likewise advocate that men ensure proper seclusion of their wives. However, for the ethicists, control over wives ran much deeper than spatial protection.

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103 Lutfi, 101.

104 Lutfi, 104.

105 Lutfi, 106.

The desire to confine women was for their own protection but also to control their nafs. With their focus on ordering the individual nafs, the main assumption the ethicists make with regard to women is their lack of superior rationality that comes with their sex. The ethicists all recognize women's full humanity because they hold that women are in possession of nafs; however, because women are deficient in rationality, they are not able to discipline their nafs and need their husbands to do that for them.\textsuperscript{107} I discuss this gendered metaphysical tension of full humanity and partial rationality of women in greater detail in Chapter Three.

\subsection*{1.4 Defining Islamic Ethics}

The definition of Islamic ethics is contested. In current scholarship, there is a significant debate on the epistemology of Islamic ethics as a discursive tradition. Scholars of the Islamic intellectual tradition mainly describe the history of Islamic ethics through three genres: fiqh (jurisprudence), kalam (theology), and akhlaq (philosophical ethics), which I will discuss in greater detail below.\textsuperscript{108} The texts I study in this dissertation fall under the category of akhlaq, though they engage with legal, theological, and mystical ideas to some extent as I describe in the following subsections.

All the strands of Islamic ethical thought share the Qur'an and Sunnah as the primary sources of moral wisdom, known as hikmah. Entire monographs have been written on the ethics of the Qur'an.\textsuperscript{109} A portion of verse 2:231 states: “And remember the

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\textsuperscript{107}Ghazali, 308, 316. Tusi, 218, 310. Davani, 156, 189.

\textsuperscript{108}Additionally, scholars of tasawwuf (sufism) adab (ethical literature) claim poetry and prose of those disciplines as ethics of Muslims.

\end{flushright}
favor of God upon you and what has been revealed to you of the book and wisdom by which [God] instructs you.” Further, the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, “Acquire hikmah because there is goodness in hikmah”\textsuperscript{110} impresses upon people that hikmah is the golden standard of knowledge for people to acquire and act upon for the sake of goodness. The term hikmah appears as a noun referring to wisdom 20 times in the Qur’an, as well as in numerous hadiths.\textsuperscript{111} Scholars have debated what is meant by the hikmah, which according to verse 2:231 is wisdom set apart from God’s book.

Many scholars consider hikmah to be the wisdom of the Prophet Muhammad as manifested through in his exemplary life and instructions for others. Omid Safi explains the ways in which multiple Muslim civilizations and communities have aspired to akhlaq-i Muhammadi as an ethical norm that “connect[s] one’s dealings with other human beings with the existential awareness that we are, at all moments, in the very Presence of God.”\textsuperscript{112} Collections of hadiths, such as the 13th century text Riyadh as-Salihin by Abu Zakaria Muhiyad-Din Yahya Ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi (d. 1277) or the 14th century Mishkat al-Masabih by Muhammad ibn ‘Abd Allah Khatib Al-Tabrizi (d. 1341), were edited and organized by subject to become formalized compendiums of religious ethics. Their chapters on how to eat, sleep, govern, marry, and talk to people are comprised of hadiths on these topics. Some early 20th century South Asian revivalist scholars called hadith the akhlaq-i Muhammadi or Muhammadi Ethics.\textsuperscript{113} Based on a

\textsuperscript{110} “‘Alayka bi’l-hikmah fa inna’l-khayr fi’l-hikmah.” This hadith is found in the Shi‘i hadith collection, Mizan al-Hikmah, Vol. 1, 669-678. There are other hadiths that encourage people to seek wisdom.

\textsuperscript{111}The verses include 2:269. For a complete list of the 20 verses using the term hikmah see Hanna Kassis, A Concordance of the Qur’an (Berkley: California University Press, 1983), 525.

\textsuperscript{112}Omid Safi, Memories of Muhammad: Why the Prophet Matters (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 298-299.

broad ethical portrait, *The Path of Muhammad: A Book on Islamic Morals and Ethics* by the 16th century mystic, Birgvi Mehmet Efendi, communicates numerous ethical principles for his disciples to live by.\(^{114}\) A recent example of scholars considering the Prophet’s words as ethics, Abdul Ali Hamid published a translated edition of a hadith collection in 2002 by Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad* or Enumerated Ethics, under the title *Moral Teachings of Islam*.\(^{115}\) These works are examples of how scholars employ the Sunnah of the Prophet itself as a formalized source of ethics.

Hikmet Yaman explores *hikmah*’s obscure meanings in the Arabic lexicographical literature. He explains that *hikmah* generally means wisdom, but in relation to God, it is God’s knowledge that can be knowable to human beings through revelation.\(^{116}\) Jurists, theologians, philosophers, mystics and other scholars from disciplines of Islamic learning, have each claimed that their approach to interpreting Qur’anic and Prophetic sources, observations of nature, and their own understanding of sacred ideas about how to live on earth, is the key to deciphering the *hikmah* of God.\(^{117}\) *Hikmah* is a broad concept of divine wisdom but is appropriated by scholars of various persuasions as their own teachings.

The question of what genre is definitive of Islamic ethics is ultimately one of authenticity and authority. What counts as religious text? Below I discuss the major concerns of scholars defining Islamic ethics are the roles of reason and tradition and questions of methodologies and sources of ethics. I argue that while the *akhlaq* texts I study in this dissertation can be characterized as Islamic ethics, they exist in conversa-


\(^{117}\)Yaman, 1, 267.
tion with other ethical discourses of theology, law, and mysticism. Further, the ethics found in these texts are at once Qur’anic, Muhammadi, and peripatetic. Where Islamic ethics come from further implies the question of whether or not ethics are permanent. In other words, the origin of Islamic ethics, reason or revelation, or both, affect ideas about whether ethics of social relations and gender relations are fixed.

1.4.1 *Kalam* as Islamic Ethics and Shared Debates in *AkhlAQ*

Islamic ethics scholar, Abdulaziz Sachedina, argues that while Islamic ethics is a pluralistic discourse, the central ethical discourse of Islam is the theological, Qur’anic debate that originated between Ash’arite (determinist) and Mu’tazilite (rationalist) schools of thought over human responsibility and divine predetermination.\(^{118}\) Sachedina is in the company of other scholars such as George Hourani, Oliver Leaman, and Carl Ernst who likewise highlight the debates between rational objectivism (reason) and theistic subjectivism (authority) as definitive of Islamic ethics, though they recognize multiple genres in which these debates took place.

Hourani describes that in early in Muslim history “the need of Muslim judges under the early caliphs to make valid decisions in legal cases, and of lawyers to formulate valid rules” raised theoretical questions regarding authority and the role of human reason.\(^{119}\) The human judgments of lawyers, judges, and rulers were classified as *ra’y* (opinion) but “anyone who backed the validity of human judgement was tacitly assuming an affirmative answer to the question [...] that there are real ethical characteristics of acts, making possible not only to God but to man direct perceptions and judgements of their


rightness.” By the same token, “whoever on the contrary denied human judgment as a proper source of Islamic law was tacitly assuming an affirmative answer to the question [...] that ‘right’ means nothing but ‘commanded by God’ and ‘wrong’ means nothing but ‘prohibited by Him’, so that it was impossible for human reason to make any ethical judgment not derived from the divine law (shari’a).”

For over four hundred years in the early medieval period, the Ash’ari (determinist) and Mu’tazili (rationalist) camps of Muslim philosophers and ethicists vigorously debated how humans can deduce moral guidance, from divinely revealed tradition or from human exercise of reasoning and logic. They questioned the role of reason if moral guidance were taken from divinely revealed tradition, and conversely, questioned the role of revealed tradition if moral guidance were taken from human reasoning. The Ash’aris held that rationality leads to uncertainty since rational thought can be contradictory or inconsistent in its rules; there is no certain way of knowing the truth. Because God would not be subject to natural law or rules of human rationality, revealed law held the truth and ultimate justice. The Mu’tazilis held that human acts have real moral characteristics that are knowable not just through God, but also through human reasoning; thus natural reason is effective in producing ethical knowledge. Human beings could reason their way out of moral dilemmas by applying the principle of justice, the most prominent characteristic of God that is knowable to human beings.

Central to this question of reason or authority as sources of ethics is where moral responsibility originates. In the seventh and eighth centuries, a group of scholars called the Qadaris were among the first to debate the question of qadar or predestination.

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122 Also see Emon, Anver. *Islamic Natural Law Theories*. (Oxford University Press, 2010). Although Emon examines the role of reason in legal works instead of philosophical ones, he uses the categories of hard and soft natural law to describe pro-rationalist and pro-voluntarist thought, respectively, in order to demonstrate the porous boundaries between the two camps.
and human capacity in the context of moral responsibility in rulership. They believed in free will. Following their ideas, as Majid Fakhry argues, the Mu'tazilis of the eighth to the tenth centuries were the “first genuine moralists of Islam.” In founding the Mu'tazili school of thought, Wasil ibn ‘Ata and ‘Amr ibn Ubayd defined right and wrong based on God’s justice and world order. Further, God’s justice requires that humans take responsibility for their own actions, whether good or bad. Because ethics could be rationally derived from the principles of God’s guidance and the laws of nature that God instituted, they held that all of humanity has a moral responsibility to act in accordance with God’s justice. Thus, as Sachedina explains, justice usually defined as “putting something in its appropriate place” was important for Mu'tazilites and later, the Shi'i theologians, because it “provided a theoretical stance on the question of human obedience to divine commands and the extent of human capacity in carrying out moral-religious obligations.”

The rival theologians, the Ash'aris, focused on the omnipotence of God and thus held that good and bad do not have intrinsic, measurable human values because whatever God commands is by definition the meaning of good and whatever God rejects defines the bad. God is the real author of all actions, while human beings’ actions are merely a metaphor for God’s actions. Sachedina clarifies that for Ash'arites, the notion of obligation of good acts defined as “promulgation of divine command and prohibition,” established “the nature of divine command and provided deontological

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126 Sachedina, 258.

grounds for complying with it.”

Ultimately, it was the role of human reasoning, definitions of good and bad (right and wrong), and understanding of God’s authority and justice that differentiated the two ideological camps. The debate permeated every genre of Muslim thought. The methods of interpretation applied to the Qur’an and hadith, the role of Qur’an and Sunnah in the creation of laws, the analytical tools available to jurists, and finally, the cosmological understanding of the human in relation to the divine in mystical discourses were all realms of the Mu’tazili and Ash’ari debate over rationality and determinism.

Most immediately, these debates arose in the genres of falsafa and kalam. The creation of ethics treatises under these two classifications of Muslim thought were shaped by the questions of moral impetus, right and wrong, justice, and the individual’s relationship to the Divine. Carl Ernst argues that the ethics discourses are based upon a mixture of reason and authority, rather than just one or the other. He states, “Islamic religious ethics rarely took on an entirely authoritarian aspect, since legal theorists consistently sought to find intentions and purposes in sacred texts. This [...] was necessary to deal with the new situations not addressed in scripture [...]” A combination of reason and authority are also found in the works of Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani, who all make rational arguments with often simultaneous appeals to scriptural references.

Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani create moral impetus in their works through their texts’ goals of providing a path to happiness and vicegerency of God (which I discuss in greater detail in the next section on sources). All three adhere to the notion of justice as “putting something in its appropriate place,” but only Tusi, who was Shi’i and

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128 Sachedina, 258.
130 Ernst, 110.
Davani, who may have been Shi'i, explain it as a virtue that creates a moral impetus for ordering the household and broader society in the particular hierarchical way they prescribe. As a Sunni thinker, Ghazali primarily draws on the notion of obligation to promote right and prohibit wrong in support of male responsibilities of men over women and other “lower men.”

1.4.2 *Fiqh* as Islamic Ethics and its Relationship to *Akhlaq*

Some scholars in the Western academy, including George Hourani, Kevin Reinhart, Jonathan Brockopp and Kecia Ali, have focused on the ways in which *fiqh* serves as Islam’s central ethical discourse.¹³¹ Ebrahim Moosa explains that “law and ethics are inseparable […] In *fiqh* discourse, piety, morality, theology, and law coalesce into a single coherent narrative.”¹³² *Fiqh* is normative discourse that serves the changing needs of Muslims by creating law or authoritative opinions based upon methods of interpreting Qur’an and Sunnah, and methods of juristic reasoning. Through laws of *fiqh*, which are divided into matters of human relations with God, or worship (*‘ibadat*) and human relations with one another (*mu‘amalat*), *fiqh* ensures an individual lives life according to what is right.

Behnam Sadeghi, who looks at examples of Hanafi jurisprudence on women and prayer, explains how classical jurisprudence was adaptive to Muslims’ needs: “the legal precedents normally determine the laws, but when they clash with present conditions, they can be overridden. The interpretation of the [Qur’an and binding hadiths] have


no causal role in this, which is not to deny [their] having shaped some of the legal
decisions in the formative period.”\textsuperscript{133} However, changes to the law are not easy; he
argues that “legal reasons—that is, the reasons jurists give for the laws—are secondary
in relation to the laws they justify.”\textsuperscript{134} The laws themselves do not necessarily change
or are slow to change, but given current conditions, their justifications change based
on “cumulative and incremental” cultural forces.\textsuperscript{135}

Reinhart accounts for cultural forces at play in jurisprudence as ethics by call-
ing for a distinction between Islamic and Islamicate ethics. For him Islamic ethics
are discourses rooted in Qur’an and Sunnah such as “kalam theology, and above all
[...] the shari’a or or legal–moral sciences.”\textsuperscript{136} Islamicate discourses are “falsafah, the
tradition derived particularly from the peripatetic tradition of Greek philosophy [...] and] the adab tradition of cultivated scribal cultural norms.”\textsuperscript{137} Within his Islamic
and Islamicate differentiation, however, he includes cultural nuance in what constitutes
the Islamic: “Islamic ethics originated in a complex world of various and competing
norms—of other religions, Hellenistic reflection, pagan heroics, and debts of honor. The
Qur’an no doubt reflects, and in many cases assumes, the existence of these norms, but
refashions them in characteristic ways.”\textsuperscript{138} This definition supports the idea that au-
thenticity of Islamic discourses does not depend on an Islamic purity or on a thesis of
exclusivity.

\textit{Akhlaq} and \textit{fiqh} are, to a great extent, mutually exclusive genres of Islamic thought,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\setcounter{enumi}{133}
\item Sadeghi, 165.
\item Sadeghi, 171.
\item Reinhart, “Origins of Islamic Ethics,” 244.
\item Reinhart, “Origins of Islamic ethics,” 252.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
capable of coexisting in the minds of scholars and practitioners. However, they compete as prescriptive discourses that aim to provide guidelines for how Muslims live and behave, even though one can live by both. The akhlaq texts I study in this dissertation are independent from fiqh, yet they have a complex relationship with jurisprudence. Several terms and concepts are shared between the two genres.\footnote{An example of this are the legal contours of marriage and divorce are preserved in akhlaq but how to behave within marriage and divorce are unique contributions of akhlaq.}

Since many of the scholars of akhlaq, including Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani, also served as jurists, or taught fiqh as part of their extensive curriculum of the Islamic sciences, they too problematize the relationship between the two genres in their writings while providing their readers a guide to the bodies of knowledge in Islamic learning. As I discuss below, in the Kimiya-i Sa'adat and Akhlaq-i Nasiri, Ghazali and Tusi view fiqh and akhlaq as emerging from entirely distinct epistemologies.\footnote{Davani does not include a theoretical discussion on the branches of knowledge and instead embarks directly on his exposition of akhlaq.} Thus in discussions on social relations, akhlaq fit into the contours of fiqh, by and large, but also contains ethical responsibilities incumbent upon Muslim men entirely apart from the legal advantages they enjoy. There are two issues at stake when it comes to exploring the relationship between fiqh and akhlaq. The first is distinguishing the two discursive traditions, what sources and methodologies they rely on, and the kinds of questions each addresses. The second is the impetus for people to actually learn and follow each tradition.

Ghazali devoted the final years of his life to writing and teaching about the rah-i din or path of faith, which for him, was moving beyond polemics and the outward expressions of religious piety. Ghazali describes jurisprudence as “connected with religion, not directly but indirectly through the affairs of this world […].”\footnote{Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, \textit{Ihya' \textquotesingle Ulum ad-Din: Kitab al-'Ilm}, trans. Nabih Faris (New Dehli: Islamic Book Service, 1962), 33.} He continues
that “as government by magistrates does not belong primarily to the science of religion but is an adjunct to that without which there is no religion, so is the knowledge of the manner of government.”

In other words, in Ghazali’s mind, fiqh or the rule of law, as he calls it, is not the rule of God, but rather is the rule of administration based upon God’s intent for society, and it could not be implemented without administrative machinery. Individuals themselves need something else to guide them in the rah-i din. I interpret this as Ghazali saying fiqh is the religious law of the land, enforced through government, while akhlaq is the religious ethics of an individual.

In the Ihya’ ‘Ulam ad-Din, Ghazali also acknowledges in that scholars “disagreed as to what branch of knowledge man is obliged to acquire.” He felt that fiqh was not necessary for everyone to learn. Ghazali held that because each person’s circumstances is different, one is not required to learn the details of fiqh: “the obligation is conditioned by the rise of new developments and changed circumstances relevant to it, and varies with the conditions of the individual. Thus the mute are not obliged to know what is unlawful in speech nor the blind to know what things are unlawful to see.” Instead ethics, as found in the Ihya, as well as the Kimiya, is required for everyone. In comparing discussions about marriage in fiqh and the Ihya, Lev Weitz explains that the fiqh genre is “more concerned with specifically legal issues such as the contracting of a valid marriage and the obligations it effects, [and thus] fiqh works tend to deal less with the kind of ethical ideal of the good wife that concerns al-Ghazali.” He explains that ethical discourse is built into fiqh through its graded hierarchy of non-obligatory practices.

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142 Ghazali, Ihya’, 34.
143 Ghazali, Ihya’, 23.
144 Ghazali, Ihya’, 26-27.
A key distinction between *fiqh* and *akhlaq* in both the *Ihya* and the *Kimiya* is Ghazali’s emphasis on the need to develop good character traits or virtues and curb the vices, while he polemizes against ‘ilm al-mu’amalat, which amounts to the laws of human relations in *fiqh*. In the *Kimiya*, he sets out to explain rah-i din, which begins with learning about one’s *nafs* and perfecting it. A non-specialist in Islamic sciences, representative of the audience of his treatise, cannot or should not have to learn all the details of *fiqh*, and should instead cultivate virtues deep in himself so that he can assuredly act in all challenging situations in accordance with revelation, which as an Ash‘ari, determined right and wrong for Ghazali. The proof texts Ghazali relies upon in the *Kimiya* range from the Qur’an and hadith to sayings of Sufis and anonymous sages. Ultimately, he sees training of the *nafs* as the appropriate vehicle for a man to understand the laws of God intuitively as he transformed his *khulq* (disposition). This is evidenced by the fact that the text begins with a discussion on knowledge of the self or *nafs* and perfecting it, rather than knowledge of God or any specific rules of conducting oneself.

Similarly, Nasir ad-Din Tusi distinguishes *fiqh* and *akhlaq* on the basis of one’s capacity to learn and depth of understanding. He belonged to an Ismaili-cum-philosophical genealogy more sympathetic to the mu‘tazili position that reason determines right and wrong. Thus, he believed that the science of *akhlaq* was the path meant for people who could develop virtues through reasoning and the study of philosophy while *fiqh* was meant for the rest.146 As Tusi discusses in his introduction to *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*, ethics of the self, domestic, and civic life come under the broad rubric of *hikmat-i ‘amali* or practical philosophy (See Chart 1).

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146This was a philosophical position, but most of the writers of *falaysuf* were mu‘tazili or sympathetic to mu‘tazilis.
The complementary branch of knowledge is Speculative Philosophy: mathematics, natural sciences, and metaphysics, which includes theology and prophecy, fall under this branch. He finds an overlap between practical philosophy and jurisprudence exists on the level of broad questions of how human beings are meant to act. Therefore he includes *fiqh* in his classification of the sciences of practical philosophy, but as a tangential field (see Chart 2).

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147 Nasir-ad Din Muhammad ibn Muhammad Tusi, *Akhlāq-i Nasiri*, ed. Mojtaba Minvi and Alireza Haydari (Tehran: Zar Publishing, 1977), 41. Davani’s work does not include a theoretical chapter on the branches of knowledge. Instead Davani delves into *akhlāq* for the individual, the household, and the city with greater references to the Sufi sages than Ghazali and Tusi.
The two main branches of fiqh, known as ‘ibadat (matters of worship) and mu’amalat (human transactions) contain rulings on matters which also appear in akhlaq. However, because of what he calls the “details of fiqh,” the methodologies, questions, and sources used to derive rules on these issues, are different from the way the philosophical tradition has handled questions of human conduct, fiqh is outside of ‘ilm-i hikmat altogether; it merely appears as a general subject in practical philosophy.\textsuperscript{148}

In contrast to fiqh, akhlaq approaches moral conduct and human relations through the science of taming an individual’s soul by cultivating virtues of rationality, intellect, and faith, and curtailing vices such as anger or hedonism to create ethical behavior. Based on general rules of the nafs, Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani discuss circumstance and person-specific ethics. Examples of these include behavior with one’s wife, children, friends, parents, employers, teachers, or strangers. The overall emphasis in akhlaq cen-

\textsuperscript{148}Tusi, 41.
ters on understanding the human soul, its psychology, how it acts and reacts to personal and social situations, and ultimately, what kind of tamed soul or mentality is required to act ethically. It is predominantly this focus on the *nafs* that stands *akhlq* apart from *fiqh*, although they may share similar concerns of what constitutes appropriate behavior with certain people. Regardless of the fact that the two scholars come from opposing schools of thought, wrapped up in sectarian polemics, they both held that *fiqh* established the basic parameters of legal or contractual relationships between agents while *akhlq* explained how to act in those relationships.

### 1.4.3 *Akhlq* as Islamic Ethics

The third dominant definition of Islamic ethics focuses on philosophical literature that centralizes an individual’s practices and character disposition or *khulq* (pl. *akhlq*) in creating ethical conditions in society. Ebrahim Moosa argues that while Islamic ethics “has several synonymous nomenclatures [...] it is most often described as the ‘science of innate dispositions’ (‘ilm al-akhlq), the ‘science of comportment or conduct’ (‘ilm al-suluk) or ‘science of mysticism’ (‘ilm al-tasawwuf).”\(^\text{149}\) Moosa does not exclude theological and legal discourses, but rather adds cultural contributions of various Islamicate cultures to the definition of ethics, especially those in Persian and Indian. Thus, instead of Islamic ethics, he uses the term Muslim ethics, which is “responsibility-based ethics, invoking reciprocal rights and duties” that draw on “all the major disciplines of religious thought, ranging from the teachings of the Qur’an, the prophetic reports, juridical literature, theology, and mysticism to philosophy and literature proper.”\(^\text{150}\)

The distinction between Islamic and Muslim ethics further enables scholars to examine

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\(^\text{149}\)Moosa, “Islamic Ethics: Muslim Ethics?” 237.

\(^\text{150}\)Moosa, ”Islamic Ethics: Muslim Ethics?” 238.
the amalgamation of multiple sources that make up *akhlaq*.

The term *akhlaq* in Arabic derives from the tri-letter root kh-l-q, which means to measure, determine proportion, or to create based on measure. It is the verb the Qur’an uses to describe God’s act of creating the heavens, the earth, all the animals, and human beings. The term *khulq* means the actual nature or temperament of a person, which is deeply embedded in creation by virtue of being created by God. Thus, the term *tahdhib-i akhlaq* (discipline of ethics), carries notions of creation as well as nature, and proportion in one’s behavior. One should behave commensurate with one’s nature. All three ethicists link the impetus for ethical behavior with God’s creation in two ways. First, they state that it is by virtue of being God’s most rational creation that men are obligated to be ethical. Second, they discuss the *nafs’s* (soul’s) disposition as created (*khalaqah*) by God and its potential to be ethical by employing the science of *akhlaq*. Further, *khulq* is neither natural, nor opposed to nature, which shows that human beings are born with neutral souls. In particular, Tusi uses *malakah* to denote a term that means habit but shares its root with terms for angel and kingship, to define *khulq*, which implies that personal disposition and the sovereign state are linked, showing another explanation of how the individual is considered to be a microcosm, a major part of an individual’s ethical goal, which I will discuss in Chapter Two. Ghazali additionally uses the term *khu*, meaning disposition of the heart. In its plural form, *akhlaq*, the term is not unlike the plural word of Greek origin, ethics, that suggests there are multiple behaviors or mores that comprise ethical behavior.

Historically, Muslim ethicists define *akhlaq* as a branch of *falsafa* (after the Greek discipline of *philosophia*) or as a branch simply of *hikmah* called *hikmat-i amali* or practical philosophy (wisdom). Beginning around 800 in Baghdad, the cultural and

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151 Tusi, 101.

152 Tusi, 37-41. Tusi defines *tahdhib-i akhlaq* as a branch of *hikmat-i amali*. 

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intellectual transfer from Greek science and philosophy led to the incorporation of philosophical terms and concepts into the methodologies of Islamic philosophical ethics, such as concepts of the intellectual soul, nafs and the individual’s role in society. Philosophers building on Stoic and Socratic ideas such as al-Kindi (d. 873) and Fakhr ad-Din Ar-Razi (d. 1209) were sympathetic to Mu‘tazilite ideas because they too held that values are reason-derived but, they relied on the writings of the Greeks to debate the state of the human condition and the impetus for partaking in moral behavior. Farabi (d. 950) and Ibn Sina’s (d. 1037) engagement with Plato and Aristotle led to discussions about the role of the moral and ascetic intellectual in the moral underpinnings of a polity. Ibn Sina was more specifically concerned than Farabi with the perfection of the human soul in its quest to find happiness and knowledge of the Ultimate. His neoplatonic ideas about the nafs and its components, the rational, irascible, and concupiscent faculties, and their corresponding virtues and vices, became a standard model which pervaded multiple genres of prescriptive Muslim thought, including akhlaq. We see this basic framework of the faculties of the nafs in Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani.

Charles Butterworth reads Farabi and Ibn Sina as philosophers who felt that religion and philosophy both are needed to explain the universe and goal of human life. Farabi held that philosophy determines what happiness is but does not explain how to achieve it, while religion does the reverse. It explains what people should do to be happy but does not explain what happiness is. Human endeavor through philosophy is similar to the wisdom in religion in that philosophy can achieve understanding of the world from the bottom up, while in religion the human examines the wisdom given from religion (God) from top down. On the other hand, Ibn Sina ties religion and philosophy together through the prophet, who is the highest intellect we strive to know and is the

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154 Butterworth, 228-229, 233.
perfect human being because he has direct communication with the ultimate wisdom of God, the ultimate goal of humans. A prophet is the best human being because he has developed his moral habits and establishes rules for people.\textsuperscript{155}

Then around the 12th century, the Illuminationist or Ishraqi school of philosophy was founded by Shihab al-Din Yahya al-Suhrawardi as a critique of Aristotelian ideas in Islamic philosophy, namely those of Ibn Sina.\textsuperscript{156} Ishraqis emphasized the concept of essence over existence, and considered the mystical, intuitive, and experiential as legitimate sources of knowledge in addition to the physical and measurable. This resulted in a philosophy based on the properties of “light,” such as degrees and intensity. With God as the ultimate Light of Lights (\textit{nur ‘ala nur}), the goal was to become self-aware and improve upon the degrees and intensity of one’s light or self-awareness through knowledge and ascetic practice. Finally, although the \textit{akhlq} tradition continues well into the modern period, major treatises specializing on matters of \textit{akhlq} mostly appear from the 11th to the 17th centuries.\textsuperscript{157}

The idea that \textit{faylasufa} (philosophers) claimed the Qur’anic and Prophetic mandate to learn \textit{hikmah} was problematic for scholars of other genres claiming the same.\textsuperscript{158} That various genres of Islamic philosophy, \textit{falsafa} as well as \textit{kalam} to some extent, engaged deeply with Greek, Persian, and Indian ideas became a modern preoccupation for both orientalist scholars and revivalist Muslim scholars. The former claimed that \textit{akhlq} was no more than wholesale, poor copies of Plato and Aristotle’s ethics. For example, W.F.

\textsuperscript{155}Butterworth, 231.


\textsuperscript{157}This is seven centuries if we consider Ibn Miskawayh’s \textit{Tahdhib al-Akhlq} from the 11th century as the beginning of philosophical ethics in Islamic philosophy and works of Ibn Sadr ad-Din al-Amin Shirwani (d.1627), which use the same definition of \textit{akhlq} (as virtue ethics), that mark the time frame between which major contributions to \textit{akhlq} occurred. Naturally, ethical discourse in other fields, such as Qur’\textsuperscript{an} commentary, law, poetry, and literature existed before and after this time.

\textsuperscript{158}I will discuss Ghazali’s objection in particular below.
Thompson, one of the earliest English translators and commentators on the Akhlaq-i Jalali, stated that “it appears that Muhammedan philosophy is neither more nor less than Grecian philosophy in an Eastern garb; a twin offspring of that common parent from which the sciences of Europe are proud to acknowledge their derivation.” He declared that akhlaq was not really Islamic because it was a copy, with some additions that made it acceptable to Muslim audiences.

Mid-20th century scholars, such as Majid Fakhry and George Hourani, studied Islamic philosophy and ethics in comparison with Greek works. George Hourani explains, “the writings usually described as ‘ethics’ (akhlaq), by philosophers such as Miskawayh and Tusi, are mainly concerned with the classification and description of virtues and vices in the manner of Aristotle’s treatment of them in the Nicomachean Ethics.” However, they singled out al-falsafa al-mashsha’iyya (peripatetic philosophy) as foreign, as if divorced from “real” Islam. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman view Islamic ethics as real life responses to existential and moral problems centered around an Islamic worldview that critiqued and expanded upon the philosophy of prior traditions (such as Greek and Ancient Persian). Leaman has shown that orientalist scholars of Islamic philosophy, such as Richard Walzer, characterized Islamic philosophy as mere translation or copy of Greek philosophy under colonialist agendas. By discrediting the intellectual heritage of the colonized Muslim peoples, European culture could claim a monopoly over high philosophical ideas. While disparate categories of

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159 W. F. Thompson. Practical Philosophy of the Mohammadan People, (London: Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland, 1839), xxv.

160 Thompson, xxi-xxii.

161 Hourani, Islamic Rationalism, 2.

162 Fakhry, History of Islamic Philosophy, 132-133 and Hourani, 70.


164 Oliver Leaman, “Orientalism and Islamic Philosophy,” in Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy 7,
Qur’anic or Greek based philosophy are helpful in terms of tracking the movement or development of ideas, the question of religious authenticity of falsafa-based akhlaq is more complicated.

Mohammad Azadpur argues in his essay, “Is ‘Islamic Philosophy’ Islamic?” that it is not easy to isolate philosophers’ beliefs into either Islamic or extra-Islamic categories by “measur[ing] their allegiance to Islam.” Building on Pierre Hadot’s thesis that “ancient philosophy was, first and foremost, a way of life [...] the goal was to transform ourselves, to become wise,” Azadpur argues that “philosophers, as lovers of wisdom, are in training for wisdom and wisdom is not contained in a philosophical treatise, but is a condition of the human soul.” He holds that because the Muslim philosophers who were engaging with Greek thought understood it to be “the practice of spiritual exercises aimed at the transformation of the self and the acquisition of wisdom.” Thus, “Islamic philosophy is the Islamic practice of philosophical spiritual exercises.” The spiritual exercises, that perfected human virtues, were also considered to be the building blocks of akhlaq.

There is very little disagreement that the Shii-Ismaili Nasir ad-Din Tusi and Ishraqi Jalal ad-Din Davani are part of a contiguous intellectual genealogy that drew on Muslim engagements with Greek thought. However, scholars often question how “Islamic” their works are. From a purely textual standpoint, Tusi and Davani make references to sources of varying origins, including Qur’an, hadith, quotations from Muslim philosophers and Sufi saints, Persian sayings, citations of Plato and Aristotle, as well as other Greek philosophers. Ernst describes that historically, Islamic ethics has always been a

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166 Pierre Hadot qtd in Azadpur, 24.

167 Azadpur, 24.
mixture of sources: “while ethics in largely Muslim societies certainly derives in part from religious sources such as the Qur’an, hadith, and Islamic law, there is a great deal of normative behavior that comes from local custom or from major pre-islamic cultures, including the heritage of Greek philosophy.”\textsuperscript{168} Yet, the question of whether this genre of literature is Islamic or not, given its reliance on supposed “extra” Islamic ideas is a frequent and recurrent question for modern theologians seeking to discredit thinkers rooted in falsafa.

Although Ghazali wrote anti-philosophy rhetoric earlier in his career while under Saljuk patronage, his own work shares ideas from falsafa, which suggests falsafa as hikmah was not as problematic for Ghazali as it was for revivalist Muslim scholars.\textsuperscript{169} Hourani summarizes that Ghazali regarded akhlaq highly, higher than fiqh, even though he did not situate himself in the tradition of the Greek-oriented philosophers who predominantly wrote akhlaq texts.\textsuperscript{170} Majid Fakhry, who treats falsafa-based ethics as the primary standard against which he measures scriptural, theological, and religious morality, argues that the work of Ghazali appears to be a synthesis of philosophical and religious ethics.\textsuperscript{171} Moosa argues that Ghazali’s work represents a dihliz,

the intermediate space or the threshold space that Ghazali identified—one with intersecting boundaries and heterogeneous notions of practices and time—he forged different narratives of religion. These narratives were the outcome of his encounter with both inherited and contemporary forms of knowledge.\textsuperscript{172}

At the heart of Ghazali’s ideas about religion and ethics was “the notion of a dialogical

\textsuperscript{168}Ernst, 110.


\textsuperscript{170}Hourani, “Ghazali on the Ethics of Action,” 70.

\textsuperscript{171}Fakhry, \textit{Ethical Theories in Islam}, 193.

\textsuperscript{172}Ebrahim Moosa, \textit{Ghazali and the Poetics of Imagination}, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 27.
imagination: a sense that all meaning is part of a greater whole and that the different parts of meaning constantly interact with each other.”

Although Ghazali rejected the metaphysical implications that Aristotelian philosophy held for God’s omnipotence and creation of the world, his works were still grounded in the overall tradition of Islamic thought, which by then, had engaged with and adopted the tools of Greek philosophy for several centuries. Moosa further characterizes Ghazali’s thought as similar to “Parmenides’ insistence on the unity of thought and being, or the unity of knowledge and identity [...] he dented the Platonic link between ontology and epistemology.” Likewise, Richard Frank argues that Ghazali followed a “rhetoric of harmonization.” The consistency Frank finds across Ghazali’s diverse writings in terms of genre and audience is that he synthesized multiple philosophical and theological viewpoints, even contradictory ones, into his brand of Ash’arite thought, while also borrowing from Ibn Sina’s falsafa. Frank points out that Ghazali most tangibly employs Ibn Sina’s Greek inspired metaphysics, conception of the soul, and even some of the procedures for self-training to be an ethical person in his ethics works.

Further, as I discuss in the next chapters, his recommendations about how to raise ethical children, how to maintain a wife, and be an ethical member of society draw on similar ideas those of Tusi and Davani and even use the same terminology. Thus, while Ghazali’s work may not fit into the genre of falsafa, the Kimiya easily follows the framework of treatises classified as akhlaq.

The texts I study here present complex origins of ethics, which are at once spiritual

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173 Moosa, Ghazali, 27.
174 Moosa, Ghazali, 27.
(Islamic in particular) and intellectual: they contain Platonic and Aristotelian virtue ethics; deontological recommendations for moral duties set by the Qur’an, Prophet Muhammad’s sayings, jurisprudence; philosophical science of reason and logic; teleological philosophy for the maximization of social good; and a mystical understanding of the individual in relation to the cosmos and the Creator. The ethics of Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani are rooted in the broader historical discourses of Islamic knowledge that contested the nature of ethics itself and debated the best way to live, which was expressed as happiness (sometimes in an Aristotelian sense of eudemonia) achieved through an Islamic conception of the world. Close reading of the treatises reveals that classical Islamic ethics is a normative discourse that is deeply rooted in, and part of, the historical, intellectual, spiritual, and cultural traditions of Islam. What the ethicists say about norms of behavior for male and female in marriage and other social settings is integral to understanding constructions of gender in Islam as a whole and in real, historical Muslim societies. The imaginings of family dynamics and social interaction, or how human beings ought to live with one another in these ethical treatises, is part of an expression of Islam, as opposed to something that is foreign to it, even if there are elements in it that seem to come from outside of sacred sources of Islam.

While Davani’s work represents a synthesis of multiple schools of thought drawn from Sunni, Shii, Ismaili, and Sufi Ishraqi thinkers, the works of Ghazali and Tusi originate in politically opposed camps of Ash’ari-Sunni and Mutazili-Isma’ili, respectively. Yet on a number of subjects, they rely on similar concepts of the human being’s soul and place in the world and ultimately they produce similar ideas about ethical gender relations. This is not to say that they are the same, but rather to acknowledge the patterns of Muslim thought that run through each of their works. Further, when it comes to gender specifically, whether or not sectarian arguments are deployed or ignored, what prevails are assumptions about patriarchy and male dominance in God’s
creation of all species.

The declaration that *akhlaq* belongs to the Islamicate or Muslim discourses because it is not "authentic" enough, requires reexamination. There are three issues with arguments in favor of categorizing *fiqh* and *kalam* as Islamic ethics and categorizing *akhlaq* as Islamicate or Muslim ethics. First, as Kevin Reinhart shows, pre-Islamic ideals make up important features of the law as it developed in the third century of Islam.177 Thus the law, and even the Qur’an itself, is in conversation with the broader historical context that came before it. Second, there are many rulings in Islamic law that are based on culturally biased interpretations of the Qur’an or rooted in false assumptions about gender. For example, jurists hold that women’s silence (especially a virgin) in marriage is her consent because a woman would feel embarrassed to vocalize her affirmative consent. Such an idea is both cultural and time bound and also assumes that women’s silence cannot mean anything else.178 Third, while law is the quintessential “Queen of the Islamic sciences,” the idea that *fiqh* is ethics undermines the significance of the rich *akhlaq* tradition, which thrived for at least seven centuries as a named branch of philosophy.179 Akhlaq likewise draws on the Qur’an and Sunnah. The so-called “foreign” influences on *akhlaq* are explicit and easier to pick apart because there is a lot of scholarship on Greek philosophy, but there is not enough scholarship on the cultural and textual contexts in which the *fiqh* and *kalam* emerged to be able to pick apart the “foreign” influences on them.


1.5 Themes and Theoretical Underpinnings of Study

Studying akhlaq texts through the lens of gender not only means considering how the texts fit in intellectual and social history, but also investigating the mechanisms through which they create ethical standards. There are three central themes I study in this dissertation. First, I seek to understand the gendered nature of power and constructions of ethical masculinity in the context of societal hierarchy based on intellect. Second, I explore the hierarchical gender relations in marriage that highlight men’s intellectual leadership and women’s biological instrumentality. Third, I examine notions of male homosociality in imagined male-only public spaces. In this section, I will discuss the scholars and concepts that have shaped my thinking about gender in akhlaq.

1.5.1 Concepts of Power

Theories of power have been useful in analyzing faculties or powers of the nafs as well as the ethical man’s responsibility to create an ethical home and society. Scholars who theorize notions of power in society are generally divided into two camps, those who define it as power-over others such as Max Weber, Robert Dahl, and Michel Foucault and those who define it as power-to take certain actions such as Hannah Arendt, and Hanna Pitkin. In particular, political scientist Robert Dahl’s classical definition of power-over explains how “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to

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do something that B would not otherwise do.”¹⁸¹ Dahl’s definition defines power-over as a coercive force, one individual possessing it over another. Foucault famously theorized, “if we speak of the structures or the mechanisms of power, it is only insofar as we suppose that certain persons exercise power over others.”¹⁸² Foucault’s definition accounts for the ways in which power-over can be systematically built into the structures of society through classes of people who hold power over classes of other people. It also accounts for the ways in which power-over occurs in a relationship, through interactions. His view has been useful in thinking about both the ways in which men hold power over all women through the ways they are prescribed to behave with them, but also how in the profession-based class hierarchy, elite men hold power over other men, who are from lower classes.

However, it is the framework of the second definition of power, the power-to, that enables me to account for why all men have power-over all women and why certain men have power over others as construed in the texts. Hanna Pitkin’s definition of power is, “something—anything—which makes or renders somebody able to do, capable of doing something. Power is capacity, potential, ability, or wherewithal.”¹⁸³ This definition of power as one’s capacity to do something fits in well with the Greek-inspired notions of the nafs (self), which is composed of several faculties that are known in the akhlab texts as kinds of quwwat, which literally means power. The nafs is made up of powers-to enact ethical behaviors. Further, Steven Lukes describes power-to as “a potentiality, not an actuality—indeed a potentiality that may never be actualized.”¹⁸⁴ Power-to act ethically as a potential to be actualized is another useful dimension to

¹⁸¹Dahl, 202-203.
¹⁸²Foucault, Beyond Structuralism, 217.
¹⁸³Pitkin, 276.
reading the ethicists’ conceptions of the *nafs* because it accounts for the need to order the powers of the *nafs’s* in order to produce ethical behaviors. Power in the texts is also gendered in that only men possess full ethical potential. The ethicists state that the ethical men are leaders in their societies because they have perfected the balance of the powers of their *nafses*. Men have the power of full rationality; they have the power of subjugating the other faculties of the *nafs* to submit to the will of the rational faculty and thus the power over others who do not possess the same power-to. Their power-to, or mental capacity, enables their power-over others.

### 1.5.2 Conceptions of Gender and Gender Relations

Women’s roles and the ethics of heterosocial relations appear in *akhlaq* treatises in chapters on the domestic economy, which are about marriage, raising children, divorce, and the business of running a home. Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani detail the qualities a man must look for in a wife, the ethical responsibilities he has towards her and the children she bears him. Here they provide us with a glimpse into their understanding of the nature of women, which teeters between the pre-modern ideas about women’s biology and spiritual, ontological understandings of the human soul. I read their discussions on these matters through feminist theoretical frameworks, such as those of Luce Irigaray, Simone de Beauvoir, and Judith Butler who all explore the relationship between gender and gender roles. As I discuss below, their frameworks shape my thinking on what roles ethical women play, or what powers are attributed to their *nafses*.

A body of literature, feminist critiques of Greek philosophy, particularly that of Aristotle and Plato, have served as important methodological guideposts for my dissertation as the ethics treatises I study here share similar virtue ethics structures or even directly engage with real or pseudonymous works of both philosophers. Feminist
history of philosophy generally is classified into two main categories of works. The first category comprises feminist criticisms of what the philosophical canon has to say about women and gender and the canon’s long term effects on philosophical ideas and their practical applications. The second is works that seek to reread, recover, or appropriate certain concepts in philosophy for feminist purposes. Works from the first category have been the most relevant to my own reading of Islamic ethics.

As Cynthia Freeland explains, a major concern of feminist critiques of philosophy is the internal inconsistency within philosophical texts that pose a contradiction between human beings’ metaphysical existence with women’s inferior biological essence.\textsuperscript{185} I compare Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani’s assumptions about the human soul in the chapters on personal virtue ethics (which are metaphysically oriented) with the assumptions about the gendered person in chapters on marriage and homosocial relations (which take biology into account). Particularly useful has been Luce Irigaray’s work that investigates how language, truth, and knowledge in philosophical texts are male oriented and omit the female. She points out the male normativity in Greek philosophy, the othering of the feminine ethical subject, and the potential intention of ethicists to create an equal but different feminine subject.\textsuperscript{186} Her work on uncovering the suppressed feminine in philosophical works that claim sexual indifference, or male universality, is helpful in teasing out constructions of femininity in works produced solely for a male audience and mostly about male homosocial relationships. Specifically, I look for what Carolyn Krosmeier defines as “gendered concepts” or male universality of ethics and aesthetics in philosophical works: “concepts that, lacking any obvious references to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{185}Cynthia Freeland, Ed, \textit{Feminist Interpretations of Aristotle}, (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 12.
\item \textsuperscript{186}Luce Irigaray, \textit{This Sex Which is not One} trans., Catherine Porter, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985). Thomas Laqueur argues that ancient Greeks, whose philosophy influences classical Islamic ethics, did not believe in sexual difference; rather they had a one-sex model in which women were imperfect iterations of males. Thomas Walter Laqueur, \textit{Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud}. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990.)
\end{itemize}
males or females, or to masculinity and femininity, nevertheless are formulated in such a way that their neutral quality and universal applicability are questionable.”187

Luce Irigaray explains a foundational flaw in Aristotelian philosophy that is rooted Plato and Aristotle’s understanding of sex and biology. In *This Sex Which is Not One*, Luce Irigaray’s main critique of Western philosophy and linguistics is that because philosophers do not recognize sexual differences, they present the male body as the universal human.188 If they do recognize women, it is only in their capacities as vessels, the maternal-feminine, which is problematic because the maternal creative power is at odds with Men’s appropriation of it as a thing. She states:

If traditionally, and as a mother, woman represents *place* for man, such a limit means that she becomes *a thing*, with some possibility of change from one historical period to another. She finds herself delineated as a thing. Moreover, the maternal-feminine also serves as an *envelope, a container*, the starting point from which man limits his things. The *relationship between envelope and things* constitutes one of the aporias, or the aporia, of Aristotelianism and of the philosophical systems derived from it.189

Irigaray argues that in reality, men deny women’s biological capability of motherhood as a subjective, rather than objective power because the woman-mother is

*castrating*. Which means that, since her status as envelope and as thing(s) has not been interpreted, she remains inseparable from the work or act of man, notably insofar as he defines her and creates his identity with her as his starting point or, correlatively, with this determination of her being.”190

Women’s creative power is troubling, so men use their power over women to define them and benefit from them. Irigaray’s account of Greek philosophy as ignoring sexual dif-

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188Irigaray. *This Sex Which is not One*, 28-31.


ferences in the objectification of women’s bodies, and thus seeing them as non-persons, is a powerful one. However, it leads to biological essentialism, which underscores the idea that men and women are inherently different because women bear children, rather than accounting for the social forces at play in creating gendered experiences. Even in the pre-modern akhlaq texts women’s ability to bear children only partially constructs their ethical role in men’s lives. The other major consideration in the creation of gender roles is the ethicists’ understanding of men’s and women’s nafses.

Simone de Beauvoir’s ideas about women’s immanence have helped me synthesize the notion of a metaphysical tension that arises from the texts preempting Irigaray’s ultimate conclusion that women are completely obliterated in philosophy. In *The Second Sex* de Beauvoir argues that a “woman is not born, but, rather becomes one” through socio-cultural experiences. Even though a woman’s role cannot be essentialized as a characteristic of her body, those experiences that define woman also define her as secondary and instrumental: “She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute and she is the Other.”191 She calls this a women’s immanence, or her existence and actions within a system. de Beauvoir then contrasts this with transcendence, which is existing beyond the physical. Although this is attributed to men, women possess it as well by virtue of being self-conscious human beings. However, socio-cultural forces demand women to immanence, thereby creating a tension between transcendence and immanence. She explains how this happens: “[Men] propose to stabilize her as object and to doom her to immanence since her transcendence is to be overshadowed and for ever transcended by another ego (conscience) which is essential and sovereign.”192 This is a key lens through which I read


192 de Beauvoir, xxxv.
the ethicists’ concepts of the *nafs*, which I argue is normalized as the male self in the texts. The ethicists admit that women have *nafses*, that as humans, they are prone to the behavioral pitfalls of the *nafs*, yet they categorically state that women are deficient in rationality and are over emotional, and thus must be ruled by their husbands. I describe this as a metaphysical tension in *akhlaq* with respect to women’s beings. The ethicists depict deficiencies of the *nafs*, which belong to all humans, as essential feminine characteristics, which solidifies the ways in which the science of *akhlaq* (ethical ordering) is a manly domain.

Judith Butler’s discussion of how gender and sex are both social constructions has been helpful to me for articulating the ways in which men in *akhlaq* texts are disembodied and spiritual, while women are embodied and biological, a claim that de Beauvoir makes. \(^{193}\) Butler holds that embodiment of sex and gender takes place through scripted expressions of “corporeal style.” \(^{194}\) She explains: “gender is an act which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again.” \(^{195}\) The scripts through which gender is performed can change over time with historical and cultural changes even within one’s lifetime, depending on one’s stage in life, and also vary from place to place. I see the ethicists as offering particular scripts of ethical masculinity to their readers, as well as what scripts they should expect ethical women to perform. Those are, connecting back to de Beauvoir, ones in which men are expected to be concerned with the lofty goals of life, putting rational faculties above corporeal ones, and thus becoming disembodied, and women perform motherhood and


\(^{195}\) Butler, “Performative,” 272.
the virtue of continence ethically.

As I describe in Chapter Two, in the ethicists’ discussion of virtues, the only virtue they discuss in women’s possession is ‘iffat (continence), which emanates from the expression of the quwwat-i shahwi (concupiscent faculty), which is responsible for the body’s physical need for pleasure in the form of food, drink, comfort, and copulation. I regard this contrast between feminine form of virtue as a control of corporeal faculty with the remaining facilities and virtues of the nafs as masculine to be indicative of how women are always embodied and men as intellectual, and thus disembodied. The notion of women as embodied and men as disembodied is also a useful lens through which I examine ethical responsibilities in parenting one’s children and the ethical responsibilities one has towards one’s parents in Chapter Three. Because women’s bodies bear children and suckle them, mothers create a corporeal debt upon their sons, who in turn, repay that debt by financially maintaining the physical comforts of their mothers such as providing them with a home and servants to perform manual labor.\textsuperscript{196} Fathers, on the other hand, are responsible for the intellectual and ethical development of their sons; sons are not able to repay such a priceless debt except through their prayers for their fathers. To develop a lens for reading the akhlaq texts, from de Beauvoir, Irigaray, and Butler, I read the following ideas in the texts: that women are secondary and instrumental to men, they are the other in comparison to a male universal (though not eliminated as Irigary argues), and that they are embodied, in contrast to men who are disembodied.

In addition to paying attention to how power is held and structured, feminist critique of philosophy also provides methodologies of examining how women’s inferiority is written into the texts. In her work on gender in rhetoricity and textuality in Jewish philosophy, Susan Shapiro proposes that references, stories, and metaphors in the

\textsuperscript{196}The texts make brief mention of daughters, which I discuss in Chapter Three, but not in relation to parental debt.
texts say more about the gender assumptions in the text than the actual meaning and logic discerned from the texts. She argues that metaphors of women and the body in philosophical texts, which may not themselves be about gender relations, have real life consequences in creating a culture of gender hierarchy. The philosophical text does not remain esoteric and theoretical; rather, it plays an important part in creating culture.¹⁹⁷

1.5.3 Masculinity and Homosociality

The study of masculinities in Islam is new, relative to masculinity studies or men’s studies broadly.¹⁹⁸ Though there is some 30 years of research on masculinities, mostly in sociology and other fields of social sciences, the study of Muslim men’s gendered experiences and masculinity in Islam is relatively new. Along the lines of de Beauvoir’s statement that, “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman,” Lahoucine Ouzgane explains that to study Islamic masculinities, “a social constructionist perspective [is] premised on the belief that men are not born; they are made; they construct their masculinities within particular social and historical contexts. Thus, masculinities in Islamic contexts emerge as a set of distinctive practices defined by men’s positioning within a variety of religious and social structures.”¹⁹⁹ Additionally, there are a few studies of genres of classical Islamic thought that examine masculinity with varying depths and theoretical engagements.²⁰⁰ Recently there have also been a handful of essays that

¹⁹⁷Susan Shapiro, “A Matter of Discipline: Reading For Gender in Jewish Philosophy,” in Judaism Since Gender, eds., Miriam Peskowitz and Laura Levitt. (New York: Routledge, 1997). Shapiro argues that Maimonides’s metaphor from the Guide of the Perplexed, that matter takes on physical form like a married harlot who is always with a man but never free, is no “mere metaphor.” It contributes to a real culture of gender hierarchy and even violence against women, as Maimonides elsewhere in the legal work, Mishneh Torah, condones the “correction” of disobedient wives by striking them.


¹⁹⁹de Beauvoir, 301 and Ouzgane, 2.

²⁰⁰Scott Kugle, Sufis and Saints’ Bodies: Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam,
look at the making of militant or terrorist-sympathizing masculinities within Muslim contexts, which take modern and contemporary geopolitics into account in addition to religious interpretation.\textsuperscript{201}

Amanullah De Sondy’s \textit{The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities} focuses on the portraits of masculinity that Prophet Muhammad and other prophets’ lives present. He argues that Islamic sources, specifically the examples of the prophets in the Qur’an and Prophet Muhammad’s own examples in the Sunnah and hadith, present and extol multiple expressions of masculinity that go against “idealized masculinity” which “lead[s] to an understanding that every man is happily married to a wife who bears him children.”\textsuperscript{202} His book also deconstructs how idealized masculinity operated in modern and contemporary South Asia as “explicitly against not just the difference that women represent but also in contrast to God and the non-Islamic world.”\textsuperscript{203}

In addition to feminist theory, my work draws from ideas from masculinity studies. I have gathered the vocabularies with which I discuss ethical and unethical masculinities from the works of Michael Kimmel and RW Connell. Kimmel argues that masculinity is constructed through “social institutions of our world–workplace, family, school, politics—are [...] sites where the dominant definitions are reinforced and reproduced and where ”deviants” are disciplined.\textsuperscript{204} To examine how normative masculinity is constructed in the texts, I focus on how men are prescribed to act in the private in-


\textsuperscript{203}De Sondy, 11.

\textsuperscript{204}Michael Kimmel, \textit{The Gendered Society} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 16.
stitutions of marriage and the household, and the public, homosocial, institutions of court, the bazar, mosque, and other locations where one interacts with friends, enemies, superiors, and inferiors.

More specifically, as I argue that the texts organize humanity into a hierarchy of intellect, with rational and ethical men holding superiority and responsibility over women and men of less rationality, I view the texts as a corrective attempt to curb a pre-modern Muslim form of hegemonic masculinity in favor of chivalrous masculinity. Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as “vehemenent and violent [...] [with] severe cost, in terms of injury ill health, and other constraints on life” but is also the most “honored or desired.” It is the lowliest and basest of masculinities that is held up as exemplary or the most essential way to be masculine. Connell speaks of hegemonic masculinity as it emerges in contemporary Western cultures with respect to violence done to men, women, transgenders, homosexuals, in a variety of contexts in the name of preserving or imposing an ideal masculinity. However, the notion of hegemonic masculinity provides me with a framework to look at the ways in which akhlaq serves as a corrective discourse against unethical activities which were perceived as manly and celebrated in pre-modern Persianate Muslim society.

The ethicists often speak of preserving muruwwa (manliness) in two contexts. The first is in relation to women’s activities, which shows how the ethicists saw masculinity and femininity in relation to one another. The second, more complex, is related to virtues of the balanced nafs. However, their use of muruwwa is curious because preserving muruwwa is only incidental to the ethicists’ advice, the broader goal of which is to achieve happiness and vice-regency of God. The orientalist scholar, Ignaz Goldzihir explains that muruwwa is:

all those virtues which, founded in the tradition of [the Arab’s] people,

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constitute the fame of an individual or the tribe to which he belongs; the observance of those duties which are connected with family ties, the relationships of protection and hospitality, and the fulfillment of the great law of blood revenge[...]
Loyalty to, and self-sacrifice for the sake of all who are connected, by Arab custom, with one’s tribe are the quintessence of these virtues.  

Goldzihir then argues that muuwuwa, which he does not note as as masculinity, but rather as “the Arab’s” value system, is completely in opposition to din, which Goldzihir translates as religion, as a new ethical value system brought by Muhammad to replace muuwuwa, which never occurs fully.

Gordon Newby’s definition of muuwuwa as a “manly virtue” that was “a fundamental value of early Arab society and was taken over by Islamic peoples in emulation of the Arab model” explains its persistence as a value for pre-modern Muslims. Unlike Goldzihir, who sees muuwuwa as an antithesis to Islam itself, Newby explains through reading Ibn Khaldun, that muuwuwa is a natural disposition consistent with religious law, and it relates to concepts of manliness, which were incorporated into Muslim ideas.

Lloyd Ridgeon explains the ways in which a parallel concept from early Islam, futuwwat, was co-opted and revised by later Muslims. Futuwwat in Arabic, or javanmardi (young manliness) in Persian, was a term that appeared in early Arabic literature as a descriptor of groups “who enjoyed a hedonistic lifestyle, whose parties included singing and wine-drinking.” In urban centers “‘ayyari-futuwwat groups had [...] engaged in

\[207\] Goldzihir, 43-44.
\[209\] Newby, 276.
\[210\] Ridgeon, 1.
extortion, violence, and political intrigue.”⁵¹¹ In those examples, manliness was synonymous with corruption and base behaviors, which can be best understood as equating maleness with hegemonic masculinity.

The Persian term javanmardi (young manliness), emerged as its direct synonym, and completely transformed the notion of ideal masculinity to epitomize chivalry and ethics. In the Qabus Nama, javanmardi was attributed to “soldiers, merchants and Sufis.”⁵¹² Despite javanmardi’s indulgent history, Sufis appropriated the term to describe the kind of manliness that was celebrated in mystical or ascetic lifestyles, which signals a tacit debate in the premodern period over what definitively characterized masculinity.

For the Sufis, javanmardi meant “selflessness, loyalty to family and friends, and the observance of the rights owed to God,” along with a diversity of opinions as to its details and practices.⁵¹³ Ridgeon examines Sufi-futuwwat texts from the 12th, 14th, and 15th centuries to reveal a deeply Qur’anic and Muhammadi oriented discussion of masculinity in which the Prophet’s cousin, Ali, is held as the highest standard of chivalrous masculinity.⁵¹⁴ The ethicists use the term muruwwa, but they use it in the sense of chivalrous javanmardi, as a standard of masculine ethics meant to uplift the individual to realize his potential as a microcosm of the world.

Finally, homosociality, or same-sex social relations, is a major theoretical construct I rely upon to investigate male-male relationships in the social and public realms. The philosopher-ethicists address an exclusively male audience, assuming that free Muslim males are the primary ethical subjects. Apart from chapters on marriage, all ethi-

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⁵¹¹Ridgeon, 2.
⁵¹²Ridgeon, 2.
⁵¹³Ridgeon, 2.
⁵¹⁴Ridgeon, 107.
cal guidelines for social interactions, including love and friendship, address male homosocial relationships. The ethics of same-sex social interactions reveal how scholars imagined social interactions to work in general; they viewed male homosocial relations as universal and heterosocial relations as exceptional situations that require different guidelines. Homosociality was the ultimate expression of a patriarchally structured society, in which men interacted with each other in a world that belonged to men. While the boundaries between the domestic/private and public were porous, women did not really hold positions of power outside the home in any formal sense.

Like Kimmel, Connell explains that a key feature of studying men means understanding that, “masculinities are configurations of practice within gender relations but requiring a structure that includes large-scale institutions and economic relations over and above the face-to-face relationships and sexuality.”\textsuperscript{215} For me, this means that in addition to studying men’s individual behaviors to account for notions of masculinities, it is important to study men’s roles within institutional structures in which they hold power, marriage and civil society. Within such institutions, Connell describes how masculinities operate in relation to each other: “Different masculinities do not sit side-by-side like dishes on a smorgasboard. There are definite social relations between them. Especially, there are relations of hierarchy, for some masculinities are dominant while others are subordinated or marginalized.”\textsuperscript{216} I apply this lens in developing my argument about the organization of humanity as a hierarchy of intellect in \textit{akhlaq}, which is premised upon the trade-based societal structure.

Oystein Holter explains that, “research on gender does not just challenge the division between masculine and feminine, it challenges the division between neutral and

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{215} Connell, 29.
\item \textsuperscript{216} Connell, 10.
\end{footnotes}
gendered.”  

Part of the universalization of men is that institutions that are seen as neutral, are actually male or male dominated structures. In *akhlaq*, the political and civic institutions are imagined as part of the male-only public sphere, even though they are presented as universal. In *Theorizing Patriarchy*, Sylvia Walby defines the public phase of patriarchy as different from the private phase. This is of particular theoretical concern for me, since it allows me to ask questions about how public homosocial structures of patriarchy shape masculinity as distinct from gender performance in the domestic realm. This moves the conversation beyond women’s oppression occurring because they are located in the private realm, and rather looks at how gender is construed in both, public and private forms of patriarchal structures. Holter explains that traditionally, people have thought that gender hierarchy comes from men in positions of power. However, researchers recently have explored the idea that gender hierarchy emerges when men have a lack of power in relation to other men. Though this comes from studies on violence against women or prostitution in modern contexts, it can show that men always have power over some women, while they may not have power over other men.  

In other words, women are marginalized at the expense of men’s struggle to rise in social rank. This is a compelling framework for examining how homosocial power dynamics affect heterosocial ones.

Scholars of pre-modern homosociality have looked at the ways in which gender segregation shaped notions of masculinity and femininity, both in isolation and in relation to one another. Nancy Partner argues that even in gender segregation, medieval men and women in pre-modern Europe thought of each other and were imagined by scholars

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218 Holter, 22.
as always together.\textsuperscript{219} In Persianate regions, as Carole Hillenbrand argues, premodern Muslim texts convey an ideal gender segregation that was apart from historical reality of prevailing heterosocial interactions.\textsuperscript{220} The texts discuss heterosocial interactions only in the narrow scope of ethical behaviors in marriage and kin relations but discuss a full range of homosocial relationships in both public and private spheres.

I recognize the ways in which the homosocial is also sometimes homoerotic. Jonathan Katz explains that, “the concept of Heterosexuality is only one particular historical way of perceiving, categorizing, and imagining the social relations of the sexes. Not ancient at all, the idea of heterosexuality is a modern invention, dating to the late nineteenth century.”\textsuperscript{221} The concept of normative heterosexuality did not exist in premodern contexts. While Katz is focused on European examples, Khaled El-Rouayheb argues that in the Arab-Islamic world between 1500-1800:

Islamic religious scholars of the period were committed to the precept that sodomy (\textit{liwat}) was one of the most abominable sins a man could commit. However, many of them clearly did not believe that falling in love with a boy or expressing this love in verse was therefore also illicit. Indeed, many prominent religious scholars indulged openly in such activity.\textsuperscript{222}

They distinguished homoerotic activity from same-sex sexual activity. In the \textit{akhlaq} texts, love and intimate friendship exists between men, which may even be homoerotic, but the texts also include remarks that explicitly discourage any erotic or sexual encounters between men. For example, in sections on bathhouse etiquette, Ghazali advises readers never to reveal their ‘\textit{awra} (nakedness) to other men in the bath house. They

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{219}Nancy F Partner. Ed. \textit{Studying Medieval Women: Sex, Gender, Feminism}. (Cambridge: Medieval Academy of America, 1993).
\item \textsuperscript{222}Khalid El-Rouayheb, \textit{Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 3.
\end{itemize}
also discourage close interaction with young boys, which is possibly a reaction to the obvious, highly ubiquitous, and sometimes-explicit eroticism of male youths in court arts, poetry, and literature of pre-modern Muslim contexts. Thus, the texts present us with a very particular kind of heteronormativity for both men and women in which the imagined ethical social relations are both gender segregated, encouraging of homosocial love, but only heterosexual erotic love. Thus, it makes sense to speak of a homosociality to investigate the rich male-male relationships the ethicists encourage.

1.6 Self Positioning

As a Muslim feminist, I have a personal interest in Muslim gender discourses. I have chosen to study treatises from the classical period of Islamic philosophy that are both part of the “canon” of *akhlaq* and are widely read and available today so that my close reading of them contributes to future discussions over gender in Islamic ethics. I insist on rigorous engagement with classical works of *akhlaq* because a historically based discussion of Islamic ethics must take place in order to investigate how notions of the moral and ethical have developed intellectually and how they have affected praxis. The use of the term “Islamic ethics” in contemporary discourses cannot be divorced from the many iterations of the notions of ethics and moral responsibility in Islam that have come before.

My relationship to western feminist theory and how I use it in this dissertation is also related to my positionality. In my graduate training, I have taken courses in women’s and gender studies and studied works about gender and religion and gender in Islam that engage heavily with western feminist theory. Because I believe that feminism and feminist critique cannot be appropriated as western, and therefore in opposition to Muslim ideas, I welcome the chance to draw on frameworks from Luce Irigaray, Simone
de Beavoir, Judith Butler, and others in my analysis of *akhlaq* texts. In fact, I think doing so normalizes scholarship on Islamic texts as part of the broader humanities endeavor, in a departure from orientalist paradigms of study.

However, I must say that the frameworks I ultimately find invaluable for analyzing gender in *akhlaq* texts, were not entirely on the forefront of my thinking until I had already completed my research and translations of the primary texts.²²³ Although I was aware of the broader frameworks of hierarchy, power, patriarchy, women’s instrumentality, mens’ primacy, I did not closely read Irigaray, de Beavoir, and Butler until I found myself wanting to include some of the classics in feminist theory on my syllabus for an introductory class in Women’s and Gender Studies at Dartmouth College.²²⁴ I found that the critiques Irigaray, de Beauvoir, and Butler were making of Greek and greek inspired philosophy and constructions of gender in society deeply resonated with my own critiques of the male-centeredness of *akhlaq* texts. I was excited to find frameworks developed by feminist theorists that I could engage to develop my analysis of gender.

The chronology of my training, my reading of the texts, followed by my employment of specific thinkers as informing my critiques of *akhlaq* is important because it is all too often that feminist scholars of Islam are dismissed as using frameworks external to Islam to evaluate Muslim ideas about gender. My awareness of gender critiques came from my graduate training as well as from living in a world in which religious and intellectual discourses are primarily the domain of men. I maintained that awareness as I read the *akhlaq* texts first; then, second, I found feminist theorists whose ideas helped me to crystalize my own. I categorically reject the idea that feminism is outside

²²³This excludes readings on masculinity, which I had done prior and simultaneous to my research with the primary texts because I had felt study of masculinity was missing from my training in feminist/gender theories.

²²⁴Thus, I find that my pedagogical choices experiences are invaluable for my research and thinking.
of Islam. This does not mean that the classics of feminist theory can wholesale be imported into gender critiques of Muslim texts, but rather means that there is value in evaluating certain concepts and frameworks, especially since *akhlaq* texts themselves did not emerge in a vacuum, but rather were in conversation with the very same texts of Greek philosophy that some feminist theorists critique.
Chapter 2

Ethical Perfection and Power of the (Hu)man’s Soul

In this chapter, I examine the notions of the self, virtues, and vices, and metaphysics of the human individual on the first tier of a tri-level progression of ethical behavior. In the akhlaq tradition, ethics is organized for humanity on three levels: the individual, the domestic, and the sovereign state, all scaled metaphors of each other. I describe how the normative ethical person, on the primary or individual level of behavior, is gendered as male, how such a person is existentially understood in relation to the rest of creation, and how he is meant to improve his behavior at home and in society. Ultimately, I argue that the ethics texts reveal a cosmology of humanity in which human beings are created equal among all other physical matter created by God, but that not all human nafses or souls are equal; they are part of gendered and intellectual hierarchy.

To this end, I discuss Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani’s expositions on the nafs or the human soul, sometimes thought of as the self in its less metaphysical usage. I ask how Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani construct the normative ethical subject, analyze how the subject gendered, and critique the notions of the trainable ethical self and the impetus for ethical behavior in the texts. In the passages I analyze here, the ethicists focus on explaining the science of the individual nafs, its component faculties, and how the composite of human faculties causes men to act in certain ways. While Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani hold that it is only in relation to others that men can be or act ethically, they layout the principles of the nafs by focusing on the training of the individual be-
fore they move to specific applications of the trained *nafs*. Thus, even before reaching
to discussions of specific social situations, in marriage or in urban community, which
I discuss in subsequent chapters, my goal here is to understand the ways in which the
individual ethical subject, the normative human being, in Islamic ethics is fundamen-
tally gendered as a male who possesses intellectual, spiritual, economic, and even racial
privilege. The entire edifice of ethical guidelines and moral responsibilities in the *akhlaq*
tradition is based upon these gendered, intellectual, spiritual, and even economic priv-
ileges.

I offer this argument following French feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray’s framework of critiquing Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy. While her overall project seeks
to reconstruct ethical gender relations—that is, she argues for a philosophy that can
create a truly ethical world, her deconstruction of gendered ideas in Greek philosophy
is a helpful lens for analyzing the gendered elements of *akhlaq* texts. She states,

> We need to reinterpret everything concerning the relations between the
> subject and scours, the subject and the world, the subject and the cosmic,
> the microcosmic and the macrocosmic. Everything, beginning with the way
> in which the subject has always been written in the masculine form, as
> *man*, even when it claimed to be university or neutral [...] Man has been
> the subject of discourse, whether in theory, morality, or politics.”

Irigaray offers a rubric for analyzing philosophical ethics which centers around the role
of the ethical subject in the cosmos; the subject is problematically gendered male in
the texts. Building on the Greek tradition, the *akhlaq* texts focus on how an ethical
man can become a microcosm of the greater macrocosm. This question of how “the
subject has always been written in the masculine form” is the key issue of this chapter.

There are grammatical concerns, but also specific ways in which the ethicists describe
the *nafs’s* propensities and concerns, that show the human *nafs* as normatively male.

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First, I discuss the grammatical constructs of the *nafs*, followed by a discussion of the normative male *nafs* in hierarchical relation to that of animals, vegetables, women, and men of other geographical climes. Second, I conduct a gendered analysis of Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani’s constructions of each of the faculties of the *nafs* and their respective virtues and vices. I demonstrate that the virtues, vices, and their cures are situated in terms of the pre-modern Muslim Persian male experience. I close with a discussion of the virtue of justice, which is a major means to the ultimate goals of *akhlaq*, namely, achieving true happiness and becoming a vicegerent of God as an individual, head of a domestic economy, and member of society. Both of these goals are achieved by acquiring knowledge, perfecting virtues, especially justice, and minimizing the soul’s vices.

### 2.1 Gendered Grammar and The Nafs

The *nafs* or soul that the ethicists are concerned with belongs to the normative human being, who for them is a Muslim male. The ethicists discuss the soul in gendered ways in relation to their prescribed ethical activity, but more principally, also think of the abstract *nafs* itself, as an of attribute the human animal, only as it belongs to a man. Before establishing the male normativity of the *nafs* in the ethicists’ moral cosmology, I will address two concerns related to the gendered grammar of the texts as a whole and the term *nafs*. First, the Persian language uses gender neutral pronouns, which unintentionally gives the texts a gender egalitarian tone. Second, the term *nafs* itself is grammatically feminine.

Upon first glance, the texts seem to address the whole of humanity, inclusive of both
genders.\textsuperscript{3} In the Persian language, the third person, gender-neutral pronoun \textit{u}\textsuperscript{4} is used for both “he” and “she.” Thus, out of context, third person pronouns can be gender ambiguous. This supports the idea that the texts may address a male and female, gender inclusive audience.

This is not the case for texts written in Arabic, in which singular second and third person pronouns are gendered. Women must be written into the texts explicitly unless there is reason to believe that any use of plural male pronouns includes women. These grammatical issues raise a problem of method in Muslim feminist hermeneutics—how to distinguish general prescriptions in religious texts from exclusively male ones.

Amina Wadud addresses this grammatical concern for reading the Qur’an from a pro-women’s perspective:

every usage of the masculine plural form is intended to include males and females, equally, unless it includes specific indication for its exclusive application to males [...] As there is no form exclusively for males, the only way to determine if the masculine plural form, ([for example] \textit{al-tullab fi al-ghurfah}) is exclusively for male [...] would be through some specific indication in the text. Thus: [the example] \textit{Al-tullab wa al-talibat fi al-ghurfah} indicates that the use of the masculine plural (\textit{al-tullab} refers \textit{exclusively} to males since the inclusion of the female plural form distinguishes the female students present.\textsuperscript{5}

I agree with Wadud that there is no way to know whether a text excludes women in its usage of masculine plural form unless there are applications and specific contexts of the usage that apply only to men. The notion of authorial intent is key in determining

\textsuperscript{3}Even though the ethicists understood the existence of people who could not be strictly identified as only male or female, and also recognized that men can be sexually attracted to other men, by and large, the ethicists think of male and female roles in society as binary. The concept of gender identity did not exist for them, much less awareness of gender binaries. Thus, I am aware of the gender binary and heteronormativity the texts pose. In fact, as I argue in Chapter Four, the texts promote a particular kind of male heteronormative profile that insists sexual intimacy with one’s wife but spiritual, intellectual, and personal intimacy with close male friends.

\textsuperscript{4}spelled alif, vav: \textit{w}

\textsuperscript{5}Amina Wadud, \textit{Qur’an and Woman: Reading the Sacred Text from a Woman’s Perspective}, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 4-5.
who the texts address. In the case of the Qur’an, a revealed sacred text intended for all of humanity, it makes sense to assume plural masculine pronouns include women unless it is accompanied by use of feminine plural form or indicated to be only referring to men by context or application of a verse.

In the case of the akhlaq texts, I argue that the context and applications of ethical precepts show that the usage of the Persian gender neutral pronouns in the entirety of the texts, with few important exceptions, are intended to refer only to men. The seeming inclusiveness of the gender neutral pronoun actually masks the male exclusiveness of the content of the texts and the specific ethical precepts within them. The authorial intent, which I show throughout the rest of this work, is to address men about their ethics in a variety of situations: when alone, when with one’s wife, as a head of a domestic economy, in society, at court, and so on. The ethical precepts presented in the texts are meant to apply to men.

In the important exceptions where pronouns are inclusive of women, the ethicists are discussing some aspect of the whole of humanity. For example, when they discuss the reasons for division of labor in society, they include occupations which are carried out by women of some social classes, such as sewing, washing, cooking, etc.6 There are also sizable passages on “the ethics of living with a woman from the beginning of marriage to the end” and “household management” in which there is obvious use of the gender neutral pronouns to refer to women.7 In both of these kinds of passages, however, the authorial intent is to continue to address men on the science of civic association and how to maintain a wife. Apart from these examples, if women are present in the text, the authors specifically say so. For instance, in Tusi’s chapter on ethics at court, it is safe to assume that he addresses the ethics of political wheeling and dealing

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6 Tusi, 250.
7 Ghazali, 313; Tusi, 203; Davani, 178.
exclusively between men, regardless of historical reality, since the ethicists specifically state one should ignore and disregard women’s opinions on politics. Women are explicitly referred to when needed in the text, otherwise, it is logical to assume that the gender neutral Persian pronouns refer to men and that the authorial intent is to speak only to men.

One translator of the *Kimiya*, Jay R. Crook, comments that because: “Persian does not have gender-specific pronouns [...], the female reader should not feel slighted or ignored when the translator uses the general masculine. Ghazali certainly did not intend to restrict salvation and spiritual happiness to males.” While it is true that the gender neutral pronouns in Persian creates greater accessibility to the texts for modern female readers and that translating Persian into English causes loss of grammatical gender neutrality, it does not mean that the ethicists intended their texts to be read by both men and women. Rather Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani assumed that women do not have sophisticated intellects and reasoning, or even control over their own *nafses*. Contemporary readers do not have to read the texts in the male centered way they were intended, but it is crucial to record the gendered nature of ethics in order to discern gender assumptions in Islamic philosophy as a whole.

The second challenge to the idea that Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani thought of the *nafs* as normative male is that the term itself is grammatically feminine and all the ethicists mention that women possess *nafses*. In Islamic philosophy, or *falsafa*, of which *akhlaq*

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8 Tusi, 310-311.
11 Ghazali, 316. Ghazali mentions women’s *nafses* explicitly by stating that “a woman’s *nafs* is really like your own,” but Tusi and Davani imply women have *nafses* because they discuss women’s relatively weak resolve in correcting their vices in the context of various suggestions for men. For example Davani, 156 in which he gives examples of the weak-minded and Tusi, 215 in which he mentions virtues of a
is a part, the word itself translates to soul in English and *anima* in Latin.\(^\text{12}\) It also is used as a term for breath. Both definitions suggest that the *nafs* is the animating component of a living organism.\(^\text{13}\) The term appears in the Qur’an as a noun 295 times as a self, soul, person, or mind as possessed by both male and female singular and plural pronouns.

In some sufi works, the fact that the *nafs* is grammatically feminine plays out as “the image of the soul as a longing female.”\(^\text{14}\) As Annemarie Schimmel explains, more common in sufi works is viewing the *nafs* as a wild aspect of human metaphysics, which construes the *nafs* as the feminine carnal self that tempts the male spiritual, intellectual self:

> Wasn’t the grammatical gender of the very word *nafs* feminine? Couldn’t [the *nafs*] serve as a symbol for the woman whose sensuality always thwarts the religious inclinations, the highminded strivings of the rationally oriented man? Since she possesses more animalistic traits than does the man, she constantly tries to seduce him through her sexual wiles [...] One of [the *nafs*’s] most important manifestations, however, is in the form of woman. This feminine element, then, is subordinate to the ‘*aql*, the intellect or reason, which has as its task to tame and train it.\(^\text{15}\)

As I discuss in greater detail below, the ethics genre shares the notion that masculinity and rationality are synonymous, while femininity marks an absence of rationality (thus, other faculties are more pronounced). Also shared is the idea that the *nafs* requires taming. However, the *nafs* itself is not seen as a female to tame, per se. By contrast, in these ethics texts, the grammatical terms and discussions that accompany explanation

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\(^{13}\) Tusi explains that vegetables and animals have their own simplified *nafses* too.


of nafs are either gender neutral on the surface as in discussion of the nafs-i insani (human soul) or gendered male as in nafs-i adami (man's soul).\textsuperscript{16} One of the faculties of the nafs is rationality, which all human beings possess, by virtue of their humanity. This includes women, even if they are deficient in it.\textsuperscript{17} With masculinity being distinguished on the grounds of superior rationality, a faculty of the nafs, the nafs itself is not seen as exclusively feminine as in Sufi discourses. However, this does not mean that they address the female nafs in positive or constructive ways.

As the next chapters discusses in detail, the texts instruct men how to manage or control the nafses of their wives and train the nafses of their male children. Further, although Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani use the gender neutral terms insan for human and nafar for an individual person, they also use the term muruwwa or manhood for what measures one should take in marriage or social settings order to preserve manhood. Thus, the gender neutral pronouns in Persian or the term nafs being grammatically feminine, do not take away from the authorial intent to instruct only men about their nafses and ethics.

\section*{2.2 Hierarchy of the Nafses: Animal, Vegetable, Man, and Woman}

In the ethics texts, all living things are created of equally valued substances and particles but are ranked hierarchically according to the abilities of their nafses to perform higher order acts of intelligence. Tusi explains, “natural bodies, from the perspective of being bodies, are equal to each other in rank, one is not above another in virtue or

\textsuperscript{16} For example, Ghazali uses the term nafs-i adami on page 47 of the Kimiya.

\textsuperscript{17}Ghazali, 316.
nobility, for one definition includes all of them and one form of principal matter values them as a whole.”\textsuperscript{18} This not only implies that all human beings are equal, but that human beings are equal with animals and vegetation. However, differences in rank among natural bodies exist based on the potential their faculties possess for intelligent acts. The human nafs’s faculty of rationality is the highest order of intelligence and is the distinguishing characteristic that defines human beings’ exceptionalism as a species—better than animal and vegetable because they possess rationality, the ability to perceive things, and discriminate among those things.\textsuperscript{19}

Of the three ethicists, Tusi is the only one who is interested in discussing the nafs of non-human beings in detail. He does this to establish a comprehensive understanding of the human nafs, state man’s goal as becoming a microcosm of the universe by establishing his nafs’s superiority and khilafat or vicegerency. Thus, I only discuss Tusi here, even though Ghazali and Davani likewise consider human beings to be God’s most superior creation and vicegerents of God.\textsuperscript{20} Tusi’s classification of the nafses of all living creatures reveals that in ethics, many traits of the nafs appear on a spectrum across plants, animals, and human animals. Thus, some vegetables are superior to some animals, while some humans who are deficient in rationality, such as women and men of low social-intellectual classes, are baser than others.

Tusi’s hierarchical spectrum of traits of the nafs, and by extension, his classification of all living creatures, resembles the Greek philosophical concept of hierarchy described by Arthur Lovejoy as the “great chain of being,” which he argues has been central to

\textsuperscript{18}Tusi, 59.

\textsuperscript{19}For Tusi, humans’ intellect occupies the ‘middle rank’ in comparison to angels, who are intellectually superior because of their proximity to God. See Louise Marlow, \textit{Hierarchy and Egalitarianism in Islamic Thought} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1997, 54.

\textsuperscript{20}All three consider women as having less rationality than men.
Western philosophy from the medieval period to the 18th century. Lovejoy explains that Plato and Aristotle held three principles of plenitude, continuity, and gradation, that were mainly systematized by Plotinus to describe all the beings in the universe. Plenitude meant that the world contains all the possible beings that can exist and they rank highest to lowest. Continuity is the idea that beings of various grades possess traits on a continuum; traits possessed by one grade of beings are possessed by the next class on a chain. Gradation dictates that the chain of traits from one class to the next is organized in “scala naturae according to degree of ‘perfection,’” which was the “degree of development reached by [an] offspring at birth.” The traits were “powers of the soul” such as nutritive and rational powers. For Aristotle in particular, these general rules did not mean all beings could be placed consecutively on the chain of being; instead, because some potentialities existed in beings that may or may not be realized, individuals could exist above or below their own class.

As a general rule for Tusi, the females of any species are passive, and therefore inferior, to their male counterparts who are active, and therefore the more intelligent beings of their class. In humans, women possess less rationality than men, thus are more akin to animals who may possess higher order reasoning and deductive skills. Tusi begins to enumerate male superiority over females in the class of vegetative souls in terms of each one’s potential for intelligent acts. Seed-bearing grasses and fruit-bearing trees are superior to those which exist without these, since they exhibit a will to live or instinct to reproduce and continue their own species. Grass and trees that exist merely as a result of the mingling of the elements of wind, sun, and water, do


\[22\] Lovejoy, 58.

\[23\] Lovejoy, 58.

\[24\] Lovejoy, 59.
not possess such desire for reproduction. The seed and fruit-bearing vegetation have virtues that their elemental and lesser counterparts do not. Tusi states that among the fruit-bearing trees “the nobler of some of these are the male individuals, which are the original form of progeny, and are distinguished from the female individuals, which are the origins of the matter.”

So even though the females are from the same matter, or even the source of the matter, the males are the “original form of progeny,” meaning they are the prototypical, and thus primary, embodiment of the fruit-bearing organism. The males provide the form, thus they are the active, more intelligent ones. Thus, in Tusi’s classification of nafses, as seen above in the example of elemental vegetation versus seed-bearing plants, gender is important in determining value and creating superiority of certain beings over others. This foreshadows how Tusi compares the human reproductive systems of men and women, with the former carrying more importance in conception and the expression of traits in offspring.

For Tusi, plants, animals, and humans all exist on a spectrum of intelligence and active principles. Evidence that the notions of intelligence and active principles drive Tusi’s hierarchy of nafses, as opposed to categorization of vegetative and animal states, is that not all vegetative souls are inferior to animal souls, and there are some exceptions to female vegetative inferiority. For example, there are insects that are lower than grass because they thrive only seasonally.

Tusi then provides a most interesting example of the date palm tree which is a superior tree, worthy of respect. Tusi gives the tree’s gender as female and departs from his typical gender hierarchy. He says the Prophet “called the date tree the paternal aunt of the human species and has said ‘Honor your paternal aunt the date palm, for she was created from the remainder of Adam’s clay.’”

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25 Tusi, 60.

26 Tusi, 61.

27 Tusi, 60. He quotes the hadith in Arabic.
He further explains that while possessing the *nafs-i nabātī* or vegetative soul, this tree possess reproductive characteristics similar to animals, such as the odor of its fluids, its ability to die when submerged underwater, taken over by pests, or cut off at the head. It also cannot pollinate with any other species other than itself, which signals that it is capable of love and affection. In short, it possesses everything an animal’s soul does except for the will to uproot itself “from the ground and move away in search of nourishment.” 28 In this example, Tusi extols all of the qualities related to the date palm’s soul but does not comment that it is considered a female in the Prophet’s hadith, even though it is both fruit bearing and obviously a superior tree in the hadith. A superior female does not fit neatly into his cosmology and he explains the hadith as an instance where vegetables can be superior to animals by use of their faculties. 29

In animals, Tusi valorizes the qualities of self-sufficiency and ability to guard oneself. Animals that possess their own tools such as antlers, horns, or claws for protection are of higher station than defenseless ones. The most noble (*sharif*) of any “animal species is the one whose sagacity and understanding reaches the extent that it accepts discipline and education until it attains perfection that was not originally created in it. Such are the disciplined horse and trained falcon.” 30 The distinction between the highest animal and the lowliest of human beings is the ability to perform a task by observing it, “without training or wearisome toil spent for them.” 31

Sarra Tlili explains that pre-modern Muslim exegetes, including those with and without training in hellenistic *falsafa*, recognized that in the Qur’an, animals can cross over the line that distinguishes animals and humans, by possessing intelligence, prob-

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28Tusi, 60.

29In fact, the example allows for contestation of the rule that females are inferior to males in active principles.

30Tusi, 61-62.

31Tusi, 62.
lem solving skills, and even morality and spirituality. While she argues for a non-anthropocentric and eco-centric reading of the Qur’an, her work also problematizes the way pre-modern Muslim thinkers understood the status of human as khalifah over animals vis-a-vis internalizing the notion of great chain of being. The idea that humans can each rise above or fall below their peers of their own class on a hierarchy of noble qualities, has serious implications for where to place women in particular. If some vegetables, like the date palm, can possess animal-like faculties while others do not, and some animals can possess humanistic elements of rationality while others do not, then the humans who possess less rationality, such as women and people of certain climes, are more animal-like in this cosmology. Returning to the example of the falcon and the horse above, Tusi praises these animals in particular because they are used by men for transportation, hunting, and recreation. This praise adds to the idea that beings of low classification are in service to higher within the hierarchical cosmology. Women are likewise a utility for men, useful for bearing their children and for the work they do that frees up men to perform higher order tasks.

All three ethicists assert that the primary difference between the human animal and other animals is the endowment of the nafs, which is accompanied by, or contains the ability to, reason and control one’s actions to a great extent. Though women possess nafs by virtue of being human, they are weak and lack superior rationality. Thus the nafs as it is thought about in the science of ethics, or tahzib-i akhlaq, is normative male, that wields power to control the bestial and savage components of the nafs.

Tusi explains that in humans, there are three major stations of virtue:

The first rank of persons is those who by means of intelligence and speculative faculty bring about noble productions and order precise skills and graceful instruments. Above them is a group who by reason, thought, and

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33Tusi, 216; Ghazali, 305-306, 311; Davani (Haydari edition), 111.
much contemplation plunge into the sciences, knowledge and acquisition of virtues. Beyond them are persons who receive revelation and divine inspiration of knowledge of the truths and laws from those close to the Divine presence without intermediary bodies. These [people] are for the perfection of the disposition, the ordering of affairs of life and hereafter, and the basis of comfort and happiness of people from all climes and ages.\textsuperscript{34}

Beyond these ranks come the angels and abstract intelligences whose station is close to the Divine. This scheme of humanity’s virtue, which is similar to that laid out by Ibn Sina and the peripatetics, is based on material or intellectual contributions to society and largely corresponds to trades. The hierarchy of human beings corresponds to the classification of knowledge, sciences, and philosophy. The more exalted persons practice the more exalted sciences.\textsuperscript{35}

These ranks have gendered elements, even if Tusi does not speak of specific roles of men, women. With only men participating in the advancement of human skills, knowledge, philosophy, and ideas, by and large to the exclusion of women, the very classification of human beings based on trade is limited to the gendered male world. Men’s ranks are primary and determine the relative values of all beings. Thus, the imagined ethical world itself is this intellectual and occupational hierarchy of the pre-modern Muslim, Persianate society. This hierarchy also creates normative masculinity in which a man’s value is determined by his contribution to society in terms of his profession, intelligence, and the notoriety of his accomplishments, which unwittingly creates a world of tough competition and open room for inequity and injustice.\textsuperscript{36}

The above passage also shows that people of various “climes and ages” exist in various classifications, for which the divinely connected people serve as comfort. Within the pre-modern Persian world, interaction with people of other climes were largely

\textsuperscript{34}Tusi, 62.

\textsuperscript{35}refer to the chart of hikmat-i amali and hikmat-i nazari in the last chapter.

\textsuperscript{36}I discuss in the next section how the social differentiation itself is not unjust in Tusi’s definition.
limited to slave labor. Tusi explains the ranks of people who sustain the lives of the virtuous ones:

nourishment is not created without organization of sowing, harvesting, milling, kneading, baking, and compounding. Neither is clothing attained without application of spinning, weaving, tailoring, and tanning leather. Neither do weapons come into being without art, purifying, and measuring.\(^{37}\)

Though these activities are necessary for the sustenance of humanity, they are considered lowly. Ann Lambton finds that historically slave men and women, both local and foreign who were Abyssinians, Qairovanis, Greeks, “Turks, Qazvinis, Anatolians, Gregorians, Indians, Rus, negroes (zanji)” were a significant contingent of agricultural labor.\(^{38}\) Together in these two passages, Tusi creates a labor-based hierarchy of manliness in which the highest classes are intellectual and the lowest classes are instrumental. This foreshadows women’s roles in the domestic economy in relation to their husbands-cum-masters. Further, the inequalities of the \textit{nafs} in Tusi’s work also extend to the dimension of race. He states, “the people who live on the sidelines of the inhabited world like Sudan and the Maghrib and others, for the movements and actions of the likes of these types correspond to the actions of animals.”\(^{39}\)

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\(^{37}\) Tusi, 63-64.  


\(^{39}\) Tusi, 62. Although the clime of a person does not always refer to his race, pre-modern Muslim texts often thought of people of different clime as a radicalized category that referred both to a person’s skin color as much as it referred to temperament and body habitus. In his \textit{Muqaddimah}, a prolegomenon to an encyclopedia of world history, Ibn Khaldun (d.1406) describes how climate and heat affects human character. Because negroes live in hot climates, “heat dominates their temperament and formation” and their “animal spirit,” (probably the quwwat-i shahwi) is more prominent than their other faculties. Ibn Khaldun, \textit{The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History} trans., Franz Rosenthal, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 63.) For Ibn Khaldun, this explains why “Negroes are in general characterized by levity, excitability, and great emotionalism. They are found eager to dance whenever they hear a melody. They are everywhere described as stupid.” (Ibn Khaldun, 63.) Ibn Khaldun lived between the lifetimes of Tusi and Davani. As a pre-modern Muslim polymath he would have similar but more developed ideas about racialized sociologies and behaviors based on climate and geography. I am aware that race as it relates to concepts of the \textit{nafs} requires a more thorough
According to Tusi’s ethics, God created all human beings at the median station of human virtue:

Human perfection and nobility of his virtues were vouchsafed to reflection, observations, intelligence, and will. The key to happiness or misery and completeness or loss is also given in his capable hand. If he moves in a straight manner with intent for the sake of benefit, successively toward sciences, knowledge, arts, and virtues, the yearning in his nature for obtaining perfection will bring to him, by a straight path and praiseworthy purpose, rank after rank and horizon after horizon, until Divine light shines on him and he finds the proximity to the sublime space, and becomes close to the Eternal presence. If he is instead complacent, then eventually he will succumb to nature’s base impulses and be guided by depravity and corrupt inclinations. Each person has free will to achieve the highest station or devolve. The caveat is that Tusi excluded people from this scheme of human potential, such as women, men of lower classes, peoples of “unfavorable” climes, and slaves. In Tusi’s world, certain people playing particular roles in society is not a sign of injustice, per se. Rather, Tusi’s conception of society comprises of a utilitarian structure based on people’s abilities, regardless of biased assumptions about sex, race, or ability.

Men are responsible for the nafses of their family members, but the souls of all other people are held up for comparison to the perfectible soul of the free adult Muslim man. The male reader is supposed to internalize the ethical precepts laid out on all three levels, the personal, domestic, and sovereign states and act accordingly with with those around him. He is then supposed to take both the experience in training his own nafs and the additional guidelines given for how to treat people of different stations in society and educate his wife and children. In other words, the texts themselves are about the training of a human nafs that belongs to the Muslim male.

discussion, which I am not able to provide here.

40Tusi, 64.
2.3 The Nafs of the Ethical Man

In this section, I will provide an exposition on the ethicists’ conception of the nafs through its component faculties: the rational, irascible, and concupiscent. Tahzib-i akhlaq, the discipline of ethics for Tusi and Davani, or kimiya-i sa’adat, the alchemy of happiness for Ghazali, is a science that involves placing the major faculties of the nafs in particular balance to yield three corresponding virtues. Left untamed, the nafs produces a whole host of vices in man. I argue that the individual faculties of the nafs are the building blocks of gendered male ethical behavior that place men in a hierarchy of spirituality and intellect based on their abilities to perfect the nafs and act ethically in a variety of social circumstances. The examples and terms the ethicists use to describe the first two faculties, quwwat-i ‘ilm or the rational and quwwat-i ghazb or the irascible, show how the ethicists imagined these faculties only as possessed by men. The rational and irascible faculties’ respective virtues of hikmat or wisdom and shuja’at or courage demonstrate ultimate masculine qualities. It is only for the third faculty, quwwat-i shahwat or the concupiscent, which they briefly mention examples involving women’s nafses as well as men’s. Because they viewed women as limited by their bodily functions, it makes sense that the ethicists could imagine women in possession of the faculty that involves the body and carnality. The virtue that stems from the concupiscent faculty, ‘iffat or continence, is milder, more feminine, even though its ultimate forms of expression and applications are masculine.

The ethicists treat the self, the home, and the sovereign state as scaled, metaphorical representations of each other that follow the similar principles in application of the tamed nafs. Across all three texts, and on each level of behavior, the principle of moderation and balance in all aspects of life is central, as is living life according to the laws of justice or moderation in dealings. Each level, the self, the domestic, and the city/sovereign state, is affected by the individual’s recognition of his nafs. A
man is supposed to train himself, then act ethically in matters related to the domestic sphere and the outside world. Put in reverse, the principles underlying a man’s actions outside the home remain unchanged inside the home because first and foremost, a man has trained his nafs in the proper sciences, and he carries that training everywhere.

The nafs itself is disembodied and is not eternally preexistent: it comes into being with creation of the human body. All the ethicists hold that it is not part of the physical body and is not an organ. Yet, the nafs’s faculties allow for “corporeal perception” that enable the body to experience pleasure and pain as well as the more cerebral functions of evaluation, analysis and judgement of things perceived by the physical senses of touch, taste, smell, vision, and sound. As such, the nafs in itself is disembodied. Thus, putting it in order is also a disembodied, intellectual task, only performed by men. Here, most helpful is Luce Irigaray’s discussion of how men are disembodied because they are concerned with lofty intellectual goals, while women are embodied as they are limited by their biological functions of “reproduction, and how it aids and abets the phallic order.” Women are concerned with “the minor arts: cooking, knitting, embroidery, and sewing [...] Whatever their importance, these arts do not currently make the rules [...]” Although the parts of the nafs originate in particular organs of the body (see Table. 1), all three ethicists explain the parts of the nafs, the way these parts function in the human animal, and the training of the nafs as a mental discipline, the purpose of which is so that man can perfect himself and fulfill the cosmic

41 Tusi 48-54. Ghazali, 18. Davani quotes both Tusi and Ghazali to explain the nafs, so he assumes its similar metaphysical properties of the nafs.


43 Irigaray, An Ethics of Sexual Difference, 6. Irigaray arrives at this point by arguing that because men are normative, women do not exist in Western philosophy except as maternal vessels. She moves into the direction of establishing sex differences by recovering the male body and reimagining the female body and as such as been critiqued by Judith Butler as being a sex difference essentialist. Butler argues instead that both sex and gender are constructed through embodied acts, not biologically predetermined.
role he was meant to play on earth.

Ghazali differentiates the spirit or *ruh* and the metaphysical soul, or *nafs*; the latter is unique to *insan*. All animals have a spirit which gives life or *jan* to the physical body, but not a *nafs*. Human beings also uniquely possess the metaphorical heart or *dil*, which learns spiritual knowledge and guides the *nafs*.

By contrast, Tusi relates the body and the *nafs* through the five senses. He defines the human soul as the same thing as the rational soul or *nafs-i natigah*. The primary purpose of the *nafs* is to perceive the world through the senses of the body of “what most people call the human.”

Tusi explains that *nafs*’s faculties “act and practice in collaboration with opinion, judgment, discernment, and intent.”

Ghazali and Tusi describe the *nafs* as having three equal parts (see Table 1).

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**Table 1. Ghazali and Tusi’s Conception of The Soul**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organ</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Part of Soul</th>
<th>Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brain, responsible for human reflection and reason</td>
<td>Rational faculty/ <em>quwwat-i ‘ilm</em></td>
<td>Angelic soul/ <em>nafs-i malaki</em></td>
<td>Seeks reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart, innate heat and source of life</td>
<td>Irascible faculty/ <em>quwwat-i ghazb</em></td>
<td>Savage soul/ <em>nafs-i sabu’i</em></td>
<td>Repels injuries and perils, yearns for authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liver, nutrition and replacement of distributed solubles</td>
<td>Concupiscible faculty/ <em>quwwat-i shahwat</em></td>
<td>Bestial soul/ <em>nafs-i bahimi</em></td>
<td>Seeks pleasure, food, drink, and women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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44 Eric Ormsby explains heart or *qalb* in the *Ihya* as heart and mind as the primal “seat of the intellect.” Ormsby, 126.

45 Tusi, 48-49.

46 Tusi, 58.

47 Ghazali, 18-28; Tusi, 58-72.
According to Tusi, the human nafs, as a composite of the three faculties, is in itself neutral, and value free, while it has the potential for good and bad actions. Within that soul, the quwwat-i natiq enables the human being to discern between right and wrong, see the beautiful from the hideous, identify the despised from the praiseworthy, and appropriate them by measure of will. It is on the basis of this faculty that his actions are divided into good and bad, beautiful and foul and it characterizes him by happiness or misery, as against other animals and plants.48

The key to happiness and goodness is to deploy this faculty over the quwwat-i shahwi and quwwat-i ghazbi, while controlling the latter two. For Ghazali, the rational faculty is angelic and only has potential for good; thus when the other two faculties are subdued, a man becomes ethical.

Davani quotes both Ghazali and Tusi regarding the science of the nafs, then provides his own simpler two-part model for the nafs and ties it more directly to practical instruction. Unlike Ghazali and Tusi, who begin their discussion on the nafs with explaining the various faculties, Davani explains his model of the nafs by describing the way the human mind thinks and perceives. Having a century and a half’s worth of additional philosophical literature to reflect upon, Davani critiques Tusi’s conception of the nafs-i insani by emphasizing that the end goal of the nafs is to facilitate equity and justice.49 He states that the rational faculty of the soul simply cannot be “equal” in value to the quwwat-i shahwi or quwwat-i ghazabi because it is meant to rule over the latter two in order to produce an ethical human being. He explains that equity and justice cannot be achieved without putting mental powers above the others. The physical powers must be subdued to the mental ones in order for “the state of the

48 Tusi, 66.

49 As explained in last chapter, Davani was concerned with just rule over particular sectarian rule. This informs his conception of the nafs.
human’s internal kingdom” to be put in order.\textsuperscript{50} Thus, Davani’s model of the \textit{nafs} divides mental and physical faculties (see Table 2).

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Faculty} & \textbf{Branch of Faculty} & \textbf{Traits} \\
\hline
Power of perception/\textit{quwwat-i idrak} & Theoretical intellect/\textit{`aql nazari} & Receives ideas and knowledge from celestial sources \\
\hline
 & Practical intellect/\textit{`aql amali} & Reflection, thought, imagination causes action in the body \\
\hline
Power of incitement/\textit{quwwat-i tahrik} & Power of desire/\textit{quwwat-i shahwat} & Power of desire, attracts beneficial things \\
\hline
 & Power of anger/\textit{quwwat-i gazb} & Power of avoidance and repulsion of bad things \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Davani’s Conception of The Intellectual Soul}
\end{table}

Source: Davani, 73-79.

The underlying premise of the three works is that a man can change the way his \textit{nafs} is predisposed to working. Perseverance, environment, and training all affect an individual’s \textit{khulq} (disposition). For this reason, Ghazali begins the ethics treatise with a section “On Recognizing One’s own Self” as the foundation of ethics, rather than learning about God or even humanity’s purpose, each of which come later in his treatise.\textsuperscript{51} Tusi explains that “small children and youths are characterized by the ethics of their upbringing and the people accompanying them, or by involving in their actions and acquiring their ethics, even if formerly their dispositions were characterized by

\textsuperscript{50}Davani, 74.

\textsuperscript{51}Ghazali, 13.
something else.”\textsuperscript{52} Without the ability or desire to bring about change on the individual level, the faculty of rationality and reason are nullified. Order and observance of the religious laws are destroyed without \textit{akhlaq}.\textsuperscript{53} This again speaks to the relationship between ethics and law. Tusi felt that \textit{tahdhi-i akhlaq}, the correction of the \textit{khulq} (disposition), is superior to and religious laws, which would be followed if men had \textit{akhlaq} training.\textsuperscript{54} If the first part of \textit{tahdhib-i akhlaq} is simply knowing and understanding what the \textit{nafs} is, as I discuss above, then the second part of it is recognizing the virtues and vices that each part of the \textit{nafs} is capable of expressing.

The three ethicists share conceptions of what constitute virtues and vices, which each corresponding to the specific faculties of the \textit{nafs}. Reading the specifics of virtues and vices in Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani’s works through the lens of gender reveals that they saw the perfected virtues as ideal male qualities. Since the practice of good \textit{akhlaq} requires knowledge of \textit{tahdhib-i akhlaq}, like other learned sciences, it is only open to men and male children.

The ethicists outline three primary virtues and their sub-characteristics, which I call ethical qualities. Ghazali’s theoretical outline of virtues that stem from control over each faculty of the \textit{nafs} is relatively brief compared to later chapters in which he discusses proper behavior towards specific people, such as one’s responsibility towards neighbors or sick friends. Davani presents a shortened version of Tusi’s expansive discussion about virtues. All three ethicists agree that three virtues that correspond to the three human faculties of the soul when they are in equilibrium.

When the rational soul is in equilibrium and placed above the other two faculties, the virtue of wisdom emerges. When the \textit{quwwat-i ghazabi/nafs-i sabu’i} (irascible fac-

\textsuperscript{52}Tusi, 102.

\textsuperscript{53}Tusi, 102.

\textsuperscript{54}Recall that in Tusi’s division of the branches of knowledge, the noblest of disciplines is the \textit{tahdhib-i akhlaq} and he sidelines \textit{fiqh} as related tangentially to the specific issues discussed in \textit{akhlaq}.
ulty/savage soul) is expressed in moderation and subordinate to the rational faculty, the “virtue of mildness [or hilm] appears and the virtue of courage [or shuja’at] becomes necessary by nature.” With the quwwat-i shahwi/nafs-i bahimi (concupiscent faculty/bestial soul) expressed in equilibrium and subordinate to rationality, the virtue of continence or ‘iffat comes about. The virtues are praiseworthy but only if a person passes those virtues or reflects them upon others through interactions with them. Interestingly, even though ‘aql (intellection) and hikmat (wisdom) emerge from the best of the three faculties, the faculty of rationality, the ethicists spend less space explaining them, over the virtues that emerge from the other two faculties, the concupiscible (quwwat-i shahwi) and irascible (quwwat-i ghazabi). This is likely because they are interested in teaching the science of regulation or tahzib in the treatises, rather than simply extolling certain traits over others.

The vices of the human soul are behaviors that arise from the three faculties being out of proper balance. The concupiscent and irascible faculties must be subordinate to the rational faculty. Additionally, each one should be expressed in moderation. Expressing too much or too little of any of the faculties leads to predictable patterns of unethical behavior in social situations. The common vices can be corrected with knowledge of typical behavioral pitfalls of each faculty of the nafs. The ethicists also discuss, pseudo-virtues, behaviors of each faculty of the nafs that may fool a man into thinking he is righteous. Their description of pseudo-virtues, resembles the sufi idea of the nafs as a trickster that guides men to act upon baser impulses but is unrecog-

57 Tusi, 110.
58 Tusi, 122-130. Davani, 94-100. Ghazali does not have a standalone section on pseudo-virtues but does include the nafs’s false good deeds throughout the Kimiya.
nizable to the untrained or undisciplined man. Here, the texts function as manuals of psychological-spiritual guidance and self-diagnosis since men should school themselves in the science of the nafs and then move through the sections of the virtues and vices with the attempt to correct the levels of how he expresses the faculties. Discussion of the pseudo-virtues helps the reader to test his true intentions for virtuous acts are truly virtuous.

Tusi describes the general rule of moderation in expressing the faculties, an idea present in Davani and Ghazali’s discussion of vices as well. He states that one should imagine the characteristics of each nafs as a continuum of behavior, a straight line. One must not stray too far in either direction, or he will fall off the straight line. It is no coincidence that this resembles the straight path or sirat al-mustaqim of faith named in Surat al-Fatiha in the opening verse of the Qur’an. Ultimately, all three ethicists agree that knowledge of the nafs, its parts, its corresponding virtues, vices, and its tricksters will help a man to perfect his akhlaq.

2.3.1 The Rational Faculty: Its Masculine Power, Virtues and Vices

The ethicists describe the rational faculty as the most important of the three faculties of the nafs for creating ethical behaviors in man. I argue below that the ethicists equate rationality with power. They view rationality in a masculine light because it lends men power to subdue the non-rational faculties, unethical acts, and less rational people.


60 Tusi, 86.
Ghazali describes the status and authority of the rational faculty by presenting it as the metaphorical king of the body. In keeping with the idea that the self and body are a microcosm of the world, Ghazali conceived of the soul and body as being a world unto itself: “the metaphor of the body is a nation and its limbs and organs are its workers.”61 This soul as monarch also has armies, viziers, tax collectors and more, which are metaphors for its faculties, which lead humans to succumb to their baser instincts and unethical behaviors and ultimately leading to unhappiness. This is because the nafs’s ultimate goal is only to achieve happiness for the body such as physical pleasures or relief that comes from consuming food or engaging in sexual activity. It can immoderately exceed bounds of acceptable behavior to achieve that bodily happiness. Ghazali resolves this conflict of interest between momentary physical pleasure and eternal spiritual happiness, both of which are acquired by actions of the nafs, by explaining that God created the nafs for the hereafter and its true happiness lies in learning about God and the spiritual path. Thus, one tames the appetites of the nafs for one’s own good. So the individual’s nafs is not just a microcosm of the world, it is “like a mirror; whoever looks in it sees the Truth, most high.”62 “Truth, most high” or haq-i ta‘ala, one of the attributes of God. Ghazali’s use of this particular name of God implies that the act of knowing one’s own nafs is a way to know the ultimate Truth as part of the rah-i din and finding ultimate happiness.

The soul is the king of the body, which is akin to a sovereign state. Shahwat (carnal appetite) is the tax collector of the state (human body); it lies and deceives the body to find more pleasure. Ghazb (anger) is the state police; it has a hot temper and rage. ‘Aql (intellection) is the king’s vizier, which is meant to keep the former two under control by holding them accountable and punishing them when they have transgressed.

61 Ghazali, 18-22.
62 Ghazali, 47.
The nafs/king must “consult” with each of these “armies” to keep the body fully functioning.\(^{63}\)

This metaphor of the nafs as king of the sovereign body is no “mere metaphor,” to borrow a term from Susan Shapiro, who argues that 12th century Jewish philosopher, Maimonides’s use of gendered metaphors to explain non-gendered concepts contribute to real culture of gender hierarchy.\(^{64}\) Ghazali’s metaphor of the state and its armies is gendered in that power, rulership, and force reside with men. Referring to state officials in the metaphor is not just Ghazali’s attempt to provide a comprehensible analogy for the nafs—rather, it is a way to equate the individual with powerful actors of the state who demonstrate strength, discipline, and most of all, the power of correcting wrongs. The human soul’s nobility, as opposed to the baseness of animals’ souls, comes from its power.\(^{65}\) Lacking power, women “are created of weakness and vulnerability.”\(^{66}\) Thus, the ‘aql, (rational/intellectual faculty) to reigning over the shahwat and ghazb, or bestial and savage facilities, is a male expression of power that enables man to gather spiritual knowledge, wisdom, and the virtue of leadership. As I show in the next section and in Chapters three and four, correcting the ethics of others, and showing leadership is not just a virtue associated with the faculty of rationality: it is a male prerogative over women and men of lower classes.

Additionally, in the Kimiya Sa’adat, Ghazali explains the nafs and its faculties as “roots of good and bad in a human being” with animal metaphors.\(^{67}\) He groups the

\(^{63}\)Ghazali, 18-19. In this one instance, he uses the term dil or heart as the soul, while the nafs is more related to a person’s entire selfhood. The reason for this maybe to keep the metaphor appropriate. The whole body and the ‘aql cannot both be the nafs, especially if there are parts of the nafs that undermine rationality, so he uses the dil as the soul here. Elsewhere in the treatise is reverts back to using only the term nafs as the soul and self.

\(^{64}\)Shapiro, 165.

\(^{65}\)Ghazali, 33.

\(^{66}\)Ghazali, 314.

\(^{67}\)Ghazali, 22.
soul’s appetites into four categories. First, akhlaq-i bahayim (the bestial disposition), which is another term for the faculty of shahwat, has a predilection for excessive eating, copulation, and anger, which classifies human beings in the category of animalkind. Secondly the akhlaq-i saba’a (predatory disposition) corresponds to the faulty of ghazb, and drives the human being to behave like “dogs, wolves, and lions, beating, killing, and falling upon people by the hand and tongue.” The third appetite, which Ghazali omits when discussing faculties, virtues, and vices, is the akhlaq-i shayatin (devilish disposition), which is responsible for foul behavior towards others such as “deceit, fraud, misrepresentation, instigating disagreement and discord between people, and doing devilish deeds.” The final appetite is akhlaq-i malakah (angelic disposition pl. akhlaq-i mala’ika), which enables a human being to “do angelic acts, love knowledge and propriety, refrain from ugly acts, seek goodness among people, keep himself better than lowly acts, be happy in the knowledge of works, and find fault with ignorance and foolishness.”

Accordingly, people can act like angry dogs, greedy pigs, evil demons, or cerebral angels (see Table 1 for names of parts of the nafs and their corresponding traits, virtues, and vices). Ghazali explains, “If you succumb to the carnality of the pig, in you the attributes of filth, shamelessness, greed, sycophancy, lowness, being happy in others’ sorrow, and envy manifest.” The way to control this is through disciplined thinking, reflection, and control. The opposite of piggishness is “contentment, self-restraint, shame, peace, ingenuity, piety, non-covetousness, and moderation.” Next, “if you

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68 Ghazali, 22.
69 Ghazali, 22.
70 Ghazali, 22.
71 Ghazali, 24.
72 Ghazali, 24.
73 Ghazali, 24.
submit to the dog of anger, in you manifest rashness, impurity, arrogance, scheming, pomposity, ridicule of others, demeaning others, contempt, and oppression of others.”\(^7^4\) The opposing attributes that will come through once the dog is treated with discipline are “patience, forbearance, forgiveness, stability, courage, peacefulness, boldness, and generosity.”\(^7^5\)

_Shaytan_ (satan) leads both of the former appetites towards the negative. Succumbing to satan causes “cunning, treachery, embroiling in conflict, cheating, and adultery.”\(^7^6\) In alluding to the Qur’an, Ghazali says satanic whispers are difficult to overcome since one can be deceived by their hypocrisy, but it allows for human beings to cultivate angelic characteristics such as “intelligence, spiritual awareness, knowledge, wisdom, rectitude, beauty of character, greatness, and leadership.”\(^7^7\) Ghazali asserts that human beings are meant to enhance their angelic appetites because “everything which has been given perfection, its highest rank is the reason for which it has been created.”\(^7^8\) Human beings were created better than other animals because they were given rationality, and therefore perfection of the human being lies in perfecting the faculty that distinguishes him.\(^7^9\)

According to Ghazali, one of the wonders of the soul is its ability to “subdue to itself powerful animals such as the elephant, lion, or horse. Everything in the world, its skills and wonders are [man’s] calling and that knowledge is acquired by way of the

\(^7^4\)Ghazali, 24.

\(^7^5\)Ghazali, 24.

\(^7^6\)Ghazali, 24.

\(^7^7\)Ghazali, 24. Qur’an verses 41:36 and 114:5 speak of _shaytan_ whispering to man. In 50:16, man’s _nafs_ also whispers to him.

\(^7^8\)Ghazali, 25-26.

\(^7^9\)Ghazali, 33.
The soul is also a mirror unto the celestial realm, which can be known to human beings through dreams and through the inner voice that guides the sages, who have perfected nafses. The final goal for Ghazali is to train the nafs in order to perfect one’s practice of the rah-i din (path of faith), that leads to sa’adat (ultimate happiness).

Like Ghazali, Tusi focuses on the ways in which the metaphysical soul is housed in the physical body and how rationality distinguishes man from animal-like behavior. Like Ghazali, Tusi compares the behaviors of pigs and dogs to people who do not control their pleasure and hunger impulses. Rationality makes human beings unique and superior to the rest of creation, though the remainder of the faculties of the human soul are shared by animals. Further, he connects the abilities of the rational soul to the ways it acquires different kinds of knowledge. He calls the rational faculty quwwat-i natiq, but is also known as the nafs-i malaki (angelic soul). It allows for “perception of intelligible and differentiating between right and wrong acts.”

The quwwat-i natiq is physically represented by the brain, which is the “location of thought and contemplation.” It has two subdivisions of its own, the quwwat-i ‘ilmi (theoretical faculty) and quwwat-i ‘amali (practical faculty), which each correspond to the branches of knowledge, speculative philosophy and practical philosophy. According to Tusi, the branches of knowledge/philosophy are hikmat-i nazari (speculative philosophy), under which mathematics, theology, and natural sciences fall. Hikmat-i amali (practical philosophy) houses all the branches of Tazhib-i akhlaq, which are virtue

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80 Ghazali 28.
81 Tusi, 72.
82 Tusi, 58. Tusi’s terms for the components of the nafs are grammatical variations of the same terms Ghazali uses.
83 Tusi, 58
84 Tusi, 69-70.
ethics, domestic ethics, and political ethics. In his classifications of the subspecialties of each branch of philosophy/knowledge, we see how all knowledge that Tusi deemed worthy of learning and teaching correspond to trades that men held (see Chart 1 below).

The very structure of all human knowledge is upheld and transferred from human to human through the male professions. As I show in the next chapter, even the ordering of the domestic realm is a task of male leadership.

Davani likewise constructs his model of the nafs based on the kinds of knowledge it acquires. He describes the whole of the human soul as the nafs-i natiqa (rational soul) instead of the plain nafs-i insani (human soul) to show his emphasis on the mind. As I show in Table 2, according to Davani, the nafs has two major powers, each of which has two branches. The first is the quwwat-i idrak (power of perception), which is

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85 Davani, 73.
equivalent to Tusi and Ghazali’s rational faculty (compare figure 3 with figures 1 and 2). Its first branch is the ‘aql-i nazari (speculative intellect) which has the power of perception of the natural and celestial worlds through observation and imagination.\textsuperscript{86} The virtue of wisdom stems from this intellect. The second branch is the ‘aql-i amali (practical intellect) which is:

\begin{quote}
the use of thought and reflection, which is the remote origin of partial movement of the body [...] produces partial arts and production from its position relative to the speculative intelligence and the marriage between them is the basis of obtaining the complete arts relating to practices such as the beauty of truth and the ugliness of lies.\textsuperscript{87}
\end{quote}

The “marriage” or azdavaj between the ‘aql-i nazari and aql-i amali, which together make up the quwwat-i idrak, creates a full range of thoughts and emotions in a person. quwwat-i idrak is the power of thoughts and imagination and is responsible for causing a person to express feelings such as shame, crying, or laughter. It is possible that Davani sees the former as a masculine trait and the latter as a feminine trait, since he uses the term marriage as the relationship between them, but he does not say as much explicitly here. Evidence supporting this idea, which I discuss in more detail below, is that he and Ghazali and Tusi see the resulting virtues that stem from the faculty of rationality as masculine qualities, while they see the virtue of ‘iffat, stemming from the concupiscent faculty as composed of some feminine qualities. However, here, unlike Ghazali and Tusi, because Davani accounts for differences between rational and emotional qualities of the quwwat-i idrak and describes the relationship between them as a marriage, we see more explicitly how he thinks of rationality as a masculine quality and emotionality as feminine. In drawing a parallel between Islamic and Chinese thought, Sachiko Murata

\textsuperscript{86}This intellectual capability corresponds to the speculative branch of philosophy known as hikmat-i nazari

\textsuperscript{87}Jalal ad-Din Davani, Akhlaq-i Jalali, Edited by Abdullah Masoudi Arani. (Tehran: Intesharat-i Italat, 2013), 74. This intellectual capability corresponds to the branch philosophy known as hikmat-i amali or practical philosophy
argues that the perfected human soul, particularly in sufi discourses, contains both complementary *yin* and *yang*, and are then able to be microcosms of the world and carry out God’s work.  

**Virtue of Rationality: Wisdom**

*Hikmat* (wisdom) is the virtue that stems from the faculty of rationality. Ghazali defines the faculty of rationality’s qualities as the ability to know the difference between the truth and lies in speech and in acts of faith; its qualities also include “good regulation, correct opinion and thinking, just action and discernment.” For Ghazali, virtuous applications of the rational faculty are related to leadership skills involved in being master of a trade, household, or polity. For Tusi and Davani, *hikmat* is both knowable and doable, speculative and practical. Wisdom is defined as “quick-thinking, speediness in understanding, lucidity of mind, ease of learning, elegance in thinking, excellence of memory, and recollection.” *Zaka’* (quick-thinking) is the speedy production of hypotheses and conclusions are habitual understandings of cause and effect. *Sur’at-i fahm* refers to habitual understanding the relationship between causes and consequences. *Safay-i zahn* (lucidity) of mind is the soul being free from confusion and agitation by irrelevant things. *Sahulat-i ta’allum* (ease of learning) refers to sharpness of vision and focus on goals and desired objects. *Hasan-i ta’qul* (elegance in think-

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88 Murata, 314.  
89 Ghazali, Volume 2, 7.  
90 Tusi, 112. Davani, 83.  
91 Tusi, 112. Davani, 83.  
92 Tusi, 112. Davani, 83.  
93 Tusi, 112. Davani, 83.  
94 Tusi, 112. Davani, 83.
ing) is the proper examination of reality in its proper limits and quantities.\textsuperscript{95} Tahaffuz (excellence of memory) is holding and grasping something that has been examined or elucidated by the rational faculties.\textsuperscript{96} Finally, tazakkar (recollection) refers to a man's ability to habitually contemplate mentally conserved forms any time his soul desires.\textsuperscript{97}

As with their discussion of the nafs in general, the ethicists do not mention men or women distinctly as possessing the virtue of hikmat. However, the applications of quick-wittedness, lucidity, ease of learning, excellence in thinking, memory, and recollection all occur in men's activities of teaching and learning a trade or expressing critical thinking in terms of men's leadership over others.

If the quwwat-i natiqa (rational faculty) becomes excessive, the mind becomes occupied with evil works and deception. The nafs causes one to overthink every situation, becomes paranoid, and crafts plots. By contrast, deficiency in rationality gives rise to stupidity and foolishness. Further, if a person does not exert his rational faculty, then the vices of the two other faculties amplify. It is also easy to fool oneself into thinking that one is training the quwwat-i natiqa, while avoiding the hard work of doing so. For instance, Davani explains that those who simply memorize or copy knowledge as parrots or monkeys do, are not really thinking deeply. As stated above, intelligent animals such as these were thought to possess some rationality along the spectrum of nobility of the nafs. The acts of copying or memorizing cause men to fall below their potential for full rationality. The ethicists then continue that the worst counterfeiters of knowledge are those who are pretentious because of obtaining certain knowledge, or people who use knowledge for conceit or conjecture about observations and facts.\textsuperscript{98} Tusi classifies

\textsuperscript{95} Tusi, 112. Davani 83.
\textsuperscript{96} Tusi, 112. Davani, 83.
\textsuperscript{97} Tusi, 112. Davani, 84.
\textsuperscript{98} Davani, 94-95, Tusi, 122-125. It is important to note that Ghazali does not include vices of the rational faculty because he feels that one can never have too much rationality; it is an angelic faculty
these antics as occurring among philosophers and the learned.

2.3.2 The Irascible Faculty: Its Masculine Power, Virtues, and Vices

For all three ethicists, the quwwat-i ghazabi is a power of anger and repulsion—repelling harms to one’s person. Like rationality and wisdom, the ethicists view the irascible power itself, as well as the virtue that stems from its expression, shu’ja’at (courage), in a masculine light. Not only do the ethicists imagine the qualities that make up courage to be essential in male leadership over a general polity, but they appeal to male notions of bravery and honor when they advocate for balanced expression of the quwwat-i ghazabi.

For Tusi and Ghazali, the quwwat-i ghazabi is one of the three faculties of the nafs. Davani accounts for this power as a sub-faculty of the quwwat-i tahrik (the power of incitement). The two branches of the quwwat-i tahrik are the powers of ghazb (anger) and shahwat (desire), which work in similar ways as Ghazali and Tusi describe.99 Tusi explains that the quwwat-i ghazabi is the bestial soul or nafs-i sabu’i and is located in the heart, the “quarry of innate heat and the fountain of life.”100 In animals, this faculty is roused by the repulsion of harm; it is the instinct of self-protection that allows them to identify danger. However, in humans, the instinct of self-preservation and repelling injury can lead them to “crave for authority” and treat others badly out of real or imagined fear of others.101 Because of the quwwat-i ghazbi, all men naturally can never do wrong.

99 Davani does not elaborate much on the quwwat-i ghazabi beyond Tusi’s explanation.

100 Tusi, 58.

101 Tusi, 58.
rally crave *tasllat* (authority) as a natural order of their souls. This plays out in the ethics texts as men taming the *quwwat-i ghazbi* in order to exercise authority within ethical bounds over women in the domestic economy and other men in the public sphere.

**Virtue of Irascible Faculty: Courage**

*Shuja’at* (courage) is the virtue that comes from perfecting the *quwwat-i ghazabi* (irascible faculty). Ghazali explains that courage comes about when this power of anger is expressed moderately, giving rise to “honor, high-mindedness, valor, mildness, endurance, calmness, beauty, and control of anger.”102 Tusi and Davani elaborate on similar qualities of courage: “greatness of soul, valor, high-mindedness, determination, mildness, calmness, boldness of soul, endurance, humility, honor, and compassion.”103 Several of these qualities involve an individual’s interaction with others. *Kibr-i nafs* (greatness of soul) means that the soul is resilient in the face of good and bad things, prosperity or lack thereof, pleasant and unpleasant circumstances.104 *Najaddat* (valor) is self-confidence.105 *Buland himmati* (high-mindedness) is essentially fearlessness from death while pursuing the greater goals of life.106 Davani emphasizes that “the nafs in seeking real beauty and psychic perfection does not see as important the benefits and disasters of this world, so it does not become sad or happy at obtaining or losing them.”107 Instead, the courageous have a yearning for death.108

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102 Ghazali, Volume 2, 7.
103 Tusi, 112-113. Davani, 84.
104 Tusi, 113. Davani, 84.
105 Tusi, 113. Davani, 84.
106 Tusi, 113. In Davani this term is ‘allav-i himmat, 84.
107 Davani, 84.
108 Davani, 84.
As expected, *sabat* (determination) is persistence in the face of failure. Hilm (mildness) is keeping one’s anger at bay when something repugnant occurs. By contrast, *sakun* (calmness) refers to the soul’s ability to maintain honor specifically in the face of hostility or war. Shahamat (boldness) is the courageous soul’s eagerness to win, while garnering a fair reputation. Tahammul (endurance) is wearing out one’s body and organs by what is required by mind and soul, or in other words, putting the body entirely at the disposal of the mind. Tavaz’a (humility) is not assigning greater merit to the accomplishments of one’s own soul over that of people in lower stations. This refers to man’s position in the hierarchy of intellect, which is correlated with a man’s trade and which clime a man is from. Despite the hierarchy, it is a virtue not to feel proud of one’s own station or achievements. Nonetheless, a sense of *hamiyyat* (honor) is interestingly included in a component of courage; it involves, “protecting the dignity of the faith and honor [...] to its furthest limits.” The term Davani uses for faith here is *millat* which means faith, but also evokes a sense of a community of believers in the faith.

The quality of *hamiyyat* is particularly masculine, which shows that the faculty of the *nafs* from which it originates, the *quwwat-i ghazabi* is in itself thought of by the ethicists in masculine terms. Davani expands on *hamiyyat* by quoting a hadith about ghayrat, commonly thought of as manly pride. He quotes the Prophet Muham-

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110Tusi, 113. Davani, 85.
111Tusi, 113. Davani, 85.
112Tusi, 113. Davani, 85.
113Davani, 85.
114Davani, 85.
115Davani, 85.
116Davani, 85.
mad, “‘God has ghayrat and for His ghayrat, has outlawed immoral deeds [or haram al-fawahish...] Sa’d has ghayrat. I have more ghayrat than Sa’d, and God has more ghayrat than I do.’”

The original context of the hadith is that a man named Sa’d ibn ‘Ubayda had said, “If I saw a man with my wife, I would strike him with the blade of my sword.”

The Prophet heard this and said the comment about ghayrat which Davani quotes. According to Bukhari, the Prophet then stated that the immoral deeds or harram al-fawahish are outlawed whether “done in open or in secret”

The term ghayrat itself comes from the triliteral root gh-y-r, which generally used to mean “other” or something by exception. The noun ghayrat is defined as jealousy, almost always of a wife or some “other” person approaching one’s wife. In the context of Sa’d’s initial envious comment about his wife committing adultery it makes sense to define ghayrat as jealousy, but the Prophet’s response about himself having more ghayrat or God as having the most ghayrat suggests that the word cannot merely mean sexual jealousy. The Prophet’s statement, “God has ghayrat and for His ghayrat, has outlawed immoral deeds done in open or in secret,” implies that having ghayrat means defending right and wrong and morality in general, and not just in the case of defending one’s honor in the case of a wife’s adultery or a man’s advance upon her. Yet, the term ghayrat has become synonymous with male honor that is rooted in his wife’s sexual behavior.

117 This is my translation of the hadith as it is quoted in Arabic in Davani, 85.


119 Translation of Sahih Bukhari, Volume 9, Book 93, Number 512.

120 For example in contemporary Pakistan, the context of the hadith is taken quite literally. Murders involving ghayrat are seen as less punishable than qatl-e amd or deliberate murder because it is seen as a crime of passion protecting a man’s honor from another man’s sexual enjoyment of his wife. See Sohail Akbar Warraich, “‘Honor Killings’ and the law in Pakistan” in ‘Honor’ Crimes, Paradigms and Violence Against Women eds., Sara Hossain and Lynn Welchman, (London: Zed Books, 2005), 90.
The hadith is interpreted to downplay sexual jealousy and prohibit one from taking retribution into one’s own hands. Toshiko Izutsu explains that Ibn Arabi read the hadith as “God is jealous [...] because He does not like the secret between Him and His servants be disclosed to others.” Davani further deemphasizes sexual jealousy from the notion of ghayrat by omitting the context and last part of the hadith, decontextualizing the term ghayrat from the notion of defending one’s manly pride over his wife or over another man’s sexual enjoyment of one’s wife. However, by using the portion of the hadith about ghayrat in the first place, he casts it as a positive virtue. Having ghayrat is emulating the Prophet and internalizing a Divine virtue. Thus, Davani is advocating for ghayrat hadith in order to say that zeal is essential for displaying the quality of hamiyat (courage). The partial use of the hadith allows him to bring up a term evocative of male pride. A man is supposed to uphold his own honor, that of others, and protect the faith to the “furthest limits” as a display of possessing hamiyat, which is part of the broader masculine virtue of courage.

Both Tusi and Davani explain that courage requires riqqat (compassion), which is the soul’s ability to be affected by the distress of others without its own functions being affected. A man should be compassionate while maintaining his own integrity, in order to feel for others. To summarize, then, the virtue of courage is defined by the strength and bravery required to better oneself and improve the lives of others. The ethicists thought of courage as masculine because it comes from the soul’s aggressive faculty of irascibility, which prompts men to subdue others. Courage is also paternalistic in that men are instructed to “protect” the faith, have honor, dignity, and

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122 Davani, 85.

123 Davani, 85.
endurance.  

Finally, the ethicists discuss the vices that arise from too much or too little expression of the *Quwwat-i ghazab*. Ghazali explains that if a man uses the *quwwat-i ghazbi* excessively, he becomes impetuous and heedless. He undertakes actions when they are not necessary and exhibits the common vices of “boasting, conceit, pride, recklessness, self-exaltation, throwing [him]self into dangerous situations.” If he exercises too little of the power of anger, then he becomes cowardly and dispassionate, which leads to “self depreciation, powerlessness, impatience, and sedateness, and abjectness.” He does not take action when it is necessary. The impostors who fake courage are those who attract unnecessary harm to themselves, bodily or otherwise, as a boastful show or false sense of courage. This includes both people who are prone to suicide and people who appear over confident because of coincidental triumphs they have had over their peers in this regard.

### 2.3.3 The Concupiscible Faculty: Its Masculine and Feminine Power, Virtues, and Vices

The second faculty of the *nafs-i insani* is *quwwat-i shahwi* (concupiscible faculty), which is known as the *nafs-i bahimi* (bestial soul). Across all three texts, ‘*iffat* is the virtue that can come forth if the soul’s concupiscible faculty or carnal appetite is ex-

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126 Ghazali, Volume 2, 7.
127 Ghazali, Volume 2, 7-8.
128 Tusi, 119.
129 Tusi, 126.
pressed in moderation and subdued to rationality. So far in this chapter I have argued that the ethicists think of the nafs as it belongs to a man, and think of masculinity and irascibility as faculties that belong to men’s souls. In contrast, it is only in the third faculty, the quwwat-i shahwat (concupiscent faculty), and its corresponding virtue of ‘iffat (continence) that we see in the ethics treatises the soul’s potential to belong to women. I argue that, in fact, the ethicists thought of women’s nafses as being led by quwwat-i shahwat, which they thought of as a feminine power of the soul (while men are led by quwwat-i ‘ilm, which they thought of as a masculine power of the soul). Nonetheless, both men and women possess all three powers.

In animals the quwwat-i shahwat is roused by the attraction to beneficial things such as food, mates, and pleasure-giving activities. In humans, the drive toward beneficial things can be so strong that it leads to ills or evils such as gluttony or sexual depravity. Tusi locates the quwwat-i shahwi in the liver, known to him as the organ of “nutrition and distribution of solubles exchanged with other bodily members.” The quwwat-i shahwi “seeks pleasure from food, drink, and marriageables.” The use of the term manakih or marriageables, can be taken as a gender neutral term, since both men and women can be marriageable; thus the statement would mean the quwwat-i shahwi seeks pleasure from food, drink, and one’s marriage partners. However, Steingass defines manakih as “marriages; women,” meaning that the term manakih in literature refers to women who are marriageable. Further, the grammatical construction of the term, mufa‘al version of the word nikah, implies a passive marriage partner, as opposed to an active one. Instead of using the terms hamsar (spouse), zan (woman/wife), ahl

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130 Tusi, 58.
131 Tusi, 58.
or *haram*, both terms used to mean one’s women (though they also mean family in a broad sense), the use of a term that is a variation of *nikah* (marriage contract) implies the use of the legalistic definition of marriage in which a man actively offers marriage, *ijab*, and a woman’s male guardian passively accepts it, *qabul*. The term *manakih* is also plural, so it refers to a man having sexual intercourse with multiple women, in excess of what is ethically permissible when the *quwwat-i shahwi* is properly subdued to the *quwwat-i natiq*.\(^\text{133}\) The *quwwat-i shahwi*, and thus the whole *nafs* in question here belongs to a man, even if women posses *nafs* or even if men can be marriageables in less conventional circumstances.

### Virtue of Concupiscent Faculty: Continence

Although the ethicists think of the *quwwat-i shahwi* in male terms, they imagine both men and women in possession of its virtue, ‘*iffat*, because it encompasses soft and passive attributes. The term ‘*iffat* translates to chastity, continence, or virtuousness. Steingass defines ‘*iffat* specifically as a modest woman, and it is a fairly common given name for girls in many Muslim societies.\(^\text{134}\) ‘*iffat* is also one of the adjectives Tusi and Davani use to describe an ideal wife.\(^\text{135}\) So while the ethicists construct the two virtues of wisdom and courage with men’s lives as husbands, fathers, and members of the polity in mind, they explain the third virtue as additionally displayed by women. However, when Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani speak of ‘*iffat* as it belongs to men, they discuss how ‘*iffat* is required in a man’s role as a pious Muslim man and steward of resources of which he is in charge; it remains a crucial part of establishing masculinity.

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\(^\text{134}\) Steingass, 856.

\(^\text{135}\) Tusi, 215. Davani 188.
Ghazali briefly explains that from chastity arise qualities such as, “modesty, contentment, patience, coolness, elegance, and agreeability.”\textsuperscript{136} Tusi and Davani state that continence requires operation of freedom from bondage to the soul’s passions and pleasures and consists of twelve elements.\textsuperscript{137} They enumerate these as: “shame, congeniality, beauty of guidance, peacefulness, tranquility, patience, contentment, dignity, moderation, regulation, freedom, and generosity.”\textsuperscript{138} Haya (shame) is the soul’s inhibition from committing foul things.\textsuperscript{139} Rifq (congeniality) is a kind of gentle mildness or submission to whatever happens.\textsuperscript{140} Husn-i huda (good guidance) is the soul’s internal willingness to improve itself using the methods of perfection.\textsuperscript{141} Musalimat (peacefulness) is the soul’s ability to persuade itself in situations where there is a dilemma between rising to reach its potential or relying on its habit.\textsuperscript{142} Da’at (tranquility) is the soul’s stillness or quietness when concupiscible appetites are in motion.\textsuperscript{143} This means that when one is indulging in food, sex, or other bodily pleasures, his soul is not swayed by the acts. This particular quality is gendered in that men are thought to be able to control their concupiscent appetites, while women are not. Kecia Ali has described the ways in which “classical Muslim tradition [...] views] women as sexually insatiable and thus prone to create social chaos.”\textsuperscript{144} The quality of sabr (patience) is

\textsuperscript{136} Ghazali, Volume 2, 8.
\textsuperscript{137} Tusi, 112. Davani, 86-88. Davani’s discussion is identical to Tusi’s here, however, he has additional sayings or examples explaining the qualities of ‘iffat that I will indicate throughout.
\textsuperscript{138} Tusi, 114. Davani, 86-88.
\textsuperscript{139} Tusi, 114. Davani 86.
\textsuperscript{140} Tusi, 114. Davani, 86.
\textsuperscript{141} Tusi, 114. Davani, 86.
\textsuperscript{142} Tusi, 114. Davani, 86.
\textsuperscript{143} Tusi, 114. Davani, 86.
\textsuperscript{144} Ali, Sexual Ethics, 9.
resistance to foul pleasures. Davani adds that this means having patience in trying times. He states that it is the virtue of the prophets of God and the Persian sages. This example of patience is gendered in that it is perfectly embodied by prophets and sages, who are only men, and thus only men can fully aspire to be fully like them. In contrast, women need it to be perfect supports for their husbands.

Likewise, qana’at (contentment) is being at peace with whatever one is given in regards to food, drink, and clothing, and restricting indulgence in these things to strict necessities. The intention for restricting expenditure on food, drink, and clothing should be contempt for them, rather than an attempt to save money, emphasizing the importance of intent for improving one’s akhlaq. Davani adds that the Prophet held that “contentment is a cache that never vanishes” as opposed to the temporary pleasures one derives from indulging the quwwat-i shahwat.

Vaqar (dignity) is the soul’s tempered pace when tested by desirable objects. Beyond Tusi and Davani’s shared definition, Davani elaborates that one should always avoid haste and hurried movements, even if one is about to miss Friday congregational prayers. One should never deviate from steady movements. Like the quality of hamiyyat or honor within the virtue of courage, which Davani explains through the concept of ghayrat, there is a gendered element to Vaqar (dignity), since there is an expectation that the man who posses this quality under the broader rubric of ‘iffat and the balanced quwwat-i shahwat attends Friday prayers. In the laws of ‘ibadat in fiqh

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145 Tusi, 114 and Davani, 86.
146 Davani, 86.
148 Tusi, 114. Davani, 86.
149 Davani, 87.
150 Tusi, 114. Davani, 87.
151 Davani, 87.
only men are required to attend Friday prayers. Historically, even if women may have attended prayers, Davani’s mention of it refers exclusively to men’s attendance, both since men are the only ones required to attend, and since he advises men to seclude women as much as possible.\textsuperscript{152}

Next in the virtue of \textit{‘iffat} is the quality of \textit{war‘a}, which often means conscientious piety and meticulous attention to details of ritual.\textsuperscript{153} It is also translated as moderation. Moderation is a key component of the virtue of \textit{‘iffat} and also the guiding principle of the entire \textit{akhlāq} scheme of deploying the faculties of \textit{nafs}. Following \textit{war‘a}, is the quality of \textit{intizam} (regulation), or the soul’s habit to estimate and judge affairs and order them according to what is best.\textsuperscript{154} Next is \textit{hurriyat} which translates to integrity.\textsuperscript{155} Although integrity can be applied to a number of things, Tusi and Davani explain that it means the soul’s ability to acquire wealth in legal ways, perhaps because that is a measurable standard for integrity.\textsuperscript{156} This definition of integrity also assumes a man is performing the virtue of \textit{‘iffat} since it is about earning wages. Although during the ethicists’ lifetimes, elite women owned property or businesses, and less elite women were compensated for work done at home such as spinning textiles or producing handicrafts, the ethicists assume that men are the financial supporters of women, and thus the guideline to acquire wealth in legal ways refers to men’s endeavors to earn.\textsuperscript{157}

The last quality of \textit{‘iffat}, \textit{sakha} (generosity), requires a man to disburse money to those who deserve it. Generosity is a man’s leadership quality, essential for maintaining

\textsuperscript{152}Davani, 190.
\textsuperscript{153}Tusi, 114. Davani, 87.
\textsuperscript{154}Tusi, 114. Davani, 87.
\textsuperscript{155}Tusi, 114. Davani, 87.
\textsuperscript{156}Tusi, 114-115. Davani, 87.
\textsuperscript{157}Ghazali, 307. Tusi, 206. Davani, 179-181. Tusi and Davani articulate the financial arrangement of the home through the husband’s need. They describe the need for a wife, children, and servants in order to support the man’s needs, while assuming he financial supports them all.
the loyalty and productivity of individuals outside the home in the city or sovereignty, the third level of ethics that I discuss in Chapter Four. Because generosity is so important, Tusi describes this quality as having sub-qualities. These are “munificence, preference, forgiveness, manliness, greatness, good doing, beneficence, and lenience.”¹⁵⁸ These qualities require a person to be generous above and beyond what is required in caring for one’s dependents and the deserving. Specifically, Tusi defines *muruwwa* (manliness) here as, “the soul’s true desire to be adorned with the ornament of benefits and munificence for necessity or greater.”¹⁵⁹ In this circular definition, in which manliness is the desire to be virtuous and virtuousness is manliness, Tusi equates the virtue of generosity with being a man or displaying manhood. Conceptually, this is very similar to the latin word for virtue, or *virtus*, which stems from the word for male, *vir*. By definition, men are the virtuous. Further, finances and distribution of resources are intimately tied to the role ethical males play. Davani relates several hadiths that extol liberality as among the virtues that God likes best. Liberality can save someone from punishment on the day of judgment. In Davani’s view, it is both complex and follows directly from courage.¹⁶⁰

Gordon Newby defines *muruwwa* as “manly virtue” that was “a fundamental value of early Arab society and was taken over by Islamic peoples in emulation of the Arab model.”¹⁶¹ He explains that Ibn Khaldun considered *muruwwa* to be a natural disposition, but one that was consistent with religious law, since he considered that to be natural as well.¹⁶² Thus, *muruwwa* was a tamed, principled masculinity for Ibn Khaldun. Similarly, since Tusi states that *muruwwa* is “the soul’s true desire to be adorned

¹⁵⁸Tusi, 115. Davani, 88.
¹⁵⁹Tusi, 115.
¹⁶⁰Davani, 88-89.
¹⁶¹Newby, 274-285, 276.
¹⁶²Newby, 276.
with the ornament of benefits and munificence,” he likewise equates masculinity with ethical principles.\footnote{Tusi, 115. According to Lloyd Ridgeon, the Persian term javanmardi’s or young manliness has a similar indulgent history before Sufis appropriated the term to describe the kind of manliness that was celebrated in mystical or ascetic lifestyles, which signals a tacit debate in the premodern period over what characteristics were truly definitive of masculinity. Ridgeon 98-99.}

Finally, when the quwwat-i shahwi or concupiscent faculty is expressed excessively, a man becomes greedy. He becomes a glutton, which gives rise to “impudence, foulness, unmanliness [bimuruwatti], uncleanness, jealousy, being despicable to the powerful, and contemptuous to the poor […]”\footnote{Ghazali, Vol. 2, 8.} Ghazali’s use of bimuruwatti or unmanliness as a result of expressing too much of the quwwat-i shahwi shows he is partly defining manhood as the control of virility and sexual prowess—not its deployment. To Ghazali, shahwat (carnal appetite) is an animalistic characteristic that takes away from one’s humanity. In this usage of bimuruwatti, one is less of a man if he is too sexually active. This usage also assumes that being less animal, or more human, is the same as being a sexual male, which confirms the ways in which he sees the concupiscent faculty as normative male, as opposed to female. Also, drawing on de Beauvoir’s concept of women’s immanence versus men’s transcendence, leading to women’s permanent corporeality and men’s full consciousness, the association of too much expression of shahwat, bodily desire, with inhumaneness and unmanliness underscores both the association of women with animals and the corporeal limitations of women’s bodies, as well as the permanent association of bodily discipline with men. Later in the same passage, Ghazali explains that if a man limits his carnal appetite too much, that also brings about namardi or unmanliness (this time using the Persian word, instead of bimuruwwa, a Persian word of Arabic origin) as well as lethargy and madness.\footnote{Ghazali, Volume 2, 8.} This second usage of the concept of unmanliness, namardi, can be defined as impotence, since unmanliness implies lack...
of male sexual function. A man should procreate in order to do his part to continue the human race and create opportunities for himself to earn blessings.\textsuperscript{166} Taken together, it is no surprise that Ghazali is prescribing moderation: one must display manliness by procreating but also display manliness by curbing one’s sexual appetite so as not to become animalistic.

Tusi and Davani define deficiency in exercise of the \textit{quwwat-i shahwi} as, “being at rest from movement in search of necessary pleasures in which the law and the intellect have given him leave to partake.”\textsuperscript{167} They likewise focuses on moderation, but are more interested in highlighting the lawfulness and necessity of food, clothing, and sex, the things that \textit{quwwat-i shahwi} seeks in order to warn against false show of self-restraint. Tusi and Davani state that the counterfeiters control the \textit{quwwat-i shahwi} for the wrong reasons. They deprive themselves from comfort in the hopes that they will receive it in double measure, either in the \textit{dunya} or in the \textit{akhirah}, or to prevent diseases that arise from overindulgence.\textsuperscript{168} Ultimately, Tusi and Davani stress to strive for fulfilling one’s needs and not more.

\subsection*{2.3.4 Justice: The Ultimate Virtue and Male Responsibility}

In the virtue of justice, there is a tension between the notion of striving for justice and the inequalities in the \textit{nafses} of humans. Although all the atoms of creation are equal in terms of miraculousness, they are unequal in potential, status, and virtue; certain vegetables carry more virtue than others, males of any species are nobler than females, and certain types of humans (men in general, and men of certain climes) have

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{166}Ghazali, 302-303.
\item \textsuperscript{167}Tusi, 120. Davani, 104-105.
\item \textsuperscript{168}Davani 95.
\end{itemize}
more capacity for perfection than others. With respect to the science of the *nafs*, justice is the best virtue that exercises ultimate compassion for others in the context of real potential for achieving equity. However, it is both subjective to a person and limited by the options that God makes available to individuals, meaning that a person’s place in the hierarchy of humanity, which I describe above, also determines one’s deserts in terms of the justice that the most superior men dole out. Thus, given this tension between ontological equality and *nafs*-related inequality, the key to understanding the notion of justice is to unpack what it means for justice to be a virtue, a character trait, and not an abstract goal for society in itself.

Amina Wadud problematizes how metaphysical and ontological equality between genders in the Qur’anic texts does not translate into real life equality. She argues that equality in the eyes of God means human beings must strive for equality on earth, especially because of human responsibility to be vicegerents or *khalifas*.\(^{169}\) The ethicists viewed concepts of human existence and justice as entirely distinct concepts. For them, human beings are equal in creation because all atoms and matter are equally created by God. Justice is not related to existence, but rather to freedom from burdens, oppression, and tyranny, as well as individual deserts based on skill and ability.\(^{170}\)

While wisdom, courage, and continence are required virtues of an ethical man, ‘*adalat* is his ultimate virtue because it enables him to achieve happiness and *khilafat* (vicegerency of God). In the case of Tusi, all three faculties produce their respective virtues; the composite result of realizing the three virtues is an ethical man who exudes ‘*adalat* in his dealings.\(^{171}\) For Ghazali and Davani, ‘*adl* comes forth naturally from the


\(^{170}\)Women lose out in worldly forms of justice in Islamic philosophical ethics, not because they are not created equal, but rather because of the underlying gendered assumptions that they are less in skill and ability because of their sex, bodies, and nature, which I discuss in detail in Chapter Three.

\(^{171}\)Tusi, 109.
faculty of rationality. All three ethicists agree that ‘adl is an essential means for attaining the ultimate goals of the kimiya-i sa’adat and tadhib-i akhlaq, namely realizing true happiness for the self and facilitating happiness for others as a vicegerent of God and microcosm of the world. The masculine nature of the virtues and their qualities lead up to this ultimate male responsibility of creating the circumstances of ‘adl in the world. In Chapter Four, I discuss how creating justice is not just a male role, but determines ultimate masculinity, which belongs to the ruler of a sovereignty because he carries the power of creating ‘adl on a mass scale. Below, I discuss how each ethicist arrives at justice as an ultimate means to living an ethical life through particular expressions of the male nafs.

It is important to note that Ghazali does not discuss ‘adalat or justice as a cornerstone of his science of the nafs for polemical reasons. As mentioned in Chapter One, the notion of justice as one of the key virtues of philosophical ethics is an extension of Shi’i and mu’tazilite theology. As a Sunni, ash’ari or determinist school thinker who polemicizes against philosophers earlier in his career, Ghazali does not state ‘adl as a fourth virtue of the soul as Tusi and Davani do (even though the two differ on how the virtue of ‘adl actually comes forth from the nafs.) Nonetheless, Ghazali states that equilibrium, justice, and moderation are important in achieving ethical behavior on an individual level. However, instead of a lengthy discussion of the qualities of ‘adalat, which we find in Tusi and Davani, in the Kimiya-i Sa’adat Ghazali discusses the kindness required of an ethical man in terms of is treatment of relatives, children, friends, neighbors, slaves, and strangers. Ghazali uses terms such as kindness, responsibility, love, and mercy, to describe the requisite behavior from a man who is a leader of his

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172Hourani, Islamic Rationalism, 10.
174Ghazali, 390-433.
This resemble the qualities that make up the virtue of ‘adalat in Tusi and Davani’s texts.

In contrast, justice is an important theological issue for Tusi, who was a Shi‘i thinker. ‘Adl is an integral attribute of God, but also an important part of man’s potential legacy and duty as vicegerent. Davani follows Tusi’s approach to tahdhib-i akhlaq and so he retains Tusi’s emphasis on justice, even though his broader theological views are ishraqi sufī.176

Tusi explains the importance of ‘adl as a virtue displayed when a man reaches the ultimate station of having a perfected nafs.177 He states that “wisdom comes from justice and justice comes from wisdom, or (one may say) that what is meant by ‘wisdom’ here is the use of the Practical Intelligence in the proper manner, which is also called ‘practical philosophy.’”178 This not only shows that ‘adalat’s relationship to hikmat is circular, but that the two virtues support each other in practice and come about with the practice of akhlaq. A man’s wise acts are the same as just and ethical acts. Further, he states that, “among virtues, none is more perfect that the virtue of justice, as is obvious from the discipline of ethics.”179 A man’s wise acts are the same as just and ethical acts, and these are closely tied to a man’s ultimate goal of achieving happiness and vicegerency of God.

Tusi explains:

When the human reaches to this level [of perfection], that he becomes fully

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175Ghazali, 390-433.

176Davani’s sectarian identity is not clear. Some scholars claim he was Shi‘i, while others claim he was Sunni. John Woods argues that Davani’s political discourse is distinguished by an emphasis on just leadership, as opposed to favoring the “right” sect of Islam, as Ghazali and Tusi argue in some of their works. Woods, 145.

177Tusi, 109.

178Tusi, 110.

179Tusi, 131.
aware of the ranks of the universe, the infinite particular rules are recorded under the general rules [...] and when his practice becomes familiar [to him], such that his sayings and doings are achieved on account of strength and preferred habits, that person becomes a world unto himself, comparable to the ‘alam-i kabir [macrocosm], and he deserves the right to be called ‘alam-i saghir [microcosm].

Tusi explicitly explains how the individual is the primary level for ethical knowledge and practice. Becoming ‘alam saghir (microcosm) is akin to internalizing the balance and beauty that God has endowed the world with, to the point that one’s actions are a balanced and ethical world unto themselves. Put another way, it is when a man internalizes the knowledge of the order of the world that enables him to reflect that order. This means he not only accepts the hierarchy of the prevailing cosmology of the world, but actively takes part in maintaining it. It is only then that he is able to fulfill God’s intent for his role in the cosmos:

Thus he becomes the vicegerent of God most high among God’s creations, among God’s pure saints, a complete and absolute human. Complete and absolute is one who has permanence and persistence, is blessed with the benefits of eternal happiness and sustained mercy, and is fit to receive his God’s abundance.

According to Tusi, the ultimate goal of the ethical training is for the human to better himself and his world, as part of God’s work.

Davani argues that the “intelligent man” will find that his simpler model achieves the virtue of equity more readily than in Tusi’s model. Davani quotes Ghazali’s definition of “al-‘adl” from the Ihya’ Ulum ad-Din in support of his model of the human soul: “Equity is a state of the nafs, its power overtakes ghazb and shahwat and guides them according to wisdom, and orders them when necessary during their exertion

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180 Tusi, 70-71.
181 Tusi, 71.
182 Davani, 78-79.
and contraction.”183 Again, according to Ghazali equity is an important principle of moderation for the *kimiya* of the *nafs*; it is not a fourth virtue as in Tusi and Davani’s works. In adding this definition of ‘adl to his discussion of ‘adalat as virtue, Davani holds that the virtue of justice comes from within the balanced intellectual mind, rather than as a composite or resultant virtue.

Like Ghazali and Tusi, Davani explains that the first faculty must overtake the second. He also describes the human being’s responsibility to program his *nafs* in order to fulfill the purpose for which God created him. In the introduction, which he titles *matla’* (sunrise), as well as the in the last *lam‘ah* (“flash” of light) of the treatise before the conclusion of the treatise titled *maghrib* (sunset), Davani discusses humanity’s ultimate goal: “The end of the human, which is the essence of the worlds and the eye of eyes, the selected one of the world, is the vicegerency of God [...] Mankind’s right to the title of vicegerent is because of the perfection of his potential.”184

This vicegerency is completed through the administration of just governance, as I discuss in Chapter Four,185 but is also carried out by “the common men” through the equitable distribution of money and resources, which are in the hands of men in their capacity as “citizens” and “men of reason and discernment [who] realize that wisdom and justice make up the conditions of aptitude for such rank.”186 Tusi explains this is because “money is the equalizer of diversities” though it is in the hands of men to dole out.187 Thus, when discussing justice or fairness in real life situations on the domestic and societal levels, at times Tusi and Davani speak of men enacting justice in monetary

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183Ghazali quoted in Davani, 78. The quotation is in Arabic. In its footnote on the same page, Arani notes that there are several words in this quotation that are different across various manuscripts of *Akhalq-i Jalali*.

184Davani, 57.

185Davani, 223.

186Tusi, 134 and 136.

187Tusi, 135.
Both Tusi and Davani define the virtue of justice as “fairness and equitability.” They agree on its 12 elements: “friendship, affinity, loyalty, compassion, care of kin, requital, good companionship, good judgement, affection, submission, trust, and devotion.” These can be divided into two categories, what is within the individual man’s power, and what is beyond it. Gender is not explicit in the text, but still present in that the ethicists could mean to include or exclude women from male-male relations.

*Sadaqat* (friendship) is the true love for a friend, enough to drive a man to put everything he has toward providing relief for his friend. Davani elaborates that in accordance with a hadith, a man should dislike for his friend what he dislikes for himself and desire for his friend what he desires for himself. In other words, treat a friend as an equal. *Ulfat* (affinity) is cooperation between two distinct groups who share opinions and beliefs on the regulation of daily life.* Wafa* (loyalty) is staying committed to charity and aid of others.* Shafaqat* (compassion) is the awareness that bad luck can befall someone and the willingness to do what one can for that person. Davani elaborates:

to the masters of clarity and people of perception it is evident and true that all the atoms of the universe are construed with existence from the true Living Unity and all the possible creations sucking milk of discipline from breasts of Divine guidance are equal in spirit and close in station and destination, especially human beings who according to clear commands of

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188 Tusi, 206-207 and 307-308. Davani, 184-185 and 263-266.

189 Tusi, 111, 115. Note that Ghazali does not discuss specific qualities of *’adl* as discussed above.

190 Tusi 115. Davani, 88-89.

191 Davani, 89.

192 Tusi, 115-116. Davani, 89.

193 Tusi 116. Davani, 89.

194 Tusi 116. Davani 89.
the book have a strengthened unifying spiritual affinity [...] 195

Divine guidance and discipline are metaphors of the nourishing maternal body. The powers of giving life and sustenance are clearly seen as feminine and, as I discuss in the next chapter, are also the essential aspects of motherhood that afford it respect from the ethicists. The feminine powers of God sustain and give wisdom to all creation, of which every atom is equal. It is by virtue of their ontological equality that human beings treat each other justly. Further, the kinship established by spirituality ensures ontological equality.

Despite this equality, compassion has grades and degrees, depending on what one perceives from others around him. Davani provides an example of a ninth-tenth century sufi, Shaykh Shibli, to explain the line between imagination and reality: “The marks of the stick with which he hit an animal appeared on his body parts.” 196 Without arguing whether this miraculous event occurred in reality, Davani states that, “imagination acts upon natural affairs” like when one’s teeth feel edgy at the thought of eating sourness or like the fear of heights when walking across a high wall as opposed to an equally narrow stretch of land. 197 In the context of compassion, this means that one’s feeling of compassion for others is situational and dependent upon perception; one can feel compassion if one uses one’s mind to perceive another’s hardship. 198

Sila-i rahim (care of kin) is allowing one’s family and associates to share in one’s worldly possessions. 199 Additionally, Davani defines moral and spiritual kin relations as

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195 Davani, 89.

196 Davani, 90. Davani is most likely referring to Shaykh Abu Bakr Shibli (d. 946).

197 Davani, 90.

198 This ethics of compassion allows one to use one’s imagination and accounts for emotions such as sympathy in determining how what treats others. I will pick up the idea that ethics accounts for emotions and feelings in the conclusion.

people with whom one has spiritual affinity. The spiritual kin of have greater rights on an individual than family.\textsuperscript{200} Mukafat (requital) is paying back kindness done to one with more than what was given to one and retaliating an evil with a lesser evil than done to one.\textsuperscript{201} Husn-i shirkat (good companionship) is being considerate of others’ natural inclinations during transactions and avoiding offending one’s partners. Because of Tusi and Davani’s use of the term transaction, husn-i shirkat refers to one’s work or business relationships, not domestic ones, although one can argue that because the nikah is a transaction, good companionship with partners also includes one’s wife.\textsuperscript{202} Husn-i qada (good judgment) is repaying someone without regret or grudge and keeping oneself free from favoritism or blame.\textsuperscript{203} Finally, tawaddud (affection) is seeking love of virtuous men and peers, those with continence and fair speech.\textsuperscript{204} Davani adds that one may bestow kind words, favors, or gifts upon such men.

The remaining three elements of justice account for matters out of the individual’s control, namely when to deploy power of subverting or maintaining the status quo. Taslim (submission) is happily accepting those actions which are solely taken for the Creator’s pleasure and abiding by the commands of God.\textsuperscript{205} Tusi includes submitting to those against whom opposition is not possible, even if it goes against one’s natural inclination.\textsuperscript{206} This implies that seeking justice is limited by the amount of power one has against an oppressor. The ethicists teach selflessness but only insofar as one can

\textsuperscript{200}Davani, 91.
\textsuperscript{201}Tusi 116. Davani, 91.
\textsuperscript{202}Tusi 116. Davani, 91.
\textsuperscript{203}Tusi 116. Davani, 91.
\textsuperscript{204}Tusi 116. Davani, 91. In Chapter Four, I explore the ways in which this love is homosocial, and not either sexual nor referring to love between spouses.
\textsuperscript{205}Tusi 116. Davani, 91.
\textsuperscript{206}Tusi 116.
maintain the ability to be good and do good for others. For instance, taking an action, however right, that would result in danger or one’s incarceration would be ill-advised according to this code of ethics.\textsuperscript{207} Accordingly, they discuss the element of \textit{tawakkul} (trust in God) as follows: “In acts that are not entrusted to the power or capacity of the humans and which the opinions and knowledge of creation have no ability to control, do not seek to create benefits or harm or hastening or delay, and do not incline against the way things are.”\textsuperscript{208} Men should surrender to the reality of extant power structures as the will of God.\textsuperscript{209} This speaks to the practicality of ethics, while standing for justice.

The last element of justice, ‘\textit{ibadat} (devotion or worship), reinforces awareness of God as essential for reaching the ultimate goal of happiness. To be just, one should be devoted to one’s Creator and:

those close to His presence such as angels, prophets, imams, and saints (peace be upon them) and following and obeying them, and submitting to the commands and prohibitions of the people of the law. One should cover and clothe oneself in the things that complete and perfect in meaning the concept of \textit{taqwa} [consciousness of God].\textsuperscript{210}

Davani adds that one should be devoted to the Creator regardless of any prior benefits one has received from God’s blessings, which shows a continuous awareness of God is necessary in order to maintain justice.

Finally, Tusi and Davani outline the vices related to false or poor expression of the virtue of justice. Because justice does not come directly from discipline of a particular faculty of the soul (arguably it comes from rationality), Davani explains the results of having too much or too little emphasis on the virtue itself, rather than too much or too little expression of a particular faculty. Tusi defines the opposite of justice as

\textsuperscript{207}Tusi, 315.  
\textsuperscript{208}Tusi, 114.  
\textsuperscript{209}Davani, 91.  
\textsuperscript{210}Tusi, 114.
tyranny. In financial terms, tyranny is “obtaining of the instruments of livelihood in reprehensible ways” and suffering as “enabling the seeker of a livelihood by means of violence and plunder, complying with seizing it without just claim.” The impostors of justice “favor people who are not marked by the path of merit” or squander wealth accumulated through the hard work of predecessors.

To summarize, justice is a virtue composed of ethical actions: acts of worship, acts against evil and oppression, acts of fair distribution of wealth. Justice is not a societal state of affairs to be achieved in which the hierarchical structure of humanity would be equalized. Ultimately, ethicists’ definition of justice relies on power relations to be both fixed and changeable. It is fixed in the sense that people and things are put in their rightful and proper place, playing their function and purpose in life, but it is changeable in the sense that justice is subjective based on the perceived right and wrong of the beholder, and one is obligated to act in order to make things equitable.

Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani articulate the science of the nafs as a means to achieving ultimate goals of happiness for man, happiness for the world around him, and adherence to God’s plan for humanity (vicegerency). For Ghazali, man achieves the ultimate happiness through following the ethical path of faith. In Tusi, man’s balance of the nafses makes him a microcosm, the ultimate goal, and thus a vicegerent of God. For both Tusi and Davani, the hard work that preserves the intellectual over the bodily powers fulfills his purpose as the vicegerent of God. The three ethicists differ in their articulations of man’s goals and specifics of the model of the human nafs, as well as sectarian or philosophical allegiances. However, comparison of their treatises demonstrates that they build on a shared philosophical heritage that regarded the nafs-i insani, or human soul as in need of spiritual and intellectual training in order to relate to God or God’s

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211 Tusi, 120.

212 Tusi, 124. Davani, 95-96.
purpose of being source and facilitator of ethics for others, including women and men of less status.

2.4 Chapter Conclusion

In the ethics texts, not all human souls are created equal. Even though all of God’s creation is equal, rationality distinguishes the human species as a whole from animals and vegetables. Human beings themselves are part of a gendered and intellectual/spiritual hierarchy in which some men stand above others and all men stand above all women on account of the superiority of their rational faculties.

The ethicists imagine the human nafs in normatively male terms. Specifically, they speak of the training of the nafs as it pertains to men’s lives. Training of the rational faculty allows a man to express the virtue of wisdom, which is composed of leadership qualities that he will enact in his role as the head of a domestic economy and a leader in his city (if not the ruler). Taming the irascible faculty is curbing anger and cultivating courage, which is marked by masculine zeal. The ethicists imagine the concupiscible faculty as possessed by women as well as men, because it is the faculty of corporeal functions. Because the ethicists think of women as distinguished from men on the basis of their biological functions, they thought of women almost exclusively in terms of their bodies, and not their minds. Thus, the virtue coming from the concupiscible faculty, continence, does not just contain feminine attributes, but is the main virtue that women can express. For men, balancing the concupiscible faculty involves expressing the right amount of desire for comforts such as food, clothing, and sexual intercourse. Too much expression of this faculty results in animalistic, and therefore unmanly acts, and too little leads to lethargy, which is also unmanly.

As a result of balancing the nafs, a man becomes a microcosm of the world. For
all three ethicists, this involves acting ethically in the world. For Tusi and Davani, this specifically means enacting justice either as a composite of the virtues or as a function of the faculty of wisdom. A man’s ethical acts with members of his household, his community and city, are a key means of achieving the goal of *saʿadat* (ultimate happiness) and *khilafat* (vicegerency) of God on earth. This identity of an ethical man that is tied to his broad social role is defined in terms of power, hierarchy of intellect and ethical comportment in the home, which I will discuss in the next chapter, and in homosocial structures of court, civic, and community life, which I discuss in Chapter four.
Chapter 3

Ethics of Marriage and the Domestic Economy

Love has very little to do with marriage. In the *akhlaq* texts, Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani caution men from becoming emotionally blinded by love for their wives, who are prone to causing pain and destruction, as they explain the ethical order of the domestic economy and men and women’s roles in marriage. The ethicists imagine men using their virtues acquired from *tahdhib-i akhlaq* to run the domestic economy like a state in which the husband is the governor and the wife is his deputy. The domestic economy, comprised of a married couple, their children, servants or slaves, and perhaps elderly parents, is a microcosm of the city or sovereignty in its form and administration.

In this chapter, I argue that the ethicists conceived of marriage as part of a domestic economy in which wives play instrumental roles in their husbands’ households; the household patriarchy reveals a serious metaphysical tension within the *akhlaq* texts. The metaphysical tension is characterized by the ethicists’ recognition of women’s *nafses* in conflict with first, their understanding that women are rationally deficient, and second, their understanding that women’s maternal functions dominate women’s essences. They believe that women and men are the same on a humanistic level. Just like men, women have *nafs* and are prone to humanistic impulses. However, women are unable to control the flaws of human nature, partly because their rational deficiencies are more intense than that of men, and partly because they are unaware of their own behavior. Accordingly, both beliefs, that women are rationally deficient and biologically limited,
are rooted in the view that women, in a broader chain of being, are less than men, the normative humans, but better than most animals. Simone de Beauvoir’s discussion of women’s immanence and men’s transcendence is relevant in relation to how the ethicists think of men as macro-scale custodians of the world and women as instruments working within their rule.¹ Further, Luce Irigaray’s philosophical critique of women’s bodies as containers, informs my understanding of the ethicists’ view of women’s maternal bodies as central to their instrumentality.²

According to the ethicists, behaving ethically does not come naturally to men, but unlike women, they have the natural capacity to do so. With regard to gender roles, what is ethical is the same as what is natural; the natural potential of the normative male *nafs* allows him to achieve the ultimate ends of happiness and vicegerency. Women’s lack of capacity to change their natures determines their ethical status and the ethics of relations with them. For example, because women do not possess the natural capacity for leadership as men do—even though men must cultivate leadership—the ethicists hold that by nature, men lead and women are led. Women are wayward, jealous, and unruly, but are indispensable if managed well.

The prominence of discussions on marriage in the ethics texts stems from the ethicists’ understanding of marriage as a key component to man’s potential ethical perfection. In his capacity as the primary ethical subject, a man partially dispenses his ethical duties by heading the domestic economy. Ghazali states that marriage is integral to the *rah-i din* and thus requires careful explanation so that it can be conducted ethically.³ He explains five benefits of marriage. First is the immense *savab* (spiritual reward)

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¹de Beauvoir, xxxv.
³Ghazali, 302.
that comes from procreation. He mentions that there are blessings in increasing God’s favorite creation and increasing the ummah of the Prophet. Providing for a wife and children is counted as a great act of charity and even better than committing oneself to a struggle for the sake of Islam. Further, children pray for one’s parents, long after one’s death. The second benefit is that it strengthens a man’s faith by providing a legal avenue for sexual intercourse. In other words, it is the means through which the quwwat-i shahwat is controlled. Thus, marriage is crucial to help balance a man’s nafs. Third is affection and comfort one feels in a woman. Although the main framework of marriage is management of the domestic economy, Ghazali (as well as Tusi and Davani) recognize that a man’s emotions are bound up in the marital relationship. As I discuss below, women can serve as either helpers or enemies because of their ability to inspire affection in a man. Fourth, is the instrumentality of the wife, who “gives leave” to the husband to pursue loftier goals. This was a benefit that Ghazali himself certainly realized, since his wife raise the children during his years away, even though he put his wife and family under the care of his brother, Ahmad Ghazali. The final incentive to marry according to Ghazali is that one’s faith is fortified while being married and there is a lot of savab for dealing with the antics of wives. Managing them strengthen’s one’s faith.

Tusi and Davani agree that one should marry in order to procreate. As discussed in the previous chapter, both recognize the human soul’s carnal appetite needs to be controlled and balanced by human virtues. However, they disagree as to whether this is a reason to get married. Davani holds that marriage protects the soul from the sin of

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4Ghazali, 302.
5Ghazali, 303.
6Ghazali, 305.
7Ghazali, 305-306.
8Ghazali, 306.
adultery. Tusi, on the other hand, states that apart from seeking children, the other reason to marry is the “protection of property,” which underscores the wife’s role as a deputy to her husband’s estate. Tusi is adamant that control of the carnal appetite should not be a reason to seek out a wife because prioritizes the numerous aspects of how to maintain a wife and ultimately make the most utilitarian use out of marriage. Of the three ethicists, he lays out the most detailed guidelines about daily management of the wife.

The sections on the domestic economy read like ethics manuals, or “how to” guides that advise men on criteria for choosing a wife who will remain instrumental in running her husband’s estate, how to live with her and manage her nafs, how to raise children, and also how to develop contingency plans in the event that the marriage is not working. Judith Butler’s conception of gender performance through scripts is a useful concept to understand how gender roles are created within marriage. The ethicists’ behavioral advice for specific stages in courtship, marriage, raising children, and divorce serve as performatory scripts for men to enact with their wives, thereby creating an ideal ethical masculinity. The ethicists also prescribe ideal feminine roles for women, but only indirectly by speaking to men about what behaviors they should expect from women. The descriptions of virtuous and wayward women serve as ethical and unethical scripts of femininity. By making men aware of the scripts they can anticipate women to perform, the ethicists imagine men executing their roles as leaders of the domestic economy by ensuring their wives conform to these ideals.

The hierarchy in marriage is rooted in the principles of governance required in run-

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9Davani, 188.
10Tusi, 215.
11Tusi, 215.
ning a state. In the ethical scheme of domestic order, only one leader of the household can reign. Men and women play their respective roles to maintain the overall happiness of the members of their household. In akhlaq, this means the marital relationship is based on a wife’s instrumentality and a man’s function to manage the wife in order to keep her occupied, happy, and therefore, productive. For Tusi and Davani, who model their treatises in large part after Greek ethics, this means following a system of economic administration in the management of the wife and household. Ghazali suggests to achieve this through displaying good behavior and comportment to the wife and establishing moderation in all aspects of life, including household expenditures and time spent in worship or entertainment. This is reflected in his title for all household-related ethics, “adab-i nikah.”13 However, as I demonstrate in the following sections, for all three ethicists, the notions of moderation (which carries over from balance as the key principle to actualize virtues from the nafs), and the husband’s proper administrative rule in maintaining the wife’s instrumentality (as a microcosm of state governance) define the ethical relationship between husband and wife.

The title of Tusi’s chapter on marriage, siyasat wa tadbir-i ahl, which is roughly translated as the politics and management of the wife and family, is particularly illustrative of the political and economic model used in creating the marital bond.14 In Persian, the word ahl means people, family, or kin. The ethicists also use the term with singular pronouns when discussing a woman, which means that the word can also mean wife. Davani’s equivalent section is simply entitled, siyasat-i ahl (governing the wife).15 Scholars of Persian philosophical texts have translated the term tadbir as it appears in chapter headings in works of falsafa and akhlaq as economics, recognizing

13Ghazali, 301.
14Tusi, 215.
15Davani, 178.
the similarity in content with Greek philosophical treatises. For example, GM Wickens translates Tusi’s *tadbir-i manzil* simply as economics. But household management is a more accurate translation, which also reveals more about male and female roles in marriage and is more conceptually related to *siyasat* (governance) which connects the husband’s marital rule to the model of sovereign rule by a governor or prince.

By an unexpected, but appropriate coincidence, use of the term economics to describe the household order harkens back to the early 20th century home economics curriculum. Home economics courses taught in United States middle schools and high schools covered interior design, cooking, cleaning, sewing, nutrition, child development and family planning. The notion that these are areas of economics shows how intimately connected the home, and therefore marriage, is to finances and management. The ethics of marriage is based upon an economic and political model, not just in terms of the allocation of funds, but also in terms of the patriarchal hierarchy in acts of household administration.

### 3.1 Ideal Husbands and Wives

The purpose of the institutions of marriage and the domestic economy is to provide men with the opportunity to execute ethical behavior that fulfills the ultimate goals of happiness and vicegerency of God. That means one must find an ethical wife who helps fulfill these goals. The ethicists’ discussions of ideal wives demonstrate their understandings of women’s roles and natures. Even though the ethicists did not have concepts of gender as an identity marker, they communicate understandings of appropriate gender roles as well as concepts of *muruwwah* (manhood) and natural character traits of women.

The ethicists’ discussions on marriage begin with the ethical criteria a man must
meet before marrying. Ghazali strongly emphasizes three prerequisites to marriage. The first is that a man must have a lawful means of earning a living before getting married unless he is on the verge of having illicit sex. Commenting on the corruption of the age in which he was living, he says people turn to unlawful or unethical ways to earn money or provide for their families. Second, he requires that men have a balanced nafs because families are full of inanities and one needs to have a good nature, kindness and patience to tolerate the amount of distress they cause. A man is not allowed to leave or abandon his family. Therefore, “whoever cannot control his own nafs, it is better that he does not take charge of someone else’s nafs.” Ghazali understood husbands as taking charge over their wives’ nafses. For Ghazali, a truly ethical man understood marriage as becoming responsible for someone else’s nafs. By recognizing women’s nafses, Ghazali recognizes women’s humanity, but also sets up a marital paradigm in which a husband is responsible for a woman’s most fundamental aspect, her selfhood. As I show in the next section on husbands’ duties, a man should ensure that his wife stays ethical, prays routinely, keeps the fast, and remains free from sin. She cannot be trusted to fulfill her own religious duties. A husband is in charge of ordering his wife’s nafs, thus a man’s own nafs must be sound. Finally, a man needs to have the strength and resolve his wife’s distractions from the remembrance of God. This echoes the virtue of courage and its qualities of high-mindedness and greatness of soul, that arise from controlling the quwwat-i ghazabi.

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16 Tusi and Davani do not have similar sections on ideal circumstances before marriage, but assume that one is ready to marry and has property.
18 Ghazali, 308.
19 Ghazali, 308.
20 Ghazali 308.
21 Ghazali, Volume 2, 7.
In discussing the ideal wife’s traits, the ethicists continue to discuss male

The wife’s personality is essential in determining the nature of the marital relationship and how the household will be run. Ghazali, Tusi and Davani are highly concerned with marriage to the right woman, rather than just any woman, since a wife is meant to play a key instrumental role in a man’s life, namely to bear his children, and take care of the home so as to “give leave” to the husband to pursue lofty goals.\(^\text{22}\) They all warn against the catastrophic combination of wealth and beauty that are unaccompanied with piety or intelligence.\(^\text{23}\)

Through a careful discussion of how the Syrian Christian scholar Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286) adapts Ghazali’s discussion of the ideal wife from the *Ihya* into his *Ethicon*, Lev Weitz argues that the image of the ideal wife in the *Ihya* is compelling for bolstering male piety the “general confessional milieu of the medieval Middle East.”\(^\text{24}\) He states that “wifely piety in al-Ghazalis text has more to do with facilitating mens pious obligations than with womens own devotional practices.”\(^\text{25}\) Each of the characteristics Ghazali outlines of the ideal wife ensure her instrumentality to her husband’s endeavors to live a pious life and the “proper ordering of household life.”\(^\text{26}\) The same is true in the *Kimiya* and Tusi and Davani’s ethics. Weitz applies Karen King’s analysis of cultural texts that are intended for men but feature women in order to think “with women.”\(^\text{27}\) Elizabeth Clark also discusses how Christian Propaganda Literature from the first three centuries of Christianity, featured women to “think with” them, or use them as examples of mentally deficient people to whom “the Christian message is both

\(^{22}\)Ghazali, 305-306.


\(^{24}\)Weitz, 204.


\(^{26}\)Weitz, 222.

\(^{27}\)Weitz, 221. King is analyzing men’s sexuality in Philo.
easily comprehended and reforming of morals.”28 Women likewise appear in the *akhlaq* texts to articulate ideas about men, which are, in this case, men’s dominance in marriage and the household order. However, as Weitz points out, even though such texts are for men, and ultimately about men, they also shape cultural expectations about women’s normative behavior, despite being “cultural fantasies.”29

Ghazali considers the virtue of being *parsa* (devout) as the foremost quality, since an “undevout woman will be treacherous with property, disturb the lordship of her husband, and perhaps betray him with her body.”30 The preservation of property, which Tusi lists as an equal incentive to marry as procreation, is just as important as fidelity for Ghazali.31 The next significant quality in a wife is *khulq-i niku* (good disposition), which ensures she will be obedient, grateful, and kind.32 Third is *jamal* (beauty) “for it is the foundation for affection” between husband and wife.33 He explains that it is a Sunnah to see the bride before the *nikah*.34 Yet, Ghazali acknowledges that beauty is not an essential quality. He quotes the Prophet as stating “‘You should want a woman for her faith, not her beauty.’ This means that you should not want her only for her beauty without faith; this does not mean that you should not look at her beauty.”35 Early on, Ghazali states that “it is known that if one marries a woman for wealth and beauty he will be deprived of both, but if he marries for her devoutness, the goal of

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29Weitz, 222.

30Ghazali, 311.

31Tusi, 215.

32Ghazali, 311.

33Ghazali, 311. More on this below.

34Ghazali, 311.

35Ghazali, 312.
wealth and beauty will be obtained by itself.” Here he doesn’t negate wealth and beauty as reasons to marry, but rather emphasizes that a woman of faith is also beautiful and wealthy. Both statements reveal a “known” tension between jāmal (beauty) and diyānat (faith) in a woman, which speaks to elements of societal superficiality and complexities of match making. Ghazali further states that marrying a woman just for the sake of having children, without regard to her beauty is an ascetic preference, similar to the ninth century scholar, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, who “chose a one-eyed sister over a beautiful one because she was more intelligent.” As a practical ethicist, Ghazali does not extol this example, but simply states it as another possibility for his ascetically inclined readers who perhaps may dismiss marriage for its worldly trappings, but might miss its many blessings. This one-eyed woman’s greater intelligence is also the only mention of the term ‘aqil (intelligent) in relation to women in the Kimiya, perhaps because, like diyānat, Ghazali saw it as antithetical to beauty, but even more rare. He does not list it as a quality one must look for in a wife as Tusi and Davani do.

Ghazali continues with the fourth quality being a woman who makes the kabin (marriage dower) lighter. Fifth is fertility. Ghazali quotes a hadith: “A straw mat in the corner of the house is better than a wife who does not give birth.” For Ghazali, a woman’s main utility comes from her child-bearing function, comparing a barren woman to a plain household item that one keeps in the house. Kathryn Kueny argues that the many rituals in pre-modern Muslim communities surrounding birth celebrated women’s maternity, but also served to “marginalize others whose anatomies are blamed for failing to produce offspring that are the ultimate adhesive to a communal life struc-

36 Ghazali, 311.
37 Ghazali, 312.
38 Ghazali, 312.
39 Ghazali, 312.
40 Ghazali, 312.
tured around paternal relations.” Women who did not participate in perpetuating patriarchy were considered a liability.

Sixth, Ghazali states that one should marry a virgin, “for she is closer in affection. She who has had a husband, it happens more often that her heart is occupied with him.” A prior husband would have already left an impression on a woman and she wouldn’t be open to her new husband’s concerns. Here, Ghazali does not consider that marriage to a previously married woman is charitable, or the Sunnah in which the Prophet married previously married women, particularly because he is concerned about how a wife can play an instrumental role in a man’s home by conforming to his needs. Seventh, a woman should be from a respectable family. Although this is ranked lower on his list of desirable qualities in a wife, it is still important because good breeding meant schooled “in faith and righteousness, for without this origin, she will not have adab [etiquette] and have an akhlaq napasandidah [unlikeable disposition], and she will pass that disposition onto the children.” As I discuss later, men are in charge of educating and instilling proper akhlaq in their wives and children, especially sons. However, Ghazali requires some base-level akhlaq training of wives, which means that girls in elite families did receive some instruction in akhlaq and that he believes in the mother as a child’s teacher, at least initially or partially. Finally, the eighth quality of an ideal wife is that she should not be too closely related by blood, both because a husband’s shahwat for her will be less and because children from such a marriage are considered “weaker.” A wife who has these qualities will be less of a burden on her husband.

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42 Ghazali, 312.

43 Ghazali, 312.

44 Ghazali, 312-313.
Tusi and Davani describe a similar but shorter list of criteria for a wife. For them, wealth and beauty are non-essential extras:

the best wife is a woman who has ‘aql [intelligence], diyanat [piety], ‘iffat [continence], fatnat [understanding], haya [modesty], riqqat-i dil [kindness of heart], tavaddud showing of love, is kutah-zaban [short of tongue], obedient to her husband, grants her husband liberal use of her nafs in his service, has preference for his happiness, vaqar [dignity] and haybat [gravity]; she should be beautiful to her own family, should not be barren, and with respect to the management of the household and budgeting, she should be knowledgeable and capable in watching expenditure. [...] And if other than these virtues she is adorned with a beautiful face, has [fine] lineage and wealth, it would be a combination of all kinds of qualities and there would be no better picture imagined than this. 45

From these attributes, we learn about Tusi and Davani’s conceptions of an ideal wife and can divide her characteristics into three categories. First, she has a continence that makes her affable. Here, the term ‘iffat (continence) is gendered as a feminine virtue. As I discuss in the last chapter, self-restraint is itself considered to be a feminine quality while men need to work hard to acquire self-restraint. She is kindhearted, short of tongue, and obedient, and prefers her husband’s happiness over her own. Related to her likability is her conduct, which should be one of vaqar (dignity), which I discuss in Chapter 2 as a masculine quality of having a tempered pace, as part of his ‘iffat. Additionally, a woman should have haybat (gravity), which is a term that Tusi and Davani use to describe how a husband and a king should conduct themselves in relation to his wife and subjects, respectively. Although Tusi and Davani do not explain what these terms mean for women in the context of the list of wifely virtues, they likely mean a woman should carry herself with maturity.

Second, she has particular abilities such as bearing children or skills such as budget management that make her useful to her husband. As quoted above, she “grants

45Tusi, 215-216. Davani, 188. Quoted here is my translation of Tusi’s passage. Davani has an identical list.
her husband liberal use of her nafs in his service."\footnote{Tusi, 215.}
A good wife happily surrenders charge of her nafs for her husband’s instrumental use. On bearing children, Tusi simply says that a good wife should not be barren and assumes that one of a wife’s major instrumental roles is to bear and raise a man’s children. Davani instructs his reader to ascertain whether a woman would be a potentially fertile woman by checking whether her female kin have had many children.\footnote{Davani, 188.}

In the genre of ethics, a wife’s role as instrumental to her husband’s home and estate is a key incentive for a man to marry. This role underscores the importance of the economic model in both running the household and within the marital relationship. Tusi and Davani require that a wife possess some measure of ‘aql (intelligence) and fatnat (understanding). It is key to note that for Tusi and Davani, and in Ghazali’s reference to Ibn Hanbal taking an ‘aqil wife, does not mean that she has hikmat (wisdom) that arises from the quwwati-i ‘ilm; rather it is a general intelligence and comprehension that goes along with competence for the “protection of property,” a major function of a wife.\footnote{Ghazali, 311. Tusi, 215.} As I discuss more below, one wifely duty is protecting a husband’s assets by watching his budget and helping him manage the home, servants, and possibly his lands. She should have enough intelligence to be her husband’s deputy in running the home, not for achieving transcendence, to use de Beauvoir’s term, or lofty goals like perfecting her nafs or becoming a microcosm of the world.

For Ghazali, although preservation of property remains an important principle in marriage,\footnote{Ghazali, 311} he is less preoccupied with a wife’s material instrumentality, and more with her spiritual instrumentality. He describes her domestic labor:

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\footnote{Tusi, 215.}
\footnote{Davani, 188.}
\footnote{Ghazali, 311. Tusi, 215.}
\footnote{Ghazali, 311}
[a] benefit is that the wife takes care of the house and completes the work of cooking, sweeping, and washing. For if a man becomes occupied with these, he will be kept from knowledge, work, and worship. For this reason, the wife is a friend on the path of faith. For this reason Abu Sulayman Darani has said, ‘A good wife is not from this world, she is of the hereafter. Meaning, she gives you leave so that you can attend to the work of the hereafter.’

The practical ethicists recognized that marriage facilitated the exchange of a wife’s reproductive labor for the ability to attend to a man’s more lofty goals. As we see in Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani’s paragraphs on girls’ education, female perfection lay with her instrumentality for her husband and not with refining her own virtues. Thus, in surrendering her \textit{nafs} over to his rule, she is fulfilling her purpose.

Finally, pride of her family, humility, and virginity come together as a single characteristic of obedience. An ideal wife has a sense of pride within her, such that her family loves her, but she is humble enough to serve and obey her husband. The ethicists’ preoccupation with virginity as an ideal characteristic is based on establishing her instrumentality and his ability to have an effect on her. The ethicists believed that obedience was a natural feminine character trait but could also be cultivated in a young, previously unmarried wife who could be shaped or molded to a husband’s tastes. Tusi and Davani say, “a virgin woman is preferred to a non-virgin, for she will accept customs and assimilate with the husband in character and habits and submit more closely and be obedient to him.” Ghazali agrees, “She should be a virgin for she will be closer in affection. Those who have had husbands, their hearts remained occupied with them.” Tusi and Davani employ a term that the Arab sages used, \textit{annanah}, for a previously married woman who compared that status of her previous husband with her

\footnotesize{
50 Ghazali, 305-306.
51 Tusi, 216. Davani, 188.
52 Ghazali, 312.
}
current husband and lamented the loss of the former.\textsuperscript{53} The Arab sages warn against marrying three kinds of women: the \textit{annanah}, woman who laments loss of former husband \textit{hannana}, re-married widow who gives money to the previous husband’s children from this husband, and \textit{mannanah}, “a rich woman who obliges her husband with her own wealth.”\textsuperscript{54} These sages also warned against the financial implications of marrying a previously married woman, a \textit{hannana}, whom they define as follows: “a grief-stricken widow is a woman who has children from another husband and shows kindness to them with the wealth of this [new] husband.”\textsuperscript{55} One would think that marrying widows with children would be a charitable, and therefore ethical act. However, for the ethicists, for whom an individual man’s potential to create domestic and societal happiness and be vicegerent of God’s will is what defines ethical acts, marrying a virgin meant one can affect change, mold a \textit{nafs} and create an ethical household from scratch. Additionally, Ghazali does mention virginity as a matter of having improved sexual relations; he quotes a hadith in which the Prophet asked a man why he didn’t marry a virgin “so that she would play with you and you with her?”\textsuperscript{56}

Applying these three categories of qualities, Tusi recommends a wife:

With her kindness, politeness, and happy disposition, should become the basis of friendship and comfort of sorrows, clearing away the griefs of the husband. [...]She should seek] closeness with kin, seeking help from relatives and disconcert enemies. She provides assistance and support in matters of living and guarding against from degradation in [social] associations and [provides] offspring.

From this, we can surmise that in the pre-modern Persian context, a wife was involved with her husband’s affairs, knew who his friends were, and spent some time with his

\textsuperscript{53}Tusi, 221 and Davani, 193. It is important to note that Ghazali also employs the same Arab saying about the \textit{hannana}, \textit{annanah}, and \textit{mannanah} in his text \textit{Ihya Ulum ad-Din} but not in the \textit{Kimiya}.

\textsuperscript{54}Tusi, 221. Davani, 193.

\textsuperscript{55}Tusi, 221. Davani, 193.

\textsuperscript{56}Ghazali, 312. I will discuss his guidelines for sexual ethics more below.
relatives. Although the ethicists prescribe seclusion, which I discuss below, they expected ideal wives to manage these social relationships.

Tusi and Davani then summarize a good wife is someone who is like a mother, a friend, and a kaniz (concubine). Tusi elaborates that a worthy wife is like a mother in that “she desires the husband’s proximity and presence, while hating his absence; and that she will bear the burden of her own suffering in the course of attaining his desire and satisfaction.” This is very similar to the description of the love a mother has for a child. Second, a wife should play the role of a friend in that she “should not grudge him (the use of) her own property, and she should conform to him in character.” This description of wife as friend shows the truly limited way in which wives could be friends with husbands. As I discuss in the next chapter, real friends, who are male peers, do not require one another to conform to their ideas. Finally, she must “play the part of a mistress [by] humbling herself in the manner of a concubine.” This not only means making herself sexually available, but also implies the relationship of ownership in marriage, in which a wife must fully succumb to her husband’s wishes because he owns her.

Taking these three recommendations together, we can conclude that the duty of a wife is to be submissive to her husband, yet affectionate. By contrast, Tusi and Davani explain that an unworthy wife can have any number of the following faults: she is despotic, loves idleness and sloth, uses foul language, makes false accusations, is heedless to his needs, brings on his anger, behaves like an enemy, complains about

57 Tusi, 219; Davani, 192.
58 Tusi, 220.
59 Tusi, 220.
60 Tusi, 220.
her husband's faults, disavows his benevolence, financially betrays him, places her own advantage over his, and inflicts distress on the male and female servants of the household. Tusi and Davani emphasize that these character deficiencies would offend a man’s prestige, holding wives responsible for husbands’ reputations. Ghazali warns, “an ill-mannered wife is ungrateful, sharp-tongued, will be deceitful with orders; enjoyment with her will make life miserable and destroy your faith.” The ethicists provide these lists in order to create a standard for a man’s vigilance during marriage.

3.2 Married, Now What? Ethical Conduct in Marriage

The ethicists are concerned with the individual’s comportment in marriage within the framework of ethical practices for maintaining the domestic sphere and managing a wife. Some of their prescriptions refer to being a good husband, which also means being a good father to the children and master to the servants and slaves, since all three functions are part of leading the domestic economy. For example, Ghazali recommends that one should not eat delicious foods alone, but rather share them with one’s wife and family. However, most prescriptions are simply about establishing the husband’s power-over his wife in order to promote the wife’s utility and proper conduct. To have an ethical relationship with one’s wife, a man is advised to behave in a certain way to create the conditions in which a wife fulfills her obligations. The ethicists call this having haybat and karamat or being awe-inspiring and showing benevolence.

The term haybat also implies being impressive or having gravity and sternness. Tusi and Davani elaborate:

Haybat is that he keeps himself awe-inspiring in the eyes of his wife so that

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62 Tusi, 220. Davani, 193 (Davani paraphrases from Tusi’s list, but contains most of these traits).

63 Ghazali, 311.
she does not consider his sayings, commands, and prohibitions permissible to ignore. This is the most important condition in ruling the wife, for if there is negligence on this condition, the path will be found for the wife to follow her own desire and wishes. She will not limit herself on this. In fact, she will bring the husband into her own obedience and make him the means to her own wishes, and she will obtain her own purposes by subjugation and service to her.  

The marital hierarchy was about organization, structure, and order of the household. Tusi advises that the very power dynamics of the marital relationship depends on his ability to perform *haybat*. A man must hold power over his wife for there to be order. He must effectively command respect to be able to rule over his wife and her default nature of going beyond the limits of the acceptable. Not only does Tusi assign command to the husband, but also assumes that women lack the self-awareness required to control their *nafses*. This is understandable given that the *quwwat-i ghazabi* prompts human *nafses* seek leadership; however, as I mentioned in the last chapter, the ethicists only conceive of men in control of the *quwwat-i ghazabi* and as possessing leadership; thus, they only accept men’s superiority in marriage.

Ghazali’s guidelines likewise preserve the husband’s *haybat*. In his section on the “etiquette of life with women from the beginning of marriage to the end,” he recommends that husbands should

joke with [wives], play, not be reserved, and approach them on their own mental level [...but] joke and play should not exceed a limit whereby a husband’s *haybat* declines. One should not aid them in [pursuing ]wrong desires; instead if he sees an act that is against his manhood or the lawful path, he should manage it. For if it comes to pass, then they will make fun of [their husbands].

He explains to men that women require careful rulership of balanced lenience and firmness under the assumption that they do not possess the maturity to control themselves.

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64Tusi, 216. Davani, 189. The passage I quote here is from Tusi; Davani’s identical passage ends at mentioning *haybat* as the most important condition in ruling a wife, which can be done by displaying the husband’s merits and hiding his flaws.
Instead, a woman has the power to carry out acts that diminish her husband’s manhood. He quotes the phrase from verse 4:34 to explain that this is unacceptable because “men have qiwama over women” and says “it should always be that the husband is dominant.”

Showing karamat, (benevolence), is also intended to maintain the husband’s status. Tusi and Davani explain, “karamat means one bestows the things on the wife which call for love and compassion, so that the absence of this state makes her apprehensive and she attends to matters of the household with beauty and accepts the order of the husband; the intended organization [of affairs] results.” In this shrewd piece of advice, Tusi and Davani recommend that a husband show or withhold love and compassion in order to oblige the wife. Ghazali holds that men should treat women well, with patience, but a husband’s good behavior does not mean he is not allowed to displease her. Husbands should “be patient with their [wives’] absurd speech and ungratefulness.”

The key is to keep the wife in line with kindness. Love and compassion for a wife are present in the texts, but they are tools, rather than feelings, in order to preserve the ethical order of marriage, the husband’s rulership over the wife. An important omission in the chapters on marriage is a full explanation of what love for a wife means, while all three ethicists, especially Davani, expand at great length as to what love for a (male) friend signifies.

Tusi and Davani recommend a man of good ethics should take the following six actions towards his wife: keep her appearance fair, veil and seclude her from strangers, consult with her in the early stages of a decision so long as she does not expect her husband to obey her, give her a “free hand” in deciding the financial budget and ex-

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65Ghazali, 315.
66Tusi, 216. Davani, 189.
67Ghazali, 314.
penditures of the household and provisions for each member, establish close ties with her relatives and family as a gesture of mutual support and cooperation, and finally if she has integrity and propriety, a man should not take other wives because inciting women’s natural jealousy and vindictiveness against the husband or the other woman can lead to disaster.\textsuperscript{68} Thus, under the assumption, and likely the observation that taking a second wife incites jealousy among wives, a second marriage would destroy the order of the household, the very opposite of a man’s domestic duty.

In an ethical interpretation of the Qur’anic permission to marry up to four women, Davani elaborates that, other than kings, who marry multiple wives to ensure many heirs, men should not take plural wives.\textsuperscript{69} He rationalizes this prohibition out of his understanding of both a man’s role in the household and a woman’s nature and her natural response to having a co-wife. First he says, “For [kings] also it is primarily objectionable, because the man relates to home as a heart relates to the body, and that one heart is not able to be the source of life to two bodies, so one man cannot manage two homes.”\textsuperscript{70} Just as there cannot be two leaders of one household, the inverse, that there cannot be two households run by one leader, is true as well. The idea of the man as the heart of the household places him in a position analogous to governor ruling a city, the central source for provisions that are distributed within the household by the deputy wife.

Secondly, he also based limiting of marriage to one woman on the understanding of women’s penchant for jealousy and vengeance. To explain this, Davani interrupts his chapter on marriage to include a story of al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf’s chamberlain and

\textsuperscript{68}Tusi, 217. Davani, 190.
\textsuperscript{69}Davani, 189-190.
\textsuperscript{70}Davani, 190.
his wife. Hajjaj told his chamberlain never to reveal his secrets to his wife. The chamberlain responded by saying that he trusts his very wise and affectionate wife to the fullest since she had always kept his secrets when he had tested her. After vowing to prove to his chamberlain that he is not wise to trust his wife, Hajjaj told him to take a purse of a thousand gold coins bearing the treasury’s seal to his home and tell his wife that he had stolen it for her. After some time, Hajjaj gifted a female slave to his chamberlain. His wife asked him to sell the slave, but the chamberlain refused upon the orders of Hajjaj by saying that he was not allowed to sell a gift given to him. Shortly after the chamberlain’s wife appeared at Hajjaj’s palace with the purse of gold coins, confessing her husband’s crime so that Hajjaj could punish him. Hajjaj then summoned his chamberlain to say that if he had not set up the whole experiment, he would have had him beheaded and his body trampled by horses for the theft. Davani not only proves to his readers with this story that wives cannot be trusted with their husbands’ secrets, but they also suffer from both jealousy and vengeance. The chamberlain’s wife was so jealous of the female slave that had entered her household that she exacted revenge by attempting to get him sentenced to death. Thus, while it is legal to have a concubines, and up to four wives, Davani suggests it is unwise. Additionally, in a circuitous way, by dissuading his readers from taking concubines and more wives, he is asking his readers to consider their wives’ feelings.

From this story, it also follows that men could attempt to keep their wives a certain way, but they could not control them. Legally, a husband has the right to control the wife’s mobility, particularly because a wife has to remain sexually available to her husband. However, ethically, even if sexual intercourse remains the foundational basis of their contract, the reason to seclude one’s wife has more to do with preserving the

\[71\] Davani, 190-191.
\[72\] Davani, 191.
wife’s time and attention for management of the home and preventing her from running
amok. Ghazali attempts to qualify the Prophet’s permission of women to appear in
public by quoting Umar, who says the Prophet allowed women to go in public when
they used to veil themselves properly but he would not have allowed it, had he seen
women’s ways today. He states that “there is greater harm to women at public sites
and gatherings.”73

For Tusi, the wife’s appearance in public is intimately connected with the husband’s
masculinity:

She will become busy with going out, and beautifying [herself] for the pur-
pose of excursions and visiting sites and seeing strange men, until both the
matters of the home will be neglected and the husband will not be respected
or appear awesome in her eyes. In fact, when she sees other men she will
count him as contemptible and small and will emboldened to take steps to-
wards hideous acts, and will also excite admirers to desire her, until at the
end there will be negligence of daily life, loss of manhood, and acquisition
of perdition and misery in both worlds.74

Tusi uses these ethical precepts to strengthen the reader’s masculinity. The loss of
manhood would result when a wife mingles with other men, loses awe and respect for
her husband, destroys or neglects the home, and causes abomination in both worlds.
Here, Tusi attempts to connect ethical and spiritual responsibilities. The sinfulness
of neglecting the house implies that seclusion is not just a worldly virtue or ethic
to follow, but laxity in excluding one’s wife has consequences in terms of deeds and
misdeeds calculated in the afterlife.

Tusi also describes how married men were not to act in “ruling a wife:” guard
against showing excessive love, which will cause her to expect dominance over her
husband, a grave corruption; never “consult the wife on affairs of universal importance,
and certainly do not inform her of your secrets” including information about the one’s

73Ghazali, 317.

74Tusi, 218.
property and capital; and finally, restrain the wife from foolish pastimes such as people-watching or listening to stories and gossip about men and their activities.\textsuperscript{75} Tusi is concerned with the ethics of ruling over the wife such that the husband maintains her instrumental role, preserving organization of daily life and reinforcing his status as the head of household.

Tusi elaborates on what it means to constantly keep the wife’s mind occupied:

> taking responsibility of the important matters of the household and overseeing its interests and attending to that which requires organization of daily life, for the human soul does not have patience for idleness and to be at leisure from necessary matters draws attention to unnecessary matters. Thus, if the wife is free from management of the house and educating children and seeking the welfare of servants, she will confine her efforts on things which call for damage to the home.\textsuperscript{76}

The husband’s behavior towards his wife should be specifically geared toward preserving her instrumental role in the household. Since these are ethical precepts, one may read them as suggestions on how to keep a wife happy; however, the focus of these recommendations, including keeping her appearance fair and befriending her relatives, is for the sake of keeping the peace at home, providing the wife with enough but not excessive distraction and, keeping a wife useful and as a productive accessory to a husband’s financial and domestic affairs. Like Ghazali, Tusi states that women have the same kind of human soul as men; however, the potentially idle souls of women are to be kept busy with the affairs of running the home, rather than occupied with the ethical exercises of perfecting virtues of wisdom, justice, temperance, and courage. The perfection of these virtues are the exclusive provenance of rational, male souls.

\textsuperscript{75}Tusi, 219.

\textsuperscript{76}Tusi, 218.
3.2.1 Marriage and Sexual Ethics

Sexual ethics in the *akhlaq* texts are consistent with the broader marital arrangement in which men control their wives’ *nafses*. As discussed in the last chapter, the ethicists account for human sexual desire through the *quwwat-i shahwi*, (concupiscent power). Another way that marriage serves as an instrument for husbands is by providing a licit mechanism to have sexual relations. However, an indicator of how low in importance Ghazali ranked sexual relations in an ethical marriage is that he lists guidelines about intercourse tenth in a series of twelve rules of married life. The reason for this is that although intercourse to be a natural and necessary component of life, it needs to be curbed as part of the larger discipline of balancing the *nafs*.

The notion of sexual needs comes from the animalistic faculty of the soul, the *quwwati-i shahwi*, that is responsible for sexual desire and other natural impulses. All three ethicists explicitly say that it is not preferable for one to marry for the purpose of fulfilling sexual desires unless one is on the verge of having illicit sex, because an impulsive marriage would lead to a bad match. Tusi and Davani explain that *shahwat* is one of the three important facilities of the human soul but comes with responsibilities. *Shahwat* must be put into perfect balance in order to amplify one’s predilection for virtuous behaviors.\(^\text{77}\) The virtues that arise with the control of *shahwat* are ‘iffat (continence) and sakha’ (liberality); a man controls sexual appetite in order to open his mind to enhancing virtuous behaviors. The ethicists propose that one keep good company, and befriend people who are not corrupt or lewd. Tusi says,

> It is imperative to take caution against lending an ear to their reports, stories, listening to their news, profanity, recitation of their poetry, superficiality, attending their parties and gatherings, especially when the quest of the soul and the inclination of nature is alloyed with this. For from attending one gathering or from listening to one quip or from reciting one

\(^{77}\text{The other two faculties are the } quwwat-i ‘ilm (rational) and } quwwat-i ghazabi (irascible).
line of poetry in an amorous way, so much filth and impurity joins the soul that purifying one’s self from it takes but many long days and difficult treatments.  

If a man allows himself to be entertained by lasciviousness, his sexual appetite will increase to excess, egged on by his innate natural disposition or needs. The ethicists also recommend fasting in order to curb sexual desire but one must never eliminate shahwat altogether because its deficiency is accompanied by sloth, laziness, and a lack of desire to have children.

The ethicists prescribe normative sexual partners to be a husband and a wife. They discouraged co-wives and concubines. Although many important pre-modern legal texts discuss the legal guidelines of sexual relations with female slaves, akhlaq texts do not do so in their sections on the ethics of keeping slaves and domestic servants. Ghazali assumes that intercourse takes place within the confines of marriage, even though clearly, Ghazali knows that sexual relations were also legal between male masters and their concubines and that children born to concubines are legitimate. In the Kimiya, he discusses marriage as the only avenue for licit sexual relations and producing children, and also assumes that a man only has one wife. As mentioned above, Davani explicitly states that it is only ethical for kings to have multiple wives, and even they should not: “For [kings] also it is primarily objectionable, because the man relates to home as a heart relates to the body, and that one heart is not able to be the source of life to two bodies, so one man cannot manage two homes.” All three ethicists discourage excessive engagement in sexual activity and only discuss it in relation to one’s wife. Tusi says that when the soul’s natural power of shahwat is exercised to excess or depraved,

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78 Tusi, 155.
79 Ghazali, 302-303.
80 Davani, 190.
one has a desire for inappropriate sexual partners such as children or strange women.\textsuperscript{81} Thus, the ethicists tacitly disapprove of men having multiple sexual partners. It is too distracting from the discipline oftahdhib-i akhlaq and causes too much domestic chaos stemming from wives’ jealousy.

Tusi mentions that marrying a free woman is better than marrying an enslaved one.\textsuperscript{82} Davani adds that marrying a free woman over an enslaved one will ward off social enemies and taint from one’s children.\textsuperscript{83} A man would not be able to provide the most bright future for his sons, if their mother were a slave. Discouraging men from marrying slaves and omitting a discussion on sexual relations with female slaves in ethics texts, along with a discussion of the ethics of keeping slaves as domestic servants otherwise, suggests that the ethicists frowned upon sex with female slaves. They would have disliked it on the grounds of producing children with stigma as well as on account of the wife’s jealousy.

Kecia Ali has shown that traditional Muslim sources have gendered ideas about sexual needs.\textsuperscript{84} She points out the contradiction in the prevailing attitude that women have uncontrollable desire but men have greater sexual rights in marriage. The wife only has a right to intercourse once, to consummate the marriage, but after that it is her duty to fulfill her husband’s desires. The same model of “gender differentiated rights and duties” exists in the ethics texts as well.\textsuperscript{85} However, in ethics, sexual desire is treated as a part of marriage, not as central, mostly because in the texts an ethical man controls sexual desire and the purpose and the benefits of marriage go far beyond

\begin{enumerate}
\item Tusi, 149. Tusi goes on to say that if one’s shahwat is too sluggish, then one has not motivated to have any children.
\item Tusi, 215.
\item Davani, 188.
\item Ali, 13
\end{enumerate}
sexual enjoyment. Biological needs, rights, and ethical duties are the three main concepts that the ethicists use to discuss sex. Both spouses have them but the role each is supposed to play in the sexual relationship is gendered and based in part on biological assumptions of feminine and masculine nature.

As I discussed in the last chapter, women’s *nafses* are marked by a prominence of the *quwwati-i shahwhi*. As such their main virtues stem from control of this facility. A husband facilitates this partly by keeping her mind consumed with the household surroundings and husband’s needs, but also through control of her sexuality. A husband should undertake great endeavors to keep his wife in *satr va hijab* (curtain and veil) from *ghayr mahram* or *na mahram* (non-kinsmen) in order to shield her from people who would instigate temptation in her and vice versa. A man should prevent his wife from meeting male strangers, carrying on with strange men through window peepholes or rooftops, attending superfluous social gatherings, and even prevent her from talking to older women who no longer veil and retell stories about the local social scene because of potential offenses such an exchange would cause.

However, Ghazali warns his readers not to become too overzealous in veiling and secluding one’s wife or trying to find out too much about her personal secrets. He cites a story of men who returned early from a journey on which they were accompanying the Prophet. The Prophet had advised the men not to return until morning when their wives expected them. Two men disobeyed, only to find their wives engaged in some illegal activities. Ghazali interprets the prophet’s prohibition from returning home early by explaining that a man’s responsibility is to seclude his wife is a duty

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86 This is accompanied by a deficiency in *quwwat-i ‘ilm* and *quwwati-i ghazabi*.
87 *Tusi*, 217. Davani, 189.
88 Ghazali, 316.
89 Ghazali, 316-317.
to society to protect her and prevent *afat* (social chaos), but not to prevent her from committing adultery or other sins that are between her and God.\(^{90}\) In this context, the term *afat* (social chaos) refers to the upheaval caused by women’s sexual desire.

In the cultural milieu of the ethicists, possessing a certain amount of *ghayrat* was an important marker of masculinity and proper male behavior. The term *bi-ghayrat*, an adjective that literally means without *ghayrat* is a pejorative term and also an insult that means shameless man without any self-respect, implying that a man’s dignity is inextricably tied to his wife’s conduct, physicality, and seclusion. Yet Ghazali quotes Ali Abu Talib as saying “carry *ghayrat* for women to an extent, because men will know about it and knowing it will become the basis of insulting them.”\(^{91}\) As I mentioned in the last chapter, the ethicists use *ghayrat* to curb the *quwwati-i ghazabi*, giving rise to the virtue of courage, which is marked by *ghayrat* as masculine zeal, not manly pride over women. Here, Ghazali is also deemphasizing the sexual jealousy as the definition of *ghayrat*, since having too much *ghayrat* is dishonorable.

Ghazali’s specific guidelines for sexual relations turns the husband’s *right* to sex on its head and by addressing a husband’s *duties* during intercourse. Applying this perspective is androcentric but shows sensitivity to women, as Ghazali notes “it is known that women are made of weakness.”\(^{92}\) However, this approach reifies the power relationship between husband and wife, giving men measured and guided control over sexual relations. Quoting the Prophet, Ghazali counsels his reader not to “fall on a woman like a beast.”\(^{93}\) The remainder of his guidelines are also supported through hadiths that reveal that sex is part of a broader cosmology of God’s creation and reproduction.

\(^{90}\)Ghazali, 316.  
\(^{91}\)Ghazali, 317.  
\(^{92}\)Ghazali, 314.  
\(^{93}\)Ghazali, 319.
Foreplay is required and one must begin and end with thinking about the *bismillah*, *takbir*, and verse 25:54, which is about creation of man from water and his kindred by blood and marriage. One should also ask for protection from satan, in case a child is conceived. He explicitly states that a man must be patient so that his wife can climax, an important recognition of women’s sexual needs. He quotes a hadith in which the Prophet stated “a man is afflicted with three infirmities: the first is that he sees someone he likes but does not remember his name, next is that a brother does a good thing for him and he rejects it, and next is that one engages in intercourse before kisses and caresses and when one has obtained his need, he does not wait until his wife also obtains her need.” One should avoid intercourse during the first and last days of the month, during the full moon, and wife’s menses. Also based on a hadith, Ghazali says that ‘*azl* or *coitus interruptus* is acceptable in order to avoid conception.

Sa’diyya Shaikh has interpreted Ghazali’s guidelines as support for women’s right to sexual fulfillment and the right to use contraception. Kecia Ali points out that legally speaking, the recognition of women’s sexual needs and Ghazali’s recommendation of allowing one’s wife to climax is a moot point since most jurists agreed that women did not have a “right” to sexual intercourse as their husbands did. Husbands could deny wives sexual pleasure by denying them sex altogether. From an *akhlaq* point of view, Ghazali’s guidelines for a man to engage in foreplay and to be patient until the wife reaches orgasm, serves the basis of ethical sexual relations. As with all ethics discourses, Ghazali’s guidelines for sexual relations, framed as duties of the husband, attempt to

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94 Ghazali, 320.

95 Ghazali, 320.


raise the demands of what is proper male behavior in the name of Islam, even if there is no legal basis for it. However, sexual ethics in the akhlaq texts are framed within the broader marital hierarchy in which a husband controls his wife’s nafs, including her impulses of shawat.

3.2.2 Money and Marriage

Money and property are key elements of an ethical marriage, since one of the main purposes of marrying is the “protection of property.” The ethicists see money as a potential source of tension between husband and wife, so they discuss its management in some detail in order to explain what rules men should establish for wives with respect to money. Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani create financial ethics that are sensitive to women’s needs, as well as their legal rights, maintain a husband’s position as the leader and financial maintainer of the household and all those living in it.

According to the law, a woman has a claim on the wealth of her husband in the form of nafaqah or maintenance as a result of the “marital bargain, due in exchange for making herself available to him (tamkin).” Putting aside the contours of this contractual relationship, the ethical treatises recognize that there are all sorts of financial situations between husband and wife. This recognition reflects the division of wealth in property in pre-modern Muslim societies. Yossef Rapoport writes that in Mamluk Cairo, Damascus, and Jerusalem, during a period that overlaps with dates of authorship of the treatises in this study, it was common for parents to spend copiously for a daughter to bring a sizable dowry and trousseau to her marriages, depending on her social class.

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98 Ali, 65.

Items given to her would legally belong only to her but would be for household use, such as furniture, luxury utensils, cookware, cushions, bedding, and textiles. In elite families, parents would also give their daughters jewelry, silver, and on occasion cash, land, and domestic servants. The ethicists’ guidelines on money in marriage reflect the reality that women could be independently wealthy, could be wealthier than their husbands, or have family members financially involved with their husbands.

The ethicists admit that a woman’s independent wealth was an attractive quality in a wife.\textsuperscript{100} Marriages in the pre-modern period were certainly contracted on the basis of a wife’s worth, even though a husband was still legally responsible for her financial maintenance. He could perhaps expect to benefit from her wealth, though Tusi advises that one should not marry solely on the basis of wealth. By itself, this noble sentiment demonstrates self-control over the vice of greed. However, Tusi follows this advice with the reasoning that the wife’s money and property will cause her to desire domination and authority and to think of her husband as subservient. He says,

\begin{quote}
    a woman’s wealth should not become the reason for desiring [her], for women’s wealth calls for their search for authority, despotism, search for service, and self-exaltation. So [even] when the husband controls the wife’s wealth, his wife considers his station as a servant and assistant, not giving him honor and respect. Unrestrained chaos is inevitable until corruption of affairs of the household and life takes place.\textsuperscript{101}
\end{quote}

Although greed is a problematic vice that stems from an excessive expression of the quwwat-i shahwi, in this piece of advice, greed is not under ethical scrutiny. Rather, Tusi is interested in maintaining the marital hierarchy of the husband’s domination as the ethical status quo. They subordinate concern for ethical formation of the male nafs to the need for marital hierarchy. For this reason, Davani and Tusi advise that one should not marry a mannanah, “a rich woman who obliges her husband with her own

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{100}{Ghazali, 311. Tusi, 216-217 and Davani 188-189.}
\footnotetext{101}{Tusi, 216-217.}
\end{footnotes}
wealth.”\textsuperscript{102}

Related to wealth is lineage, which also can cause upset in the marital hierarchy. Davani warns that:

As lineage is the basis of pride, and since women are known to be at a deficiency of mind, for this reason, they reject following their husbands. In fact there are times that they see their husbands in the place of servants, they break the order reverse the status quo, and cause loss of money. Wealth and beauty are similar disasters.\textsuperscript{103}

Tusi and Davani simply advise: do not to marry a woman particularly for her rank or money, and you will not have the problem of her making a servant of you. Proper order in the marriage involves the husband governing the wife, which is not possible if a wife is of higher financial and social rank because a woman, with her rational deficiency will not understand why she must serve her husband.

From the recommendations given to men in the texts about how to manage their household expenses, it seems that wives had significant access to their husbands’ money. In fact, as I mention above, Tusi and Davani recommend one find a wife who has knowledge about budgeting as she would be most useful to one’s estate and fulfill one of her main wifely obligations, the protection of property. Tusi’s very definition of a salih or proper and good wife, “is a man’s partner in property, his co-parcener in housekeeping and management of the household, and his deputy in his absence.”\textsuperscript{104} A wife is responsible for running a husband’s estate in his absence and functions as a vizier to her husband’s sultanate. For Tusi and Davani, it is key that the husband give his wife a “a free hand in controlling the provisions of the household and hiring servants for important matters.”\textsuperscript{105} This can mean delegating tasks to the wife such as budget

\textsuperscript{102}Tusi, 231. Davani, 193.
\textsuperscript{103}Davani 188-189.
\textsuperscript{104}Tusi, 215.
\textsuperscript{105}Tusi, 216. Davani, 190.
decisions, household expenses, and hiring and firing servants. Yet, the husband should still oversee her bookkeeping, as a bad wife is fraudulent with a husband’s wealth or asks for money without need.\textsuperscript{106} Taking a more spiritual approach, Ghazali likewise warns against being tightfisted with one’s wife and family, reminding the readers that the Prophet stated that spending on one’s family is better than spending on defending the faith, freeing a slave, or charity.\textsuperscript{107} All three recommend discretion in spending, while Tusi and Davani prescribe secrecy about the husband’s total net worth, lest the wife use that information against him.\textsuperscript{108}

According to Rapoport, it was common for urban women, including few from elite and scholarly families, in pre-modern Muslim societies to earn wages for spinning textiles and sewing.\textsuperscript{109} In addition to any independent wealth from a dowry, these wages probably allowed women to have a modest income at their own disposal, outside of the husband’s financial support. Rapport reports that many women participated in a “women’s economy” in professions servicing women such as midwives, hairdressers, matchmakers, bath and hospital attendants, and wet nurses.\textsuperscript{110} He argues that it also created a dynamic between husband and wife that threatened the patriarchal ideal of the Muslim household, in which women were transacting outside the home. Because the wife, children, servants, and slaves all constitute the \textit{ahl} (people) of the home, they serve as “one indivisible economic unit.”\textsuperscript{111} This means that just as servants and slaves do not earn wages, wives do not “earn” money from their husbands. They are given provisions and sums by the husband, who is the leader of the home. Rapoport cites

\textsuperscript{106} Tusi 225.
\textsuperscript{107} Ghazali, 318.
\textsuperscript{108} Tusi 218. Davani 190.
\textsuperscript{109} Rapoport, 32.
\textsuperscript{110} Rapoport, 33.
\textsuperscript{111} Rapport, 52.
Hanbali scholar, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, “equated the support of wives with the support of slaves” on the basis that “absence of wages [for household services] shields the supposed mutual loyalty and love between a master and his slave from the disharmonious market economy. The same should hold true, ideally, for the relations between husband and wife.”

Though Rapoport is discussing the effect that a wife’s contact with the external world would have on the marital relationship, we can extrapolate that financial transactions and money lending within the marital relationship probably also strained it. The ethicists do not discuss money lending between wives and husbands directly. However, Tusi does mention that the exchange of money should take place on friendly terms: “A wife is like a friend in that [...she is] content with whatever the husband gives her and forgives whatever the husband keeps from her and does not give her and does not refuse [him] her own wealth.” Tusi makes it clear to his readers that it is ethical to take money from their wives; an ethical wife would not refuse. They support wives lending money and giving control of their land as ethical for women even though women were not legally required to share their wealth, and even though men ought not to marry richer women than themselves in order to maintain power.

3.3 When and How to Divorce

In *akhlaq* divorce is ethical if life with a woman completely subverts the patriarchal order of the household or violates a man’s duty to be the force of ethical change, as a result of his ordering his *nafs*. Here Simone de Beauvoir’s discussion of immanence

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112Rapoport, 52.
113Tusi, 225.
114Tusi, 216-217.
sheds light on analyzing how a wife can become an evil that must be quitted at once.

She states:

Every subject plays his part as such specifically through exploits or projects that serve as a mode of transcendence; he achieves liberty only through a continual reaching out towards other liberties. There is no justification for present existence other than its expansion into an indefinitely open future. Every time transcendence falls back into immanence, stagnation, there is a degradation of existence into the ‘en-soi’—the brutish life of subjection to given conditions - and of liberty into constraint and contingence. This downfall represents a moral fault if the subject consents to it; if it is inflicted upon him, it spells frustration and oppression. In both cases it is an absolute evil. Every individual concerned to justify his existence feels that his existence involves an undefined need to transcend himself, to engage in freely chosen projects.\(^{115}\)

So when women refuse their role as immanent and attempt at transcendence, they impinge on men’s transcendence and thus become evil to their overall enterprise. As stated above, the ethicists saw problems in wives attempting to dominate their husbands if they were excessively beautiful or wealthy. Tusi says, “For someone who is infatuated with an unworthy woman, advice for him is to seek liberation from her, for being close to a bad woman is worse than being close to wild beasts and snakes.”\(^ {116}\)

The term liberation is key here since the ethicists view being married to a bad woman as a reversal of the power dynamic in which the husband feels enslaved, while it should be the wife who is in service to her husband.

Although it is statistically unknown how prevalent divorce was in pre-modern Muslim societies, legal records of divorce cases from Andalusian, Mamluk, and Ottoman periods indicate that it was both common and normal for both men and women to initiate divorce, with much less stigma attached to it than in modern periods.\(^ {117}\)

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\(^{115}\) de Beauvoir, 27.

\(^{116}\) Tusi, 220.

the eyes of the ethicists, divorce was permissible and at times advisable. However, for the ethicists, it also raised several moral and ethical concerns with regard to the treatment of women. Rapoport confirms that “The prevailing cultural assumption in Mamluk society, at least until the end of the fifteenth century, was that divorce was a disaster for women,” even though it was frequent and women’s income, especially in spinning and sewing, allowed many women to remain single for long periods of time between marriages.118 The ethicists do not discuss this attitude in detail but outline their guidelines in divorce centered on this idea that divorce caused hardship on women.

As mentioned above, the texts compare the relationship dynamic between husband and wife to slavery. As Kecia Ali has shown, the connection between marriage and slavery is frequently found in early Islamic jurisprudence with a husband’s legal status analogous to a slave owner and the wife’s status as analogous to a slave.119 Pursuant to the legal analogies, in ethics, the hierarchical relationship is one of master and underling in a domestic economy. The husband is to remain dominant and the wife should be in his service. Ghazali states, “the rights of the man over the woman are greater, because she is really the man’s bandah.”120 The term bandah literally means someone who is bound or in bondage such as a servant or slave. Ghazali is referring to the metaphorical relationship between husband and wife in the nikah. Tusi and Davani likewise affirm this analogy when they quote an Arab saying that, in addition to being like a mother and friend who want a husband’s welfare and unconditional love, a woman as a kanizak (concubine) “should degrade herself in the manner of a parastar [slave], pledge her service and endure his anger.”121 As I discuss below, a reversal in this dynamic is grounds

118Rapoport 69 and 113. Tucker, 104-111. Tucker outlines the ways in which courts provided women with recourse but how the divorce jurisprudence itself favors men.


120Ghazali, 322.

121Tusi, 220. Davani, 192.
for divorce, especially if the husband feels enslaved by her actions.

After outlining what one must look for in a suitable wife, Ghazali warns his readers to be very cautious with the selection; he quotes a hadith in which the Prophet said, “marriage is slavery; be careful about to whom you give your own child as a slave.”\(^\text{122}\) Remembering that he is speaking to men in citing this hadith, Ghazali briefly upsets the wife-as-slave analogy by reminding his male audience that the Prophet said marriage, even for men, is like slavery. For Ghazali, this means two things. First, legally contracting marriage is similar to commercial transactions involving humans. Second, and more relevant to his discussion on marriage in the \textit{Kimiya}, men should not feel enslaved and stuck with bad wives. The ethicists all subscribe to the idea that one must take steps to improve the situation before considering divorce, but do not hesitate to lay out a plan for men to go about divorcing bad wives who enslave them.

Tusi describes the traits and actions of a bad wife:

\begin{quote}
An unworthy wife is similar to a tyrant in that she likes laziness and idleness, uses abominable speech, and has a lot of anger; she is inconsiderate of that which brings about her husband’s satisfaction or anger, and gives a lot of pain to the servants. She is similar to an enemy in that she considers the husband as contemptible, holds him in low esteem, shows bad manners, disavows his favors, has rancor for him, complains and recites his faults. She resembles a thief in that she defrauds him with respect to wealth, asks [for money] without need, and deprecates his kindness; she is incessant in doing that which he hates, she shows insincere friendship, and she prefers her own benefit over his.\(^\text{123}\)
\end{quote}

There are only a few things one can do with a wife like this. If a wife disobeys her husband’s commands, then Ghazali recommends a four step approach to disciplining her, based on his interpretation of verse 4:34. First “request her obedience with kindness and friendliness; if she does not obey, separate the bedclothes and put your back to

\(^{122}\text{Ghazali, 313.}\)

\(^{123}\text{Tusi, 220.}\)
The Qur’anic term for disobedience in 4:34 is *nushuz*. Kecia Ali explains that jurists generally defined a wife’s *nushuz* in four ways: “sexual refusal; departure from the conjugal home without permission; disobedience or disrespectfulness more generally; and, in a minority view, a wife’s non-performance of her religious duties.”

Ghazali does not use the term *nushuz* in the *Kimiya*. Instead, he explains one can take the 4-step approach to correcting a wife if she negates her husband’s decrees by *doing* “*nafarmani*” (disobedience) and does not *have* “*ta’at-i shuhar*” (obedience to the husband), in the sense that she possesses a rebellious disposition inherent to her character. Ghazali explains the wife’s offenses using a series of Persian terms, which may be his way of defining a Qur’anic/legal concept for his lay, Persian speaking audience, or a way to skirt around what actually constitutes outright wifely disobedience. I argue that since the genre’s focus is on an individual’s *khulq* and how a man should interact with others, given their dispositions, Ghazali’s is applying a principle similar to the third jurisprudential definition of *nushuz* that Ali outlines, general disobedience, without actually using the term *nushuz*. For Ghazali, the prerequisite for correcting the wife is her disobedient nature, as opposed to isolated disobedient acts she may commit such as sexual refusal or departure from the home. Ghazali’s understanding of a wife’s *nushuz* as having a disobedient character may explain is further departure from jurisprudence which is concerned with suspension of a wife’s *nafaqah* (financial maintenance) if she is disobedient.

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124 Ghazali, 319.
126 Ghazali, 319.
In the event that a wife is deficient in performing religious obligations such as prayer or fasting, Ghazali instructs his reader to separate from his wife for up to a month, following the Prophet’s example of doing so when he was angry with his wives over some petty disputes they were having. Why Ghazali opts for the more peaceful guidelines only in matters of religious adherence, while recommending the 4-step approach in all other matters of disobedience, has to do with Qur’anic verses superseding other sources of ethics. This included the Prophet’s own example of how he dealt with his wives’ bad behaviors, even though the Prophet is the ultimate interpreter of the Qur’an. Also, as Ayesha Chaudhry shows that Ghazali reads the verse as incremental steps to take against a rebellious wife with striking her as a last resort, because hitting her would not be to her benefit, but rather for his benefit.128 In the Kimiya Sa’adat, Ghazali prefers abandoning the wife for up to a month following the Prophetic example. Once a man has already decided to divorce, he must do so ethically.

There are a few types of juridical and non-juridical divorce in classical Islamic law that help situate the ethicists’ guidelines. The most common, and the most relevant in the ethics texts, are talaq or repudiation pronounced by a husband. After a husband pronounces talaq, the wife observes a three-month waiting period, known as ‘iddah, at the end of which the marriage is dissolved. During ‘iddah, a woman continues to receive nafaqah or financial support, but a man can also take back his wife, indefinitely suspending the talaq pronouncement; he can repudiate her and take her back two times but a third pronouncement of divorce is irrevocable. In talaq, the husband forfeits the mahr, or marriage dower paid to the wife, or deferred, at the time the marriage is contracted.

There is an element of moral discernment in the jurists’ discussion of husband initiated divorce, talaq, involving the level of which procedure is best to follow given

the legal assumptions that staying married is always preferable to divorce and that efficiency in the process is best because shows kindness to women.\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Talaq al-ahsan}, or the “better talaq,” is defined as the husband’s single pronouncement of \textit{talaq} in between the wife’s menstrual cycles, in which there are no sexual relations with her, so as not to interrupt the ‘\textit{iddah}’ waiting period. This means that a man should not change his mind, thereby toying with the wife’s emotions, in order for it to be a better divorce.\textsuperscript{130} According to the jurists, what makes this form of \textit{talaq} better is that it allows time for the wife to attempt reconciliation but still is efficient in that it is concluded within three months. \textit{Talaq al-hasan} or the “good talaq,” defined as the husband’s repeated repudiation of the wife in between each of the three menstrual cycles of the ‘\textit{iddah}’ waiting period, is equally efficient but the difference that downgrades it from the better divorce is that it causes an irrevocable divorce, meaning the two cannot remarry one another after the divorce is final. This distinction between better and good divorces reveals that the principles of reserving the possibility of saving a marriage and efficiency are at odds with each other. Finally, three pronouncements of \textit{talaq} on a single occasion, \textit{talaq al-bid’a} or divorce of “fabrication,” also affectionately known as triple \textit{talaq}, is both swift and irrevocable but discouraged by the jurists because it precludes any chance of reconciliation during the ‘\textit{iddah}’ waiting period. Apart from the fact that opportunity for reconciliation and efficiency are contradictory, the moral value of these procedural differences is fixed according to the jurists’ unchanging assumptions that reconciliation and efficiency are always desirable in all circumstances. This of course does not reflect real life applications of divorce law in pre-modern Muslim courts.

\textsuperscript{129}Behnam Sadeghi calls such assumptions “legal reasons” that change over long periods of time as a result of cumulative and incremental changes in jurists’ attitudes towards a given topic. However, he argues, changes in legal reasons do not always change the laws themselves, but rather the justifications for them. Behnam Sadeghi, \textit{The Logic of Law Making in Islam: Women and Prayer in the Legal Tradition}, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 165-171.

\textsuperscript{130}Tucker, Women, Family, and Gender in Islamic Law, 86.
Another kind of legal divorce that is relevant to ethics discussions is the khul’a, or wife-initiated divorce. Khul’a is an irrevocable divorce, meaning the two cannot remarry each other once the divorce is final, initiated by a wife in exchange for a negotiated sum or return of the mahr marriage dower. Jurists always interpret wife-initiated divorce, khul’a, as requiring a husband’s consent or juridical intervention, which means that while a man can independently and unilaterally secure a divorce for himself, a woman cannot. A woman essentially ransoms herself for a sum upon which the husband agrees, or else seeks juridical intervention by proving legitimate grounds for divorce.

In contrast to the legal complexities of the divorce process in fiqh, scholars writing in the genre of akhlaq or Islamic philosophical ethics, take an approach to divorce that begins with assessing a man’s situation and marital responsibilities. There are several passages in the akhlaq texts that indicate the ethicists are concerned with the weight of moral responsibility the unilateral right carries for men as well as the emotional components of severing marital ties. So exercising one’s unrestricted right to divorce is not unethical, nor is having that power unethical, but how a man exercises that right is what makes it ethical or unethical.

Barring insanity, there are no legal impediments to a man pronouncing talaq, thereby unilaterally causing a divorce. Rather than simply advising his readers to pronounce talaq in gentle or kind ways, known as talaq al-ahsan\textsuperscript{131} in legal literature, Tusi provides guidelines for a man to instigate the desire for divorce in his wife:

If quitting her is impossible, there are four types of plans can be employed for this. First, [liberal] expenditure of wealth: for protection of the soul, manhood, and reputation is better than protection of wealth. If you should expend a lot of wealth to buy yourself from her; you should consider that money as very little. Second, nushuz [with her], [show] bad manners, temper, and move sleeping places, in a way that does not lead to chaos. Third, adopt mysterious tricks, such as inciting old women to [cause her to] fear herself and lure her towards another husband, and [while] show[ing] desire

\textsuperscript{131}Tucker, Women, Family, and Gender in Islamic Law, 86.
for her on the surface, and refusal to leave her, so that it happens that an eager desire to leave appears to her. In summary, use all types of connivance, obstacles, encouragement and provocation that causes separation. Fourth, after exhausting other strategies, leave her and embark on a distant journey, on conditions that impede her from taking steps towards implementing abominations, so that her hopes are cut off and she chooses separation.\textsuperscript{132}

In Tusi’s view, these covert tactics are more ethical than a \textit{talaq} outright. At first glance it seems that Tusi might be responding to tangible impediments to a man exercising his right to unilaterally divorce his wife. Historically, the legal parameters of payment and return of the \textit{mahr} have affected both whether or not a couple divorces and who initiates divorce. If set high enough, the \textit{mahr} can sometimes serve as a deterrent to the husband pronouncing \textit{talaq}. By the same token, a high \textit{mahr} could also discourage a woman from seeking a \textit{khul’a}, for having to pay back the \textit{mahr}. In such a situation, the breakdown of marital relations could end in a stalemate with neither party initiating divorce. However, Tusi’s first suggestion is to just pay off the \textit{na-shayestah} (unsuitable) woman for the sake of freedom, suggesting that for him the payment of \textit{mahr} should not be a deterrent against \textit{talaq}. Other common incentives to stay married, such as protecting one’s social image, do not explain the advice in the above passage because Tusi held that a bad wife is a man’s downfall in all personal and social matters and should be quitted at once.

Instead, Tusi’s idea to manufacture situations that would cause a wife to seek divorce makes sense in the context of releasing a man from the unethical position of divorcing a woman. Although there may be no reasons to stay married, \textit{talaq} posed a moral dilemma for men. In addition to having financial responsibilities for the wife, the ethicists recognized that a man may \textit{feel} ethically responsible for her well-being; he may \textit{feel} it is better for the children involved; or perhaps, the man enjoys some social benefits from the marital alliance, which led him to the marriage in the first place.

\textsuperscript{132}Tusi, 220.
Thus, Tusi outlines these tactics so that the wife absolves the husband of the moral burden of initiating divorce.

Tusi recommends that the husband should nushuz against his bad wife, using the term as a verb, in order to get rid of her. Ali explains that jurists viewed a husband’s nushuz as a display of his repulsion from his wife. Instead of focusing on a woman’s nushuz in 4:34 as grounds to correct or leave a wife, Tusi recommends a husband display his nushuz, similar to how jurists interpret the term in 4:128, as a way to put the onus of divorce on the wife. Verse 4:128 refers to what women should do if their husbands commit nushuz:

if a woman fears from her husband nushuz or desertion, then there is no sin on both of them that they make terms of peace between themselves, a reconciliation and the reconciliation is best. The souls are swayed by greed, but if you do good and fear God, then indeed God is of what you do.

The verse suggests reconciliation as the best path. Since Tusi suggests that a woman would seek divorce if her husband commits nushuz against her, she would be in violation of God’s command to reconcile. Any sin would be hers.

Tusi is not too concerned with the moral burden for manufacturing desire for divorce in the wife. Furthermore, Tusi is not concerned with posing an ethical dilemma to the wife for staying in the marriage because a woman’s ethical responsibility to stay in a marriage does not exist in his mind. Tusi (as well as Ghazali) imagine ethics of marriage from the husband’s perspective, which in part, means that women’s incentives in marriage are money, protection, and the privilege of increasing the Muslim population by bearing children. If a wife forfeits these privileges, it is of no ethical fault on the part of the husband.

Ghazali likewise is concerned about the ethical challenge that talaq poses. He says, “As far as you can try, don’t divorce, for God Most High dislikes divorce of all lawful

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things.”

The latter part of this saying is a hadith, though Ghazali does not quote it in Arabic as he does other hadiths. He states it in Persian, likely because it was common wisdom. Although the hadith is commonly used in contemporary Muslim societies to discourage women from seeking divorce, since men have the unilateral legal right and are thought to possess the rationality to exercise it wisely, the specific term in the hadith is talaq, not any kind of wife initiated divorce that the prophet had approved. Thus, it makes sense in the context of ethics, that the hadith is used to discourage men from divorce in light of their unilateral right. In the ethics texts, the bottom line is as Ghazali says: “Of all things, don’t give someone distress unless it is necessary.”

Both Tusi and Ghazali reiterate the potential cruelty of talaq and mens’ ethical responsibility to dispense it wisely. Nonetheless, they approve of men divorcing their wives.

Ghazali explains that one should be kind in talaq: “Be apologetic in divorce—in a way of kindness—do not give a divorce with anger and hostility. At the same time, give her gifts that make her heart happy and never reveal her secrets to anyone. Do not make known the flaw in her for which you gave her a divorce.” Ghazali is more than just prohibiting backbiting here. Even in divorce, he is attempting to protect the husband and wife relationship in principle. Ghazali then creates an edifying dialogue between two people to demonstrate a few principles: “One was asked, ‘Why are you giving your wife a divorce?’ He said, ‘One is not able to reveal one’s wife’s secrets.’ After he gave her the divorce they said ‘Why did you do it?’ He said ‘What do I have

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134Ghazali, 322.


137Ghazali, 322.

138Ghazali, 322.
to do with another woman that I relate things about her.”  

The first principle he illustrates is protection of the proper boundaries between unrelated men and women. Hearing about the personal aspects of a woman meant one knew her. In other contexts, the Ghazali says that hearing is like seeing and that hearing and feeling are the same. Revealing a woman’s attributes would be akin to seeing her, which was against the *ghayrat* or pride of her husband. Second is protection of a woman’s privacy and reputation, which would enable her to remarry, as was common practice. Third, Ghazali demonstrates the power of divorce to break the marriage tie with finality, lest one feels the divorced woman is still somehow one’s wife. The notion of a relationship with an ex-wife does not exist in *fiqh* beyond *nafaqah* or financial maintenance that is be paid to an ex-wife through the *‘iddah* period or until the end of a pregnancy, whichever is later. Yet, Ghazali warns the reader that an ex-wife is the same as any “other woman” with whom one has no ties. I read this part of his dialogue as an ethical rule outside *fiqh* regulations that speaks to a man’s emotions in divorce, namely guarding against thoughts of his freshly divorced ex-wife.

Davani’s approach to correcting a disobedient wife or divorcing her is the most compassionate of the ethicists. He does not discuss divorce in any substantive detail except to say that one may pursue “separation, provided that it does not involve devastation such as loss of children.”  

This shows in Davani’s context, child custody did not always belong to fathers, although because he does not use the word *talaq*, it is not clear whether Davani is warning to fathers about potential loss of custody as legal possibility in divorce or an extra-judicial reality in divorce, or as a possible outcome of informal separation, or all three scenarios. More importantly, he is concerned about

139Ghazali, 322.
140Davani, 193.
the fate of children in separation or divorce. Further, if one cannot assure that there will be no devastation, then Davani recommends that one should try being kind to a na-shayestah (unsuitable) wife in the hopes that she will reform, or else leave her in the care of someone who will correct her and embark on a distant journey oneself.\textsuperscript{142}

These sections of the akhlaq texts reveal Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani’s discomfort with the unilateral right to divorce in mens’ hands without ethical regulation. Tusi describes a way out of having to repudiate one’s wife, but Ghazali explains a much more sensitive approach to talaq than the law would require, such as providing one’s wife with gifts and protecting her privacy in the process. Davani prefers separation, by omitting the term talaq and discussion of its details altogether. In ethicists’ minds, the laws of fiqh govern the legal process of untying marital bonds but akhlaq governs how men manage divorce and act ethically in the moment. It is unlikely that the ethicists had women’s interests in mind since they ultimately are advocating for men to be ethically safe by protecting their ghayrat and responsibilities as providers to women and children.

\subsection*{3.4 Parenting, Motherhood, and Fatherhood}

Focusing on ethical and unethical behaviors in the marital relationship has enabled me to examine how the ethicists articulate marriage as a man’s domain in which he is able to exert his power over his wife by virtue of having a superior intellect. Examination of the ethics of parenting allows us to see the biological underpinnings of gender roles since it focuses on the biological and parental functions mothers and fathers play in their children’s lives. I argue that the ethicists viewed gendered parental roles as a result of men’s biological functions as life giving and women’s functions as childbearing and lactating. These parental roles are not just momentary, when men and women have

\textsuperscript{142}Davani, 193.
children, but become defining attributes of masculinity and femininity, respectively. I also show how boys are socialized from infancy to become leaders in the social and domestic hierarchies of power and intellect and girls socialized from infancy to play an instrumental role in their husbands’ households.

Luce Irigaray critiques Greek Philosophy as obliterating women’s bodies except for essentializing them as maternal envelopes that carry children. Although Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani recognize sexual desire in women and even their intelligence to a limited degree, they primarily construe women as maternal bodies. Applying de Beauvoir’s concept of women’s immanence and men’s transcendence, we see in the ethicists discussion of parenting how women are embodied and men are disembodied. The male audience of the texts is advised in the texts to respect their mothers for the corporeal sacrifices they undertook in carrying and suckling them. By contrast, one should respect fathers for giving them life, both physically and intellectually. Butler’s discussion of scripting gender is relevant here as well since it is through discussions on parenting that we gain insight into how young children were meant to be socialized and gendered to be male or female. The ethicists all thought infants were born as blank canvases with capacity for wisdom, even though the human soul has tendencies toward self-indulgence.143

In this section I will compare the akhlaq advice on parenting boys and girls, and examine how biology of motherhood and fatherhood creates gendered responsibilities upon children in how they respect each parent. I present two arguments related to parenthood. First, the prescribed ethical guidelines for how to raise children is the basis of gendered behaviors and roles that men and women are supposed to play. Second, I argue that women’s physiological ability to bear and suckle children, noted as the main difference between men and women’s bodies, has a profound impact on the way Muslim thinkers construct social ethics contingent upon sex.

Ghazali’s discussion of parenthood is focused on the Prophet Muhammad’s example of how to raise and treat children. Unlike his explication on the ethics of life with women in marriage, which is not rooted in a rights-based discourse, Ghazali’s section on children is articulated as “rights of parents and children” and is composed almost entirely of a series of hadiths, without Ghazali’s elaboration. Many hadiths refer to the Prophet’s own experiences raising daughters and several hadiths discuss his playful and loving interactions with his grandsons, Hasan and Husayn.

Tusi, by contrast, presents parenting instructions with explanations because he is interested in disciplining men in the art of fatherhood, as much as he is interested in prescribing a proper upbringing for children. He instructs readers on how to inculcate behaviors and habits in children that will enable them to be ethical adults. Tusi is also aware that his adult male audience may be deeply entrenched in their own lives, and thus may need explanations for why the guidelines are what they are. For instance, he says, “prevent your child from taking an oath, whether truthful or false, for grown men sometimes have need of them, but children never do.”

Thus, he brings the rules of parenting and describes the stages of childhood at the reader’s level. Davani’s discussion of parenting maintains Tusi’s psychological approach to raising children to some extent, but as is characteristic of his treatise as a whole, he draws on many more sources while being more succinct. Across all of the texts, how to raise boys is addressed at much greater length and in more detail than how to raise girls, demonstrating that the normative human being, from birth is male. Fathers command more respect than mothers, though all three ethicists convey the seriousness of mothers’ biological sacrifice in carrying, birthing, and initially caring for children.

It is not easy to discern when the guidelines for raising children, shifts to guidelines

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144 Tusi, 226.
145 Ghazali, 430. Tusi, 238. Davani, 206. Ghazali mentions the hadith that the rights of the mother are twice those of a father, but rights do not always correspond to respect.
exclusively for raising boys because the ethicists use gender neutral pronouns in Persian and the gender neutral term for child, *farzand*. The term for son throughout Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani’s works is *farzand*, which can mean son or daughter, but because all three use the term *dokhtar* (girl), specifically for daughter, we can assume that *farzand* refers to child in general but with a normative meaning of male child. Further, because all three texts have separate, albeit brief, discussions on raising *dokhtars*, the sections on *farzands* must refer to male children only. Like in the discussion of the *nafs* broadly, the examples relating to raising a *farzand* are mostly male applications in which the children in question have the capacity to fully develop their rationality, learn a trade, and prepare for leadership in domestic and homosocial realms.

There are some similarities in the ways one raises boys and girls, especially in the first stages of life. The births of both baby boys and girls are always considered as blessed events. The procedure of reciting the call to prayer in the ears of the babies are the same for boys and girls, as are the Sunnah practices of shaving the baby’s hair and giving charity of gold or silver equal to the weight of the hair, and sacrificing sheep. However, if parents can afford it, they should sacrifice two sheep for a boy and one sheep for a girl.\(^{146}\) The ethicists are in agreement that a proper name should be chosen for a baby shortly after his birth. Ghazali mentions the *aqiqa* or sacrifice that accompanies naming the child on the seventh day of his life as practicing a Sunnah in his section on marriage. Davani says that the one advantage in delaying beyond seven days is that one may reflect more carefully on choosing the name. He explains that a bad name will negatively affect his whole life. Annemarie Schimmel discusses pre-modern Muslim

\(^{146}\) These texts do not discuss the discrepancy in the sacrifice upon births of boys versus girls. Presumably the Prophet prescribed one sheep, or lesser financial liability on parents for having a girl than a boy, as an attempt to encourage equalization in the birth of boys and girls, in line with the Qur’anic prohibition against burying infant girls that the Prophet’s movement brought early on. However, many people interpret this Sunnah as boys having greater worth than girls. Kueny says that only the Malikis held that an equal number of sheep should be sacrificed for boys and girls. She argues that the act of sacrifice itself symbolized a paternal spillage of blood (in addition to the mother’s) in process of birth. Kueny, 155.
parents’ decision-making in selecting names for their children followed gendered criteria in that names often reflected gendered qualities the parents hope the child would espouse. Girls sometimes bore names such as kafi (enough) and khatimah (finish) if they arrived after a successive births of girls. It is also presumed that knowledge of religion, how to pray, as well as the discipline involved in listening to parents, how to eat, dress, and speak in private and in front of strangers are all taught to both boys and girls.

However, significant differences in the way one raises boys and girls emerge early on in a child’s life. As the texts enumerate instructions how to raise children, they assume that the child being taught is male. The ethicists include guidelines for how a child is to carry on in public and how to recognize his aptitude for the trade he will join when he grows up so that he may earn a living find the means to support a wife. All three, Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani, write very small stand-alone sections about having daughters and the ethics of raising them.

3.4.1 Raising Little Girls

The guidelines specifically about raising girls are scant in the texts, which reiterates the texts’ male-centered perspective of marriage and family. While Tusi and Davani reflect on raising daughters in brief stand-alone sections, all three treatises have some mention of how to raise one’s daughters in the same section as what to look for in a wife, as if the ethicists’ thesis about marriage contains everything they had to say about all relationships with females. It also shows that reflect on the notion that a wife is someone’s daughter too, and one should treat a wife like one may want his daughter


to be treated in marriage. Ghazal hints at this when he quotes the Prophet as saying “Marriage is like slavery so be careful to whom you give your child in marriage.” But he uses the hadith to show how important it is for a man to find a good wife, rather than finding a good husband for one’s daughter.

Ghazali takes the perspective of Prophet Muhammad’s ethics and also deliberately makes the case that girls can be just as valuable as boys in the grander scheme of blessings they bring on the path of faith. His focus on the potential blessings that girls bring to fathers highlights the metaphysical tension in recognition of women as full persons with nafses (just as boys), but seeing them as deficient, weak, and thus destined to instrumentality. Ghazali states that one should not be displeased if a child born is a girl, nor should one show too much joy if the baby is a boy. The reason for this is that one does not know whether there is greater goodness, blessings, and spiritual reward with the girl or boy. Ghazali quotes three hadiths that elevated the status of girls in the early Muslim community within the context of raising them in the patriarchal family structure. In the first one the prophet said that God will be kind to those who suffer the distress of daughters or sisters and arranges their affairs. For Ghazali and the other ethicists, the notion of arranging a daughter’s affairs meant marrying her off with a significant dowry that made her a more attractive match. Rapoport’s social history of marriage in the Mamluk period shows that most urban women had sizable dowries and trousseaus that would function as a “pre-mortem inheritance” for daughters.\(^\text{149}\) The same expenditure was not done for a son upon his marriage, but sons usually inherited twice as much as daughters according to the law. In the second hadith Ghazali quotes the Prophet says: “Whoever has one daughter is afflicted, whoever has two daughters is heavy-laden, whoever has three daughters, oh Muslims help him, for he will be with

\(^{149}\)Rapoport, 6.
me in heaven as though we are two fingers.”\textsuperscript{150} Ghazali comments on this: “meaning close.”\textsuperscript{151}

Ghazali is drawing on these hadiths to emphasize the immense opportunities for spiritual reward that girls bring to their fathers, but it is in the context of women being an ordeal and the difficulties of executing responsibilities on their behalf. Like in any trial, there is an opportunity to demonstrate sabr (patience) and good akhlaq. The same spiritual reward does not exist for “arranging the affairs” of sons because, to put the hadith into historical context, girls were considered, both in the time of the Prophet and in Ghazali’s time, to be among the weaker segments of society. The third hadith Ghazali quotes reinforces this idea: “Whoever eats from the first harvest in the bazaar and takes it home, it is like charity. You should start with the girl then a boy, for whoever makes a girl happy, it is like weeping out of fear of God most high. And whoever weeps out of fear of God most high, his body will be forbidden for the hellfire.”\textsuperscript{152} Making a girl happy is an act of charity, which was considered a major blessing in the revelation and in the Prophet’s tradition. That charity of making a girl happy is one of the means by which a man applies his balanced nafs in order to produce the ultimate goal of sa‘adat within the household. For a father, this does not mean uplifting girls to the level of boys, but rather being the provider for happiness according to everyone’s allotted measure.

Tusi’s guidelines on parenting girls are even less substantial. Compared to the nearly six page long explanation on how to raise a boy, followed by a six page long addendum filled with technical details on how a boy should speak, carry himself physically, eat, and be taught to drink wine, if at all, Tusi writes a mere paragraph as his total thesis

\textsuperscript{150}Ghazali, 322. 
\textsuperscript{151}Ghazali, 322. 
\textsuperscript{152}Ghazali, 322.
on how to raise a girl. He does not mention what rules of raising boys, if any, would apply to raising girls. It begins: “This [what preceded] is the management [siyasat] of boys. For girls, in this same manner, employ what is favored and befitting them.”

Presumably “in this same manner, employ what is favored and befitting them” means instilling discipline, manners, and education by a similar process but curated for girls. Like in their discussion of the nafs, Tusi and Davani use gender neutral pronouns when they discuss the technical details of the manners to teach children in general. Some of those guidelines seem gender neutral, but many of the recommendations assume a child is using the manners in public, and in male-only homosocial spaces, therefore the manners they enumerate about movement, eating, and speaking, are specifically for boys.

Without providing specifics for girls, Tusi says, “Instill in them attachment to the house and seclusion, dignity and self-restraint, shame, and other qualities we have enumerated in the chapter on wives.” Girls are raised from childhood to become wives, so girls’ education reflects that. Tusi writes, “Prohibit [girls] from reading and writing, and teach them skills that are praised in women. And when they reach the bounds of maturity, make a bond with one of similar status.” Tusi and Davani leave it up to the reader to discern what those praiseworthy skills would be. They may not have necessarily included domestic duties of cooking and cleaning since the text addressed elite men with slaves or servants, of whom the wife would take charge. Judging from the household tasks Tusi and Davani expected women to assume, and given their interest in the notion of preparation for the future and cultivating skills, it would make sense that girls would be taught would be bookkeeping, basic reading and writing, and managerial

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153 Tusi, 229.
How Tusi and Davani imagined that girls could be raised to be good wives, such that they play the role of husbands’ proxy, without literacy or being discouraged from reading and writing, is a discrepancy in their texts. Perhaps they mean that girls should be taught some cooking, sewing, reciting poetry, and religious education enough for personal practice and teaching basics to one’s own children, but they do not say as much. The texts assume a transfer of dispositions from mother to children, some of which might be biological or through milk, but do not state specifics about skills girls need to acquire.156 The ethicists themselves came from families in which the women knew how to at least read or recite the Qur’an and read and write in basic Persian, if nothing but to teach children. Richard Bulliet explains that among patricians, boys’ and girls’ education were equal.157 Asma Sayeed argues that women’s learning and participation in hadith scholarship contributed to their “social capital” and reinforced learning in future generations of women.158 Yet, Tusi and Davani’s suggestion to actively prevent girls from learning to read or write may be understood in the premodern context of gender segregation. The ethicists all recommend that men seclude their wives and do not allow them to indulge in idle pastimes or visit with people who would make them desire more contact with the public sphere.159 Writing facilitates contact with the outside world through letters or messages, creating porous boundaries between public and private and destroying the illusion of complete gender segregation that scholars had created in theory. In reality, full gender segregation did not exist.

There are two possible reasons why the ethicists omit specific guidelines for what

158Sayeed, 114.
to teach girls. First is that because the ethicists presumed that all girls would be married off, husbands would be responsible for their wives’ *nafses*. Thus, the ethicists articulate minimal guidelines for raising daughters and instead focus on ideal wifelhood and, to some extent, motherhood.\textsuperscript{160} Second, the absence of specific guidelines for ordering women’s *nafses* may be precisely because their *nafses* could not be ordered using *tahdhib-i akhlaq* or *kimiya-i sa’adat*. The ethicists are fully aware that like men, women are predisposed to letting their *nafses* get the better of them and thus men need to manage their *nafses*.\textsuperscript{161} However, it is also possible that none of the ethicists give much thought to girls’ education in any detail because it may have been the purview of the mothers.\textsuperscript{162} For fathers, the audience of the texts, it is enough to state how girls can be a potential source of spiritual reward if squared away properly.\textsuperscript{163}

### 3.4.2 Raising Little Boys

There are four areas of behaviors that Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani stress when it comes to raising boys who will grow up to become ethical men. The first area is general discipline, which includes listening to one’s parents, having self control, and being timely with prayers and religious observances. The second area is proper conduct with regard to food and drink, clothing, appearance, and money. The third area is selection of proper education and career. The fourth area is long term preparation for independent life as an adult, husband, and father, and desire to reciprocate care for one’s parents.

\textsuperscript{160}Tusi, 229-230. Davani, 190.
\textsuperscript{161}Ghazali, 316. Tusi, 217-218. Davani, 189-190.
\textsuperscript{162}I am speculating. Both Giladi and Kueny discuss standards for raising boys, not girls, because that is what the normative texts they rely on discuss.
\textsuperscript{163}Tusi, 230. Davani, 200. Ghazali, 321-322. Ghazali states this in his section on marriage, not in his section on raising children, which is only about boys, indicating that his entire treatment of ethics pertaining to women is in the context of marriage.
Tusi begins with the first decision a parent has to make for his child, selecting a proper wet-nurse. From the text, we know that at least sons, and perhaps daughters—though they are not mentioned—were suckled by women other than their own mothers; this reiterates that the ethicists are addressing ethical conduct for elite families.\textsuperscript{164} The nurse should be healthy both physically and mentally since the ethicists believed that diseases, whether mental or physical, that entered the body through breast milk remained in the body forever.\textsuperscript{165} Medical texts from the period confirm the belief that “milk transmits physical, mental and moral characteristics from the nurse to the nursling.”\textsuperscript{166} In the \textit{Ihyah ‘Ulum ad-Din}, Ghazali advises fathers to find a pious nurse, in addition to a healthy one.\textsuperscript{167} In his addendum on the rights of parents, Tusi mentions that mothers physically nurture and nourish the children, so in Tusi’s context, wet-nursing probably existed alongside mothers nursing children. Avner Giladi explains that medieval medical and normative ethics texts do not definitively tell whether wet-nursing or maternal nursing were more prominent, but that maternal health, family planning, and social class were the determining that factors behind the choice.\textsuperscript{168} Nonetheless, physicians and jurisconsults preferred maternal nursing because it was thought to mutually benefit mother and child.\textsuperscript{169} The ethicists and others from their time period also take for granted, following ideas from Greek medicine, that maternal-nursing established a mother’s unconditional love for her child,\textsuperscript{170} which as I discuss

\begin{footnotes}
\item[164] Later the ethicists give credit to mothers for carrying and birthing children, but not suckling them.
\item[165] Tusi, 222.
\item[166] Avner Giladi, \textit{Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses: Medieval Islamic Views on Breastfeeding and Their Social Implications}, (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 44.
\item[168] Giladi, \textit{Infants, Parents, and Wet-Nurses}, 54.
\item[169] Giladi, \textit{Infants, Parents, and Wet-Nurses}, 49.
\end{footnotes}
below, forms the basis of a child’s indebtedness to her.

In various ways, all three ethicists write about the idea that discipline is the very first thing one must teach a child, as the first step to conditioning his \textit{nafs}.\textsuperscript{171} Ghazali writes, “One of the rights of a child is that one not let him be rebellious by his own ill-nature. The Messenger said: ‘God Most High have mercy on the father who does not restrain his son’s disobedience.’”\textsuperscript{172} All human beings have unruly \textit{nafses}. All three ethicists explain that children are blank canvases but are prone to bad behavior because the faculties of their \textit{nafs} follow their bodily needs very strongly, without the control of rationality that is yet to develop in them.\textsuperscript{173}

Tusi specifies that once suckling is complete, the process of disciplining a child begins. He writes that first and foremost, one must instill a love of nobility, which is marked by intelligence, discernment, and piety, but by no means is nobility determined by property or race.\textsuperscript{174} This departure from his earlier discussion about superiority that is bound up with social class and race reveals the tension between notions of divinely ordained social hierarchy and ethics of social relations based on respect and justice. Tusi and Davani further say that “he should be forbidden to boast to peers about his forefathers, wealth, possessions, and his food and clothes. He should be taught to be humble with everyone and kind to his peers, and forbidden to show off to his inferiors or to be partial to his peers or covetous of them.”\textsuperscript{175} This idea of discipline governs the ethicists’ entire philosophy of raising sons from elite families so that they can grow up to take their place at the top of the social hierarchy.

On the subject of discipline, Tusi and Davani counsel that one needs to be sub-


\textsuperscript{172}Ghazali, 430.

\textsuperscript{173}Ghazali, 430. Tusi, 222. Davani, 195.

\textsuperscript{174}Tusi, 222.

\textsuperscript{175}Tusi, 225-226. Davani, 197.
tle with children. They explain that fathers should praise a child’s good actions and discourage minor bad acts. Children commit many errors such as lying, envy, theft, tattling, fighting, or being nosy, which go away with maturity, so a parent must chide privately so that the child does not become insolent. 176 If the child continues with the bad behavior, both Tusi and Davani recommend to keep on privately chiding him, emphasizing on the foulness of his behavior but to not become openly hostile toward the child, which will incite repetition and impudence. In the same passage, Tusi and Davani are explain reverse psychology: “humans eagerly desire what is forbidden.” 177 The child will think himself brave for flouting reproach. Also, the child should not be allowed to do anything completely in secret—the parents should be aware of all his actions. In a brief nod to a mother’s role in parenting, Tusi says, “[The child] should be in the habit of obeying his father, mother, and his tutor, and view them with the eye of awe so that he fears them.” 178 Next, all three ethicists say that he should be taught practices of religion and prayer. Following a hadith which Ghazali quotes directly, Davani holds that after the age of ten, children should be physically disciplined for missing prayers so that the institution of prayer is well instilled in them. 179

Tusi and Davani tell fathers to train the appetitive faculty 180 early on in children by adopting the principles of necessity and moderation with regard to food, drink, clothing, and money. One should begin conditioning the appetitive faculty by regulating the boy’s eating practices, which have health, behavioral, and even social consequences. To prevent gluttony, teach the child that food is meant for sustenance or praise other

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177 Tusi, 224. Davani, 195.
178 Tusi, 227.
180 This is the same as the quwwat-i shahwai, the concupiscent faculty, which in addition to sexual needs in post-pubescent humans, is also responsible for desire for food and comfort.
children who eat less and with manners.\textsuperscript{181} The child should have a larger dinner than breakfast so that he is not lethargic, heavy with food all day. Giving less meat will make him alert and limiting sugar is a good idea because such foods are not easily “converted.”\textsuperscript{182} He should be accustomed to not drink water until the end of the meal and he should not be given dinner until he is done with his chores.\textsuperscript{183} The child should be limited to like few kinds of food; the appetite should be limited to coarse foods. From time to time, the child should eat simple dry bread because “such manners are good in the non-wealthy but are even better in rich.”\textsuperscript{184}

In general, he should see the foulness of a gluttonous and greedy man. Tusi also strictly warned against giving one’s son intoxicating drinks or wine until he reaches early manhood, for they will harm his body and cause him to do foolish things. He should not be allowed in the company of wine drinkers unless they are virtuous and polished men and there is some benefit to being in their company.\textsuperscript{185} Such an attitude toward potations is indicative of what Kathryn Kueny explains is the way early scholars “sought to resolve issues of conflict, structure their world, govern human behavior, which in turn shaped their understandings of the divine message.”\textsuperscript{186} Although intoxicants are legally prohibited, she argues that the didactic discussions surrounding prohibition reveal “characteristic strategies of thought involved in the ongoing process of defining, negotiating, and resolving these fundamental religious concerns.”\textsuperscript{187} Likewise for Tusi,

\textsuperscript{182}Tusi, 225.
\textsuperscript{183}Tusi, 225. Davani, 196.
\textsuperscript{184}Davani, 197.
\textsuperscript{185}Tusi, 225.
\textsuperscript{186}Kathryn Kueny, \textit{The Rhetoric of Sobriety: Wine in Early Islam} (Albany: State University of New York, 2001), xiii.
\textsuperscript{187}Kueny, \textit{Rhetoric of Sobriety}, xiv.
it is not enough to prohibit wine drinking, but rather to provide behavioral guidelines surrounding it so that drinking and being in the company of drinkers is related to inculcating ethical discipline.

The proposed dress code also tells us about the mental conditioning for boys that Tusi and Davani consider to be manly. To prevent interest in fashion (a feminine interest), one must teach the male child that clothing is for the protection of the body. All three ethicists say the child must know that brightly colored and embroidered clothes are for women, but noblemen do not need those things.\textsuperscript{188} No soft clothes, lest he become soft. His hair should not be arranged nor should he “be decorated in the garments of women.”\textsuperscript{189} It is not that they expected readers would dress their sons in women’s clothing, but rather they wanted to convey the idea that bejeweled, embroidered, or ornamented clothes, which were dress options for elite urban men to show their high class, were effeminate because they required too much fuss, attention to fashions and frivolity, which was in itself was the provenance of women.\textsuperscript{190} Winter clothes cannot be too warm and his room should not be too warm either. His clothes in the summer need not be too light, and his room need not be too cool.\textsuperscript{191} Davani says he cannot have the items of luxury such as an underground retreat in the summer or a fire in the winter.\textsuperscript{192} The dress code of coarse temperate fabrics for boys is designed to make them tough, but defines their masculinity in contrast to girls from a young age.

Further, Davani and Tusi both advise against giving one’s son rings to wear before

\textsuperscript{189} Tusi, 225. Davani, 197.
\textsuperscript{190} Delia Cortese and Simonetta Calderini, \textit{Women and the Fatimids in the World of Islam}. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), 2006, 83-86. Cortese and Calderini explain that in Fatimid Cairo, public female dress codes were tied to court politics. The basic garments themselves from this time period were not gendered–baggy trousers, turbans, robes, etc. However, their colors, fabrics, and embellishments sometimes demarcated gendered, and social class.
\textsuperscript{191} Tusi, 225.
\textsuperscript{192} Davani, 196.
the necessity of wearing them arrives. The wearing of particular rings signaled one’s elite status or lineage, in terms of being from a particular ruling, scholarly, or other respected social class. Almost all elite men wore seal rings as a form of identification and means of authenticating letters and documents. Although Tusi was familiar with the significance of particular gemstones and precious metals, since he wrote for Hulegu one of the most comprehensive encyclopedias on gemology and treasures, he still considered any jewelry outside of the functional seal rings to be superfluous in conditioning boys according to akhlaq.

Accordingly, Tusi and Davani recommend that fathers present gold and silver to boys in a negative light. In an interesting moment of intertextual reference between the ethics treatises, Davani quotes Ghazali’s tafsir interpreting Prophet Abraham’s prayer in the Qur’an, “prevent me and my children from worshipping idols” meant that he prayed to God for protection from worshipping money, gold, and silver, which are the root of evil. This aligns with several hadiths of the Prophet that discourage wearing and hoarding gold, by both men and women.

Tusi and Davani’s concerns for older boys are related to comportment. As part of conditioning their nafs’ attention, the ethicists advise men to keep children from hearing obscenities or becoming involved in idle pastimes. If a boy plays games, let

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193 Tusi, 225. Davani, 197.
196 Davani 198. This is an example of how Davani brings together the respective philosophical and scriptural foci of Tusi and Ghazali, but also how the two approaches are not mutually exclusive in creating Islamic ethics, a point I make in the Introduction.
198 Tusi, 225.
them not be too strenuous because he should have mental fatigue, not physical. He should learn to exercise his faculty of rationality. They advise not letting the child sleep too much or sleep during the day lest he become lazy. Walking, exercise, and riding should be a regular part of his routine. One should not let his child talk too much. A boy should enjoy adult conversation and learn fair and elegant speech. One should teach poems and verses about good ethics and manners but keep away from frivolous poetry about love and wine such as that of Imrul Qays and Abu Nuwas, which was regarded as decadent.

Great care must be taken in selecting a tutor for the boy. Since they speak of only one teacher, the texts assume that a child enters into the tutelage of a master for a significant number of years, as was the case with each of the ethicists. The tutor should espouse the ideal ethical virtues of a man according to Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani’s standards and is also good with children. According to Tusi and Davani, the tutor should be intelligent and religious, well versed in the education of children, and reputed to have fair speech, gravity, an awe-inspiring manner, manliness, and purity. He should be able to converse and teach every class of man and be familiar with the

199 Davani, 196.
200 Tusi, 225.
201 Davani, 200-201.
202 This poetry was popular enough to mention by name. Tusi, 224. Ghazali also warns against employing tutors who insist on teaching poetry about corporeal love and women. Ghazali, Vol. 2 469.
204 Tusi, 226. Davani, 197-198.
manners of interacting with kings. The tutor may beat the child for the sake of discipline but the beating must be short yet painful so that it is effective, yet does not prevent the child from forming a bond of affection with the tutor. However, as a general rule, the tutor should be kind to the child so that the child learns how to be kind to others by example.

Tusi and Davani specify that pedagogy should be tailored to an individual boy’s predilection in order to ready him for earning a living and establishing his own domestic economy. Tusi says it is preferred that the child’s path of education is determined by considering the child’s state using “physiognomy and discernment,” to figure out “which skill or ‘ilm is innate in him.” A career should likewise be chosen based on the child’s strengths and interests: “Everyone is capable of a given craft. The faster you bring his attention to it, he can achieve fruits of that [labor] and turn [his work] into an art.” If one pushes his child in a direction that he is not suited, then “his days will be wasted and his life made useless.”

Davani quotes an Arabic saying: “Everyone has faculties for which they are created.” He adds that “ancient sages would look at the birth horoscopes to employ the child to the appropriate profession that was calculated by the state of planets.”

Initially, when children are small, disciplining them shares several principles with disciplining wives because like children, the ethicists think of women as having underdeveloped faculties of rationality compared to adult men. Men, as leaders of the domestic

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205 Tusi, 226. Davani, 197.
207 Tusi, 228.
208 Tusi, 228.
209 Tusi, 228.
210 Davani, 119.
211 Davani, 119.
economy, are in charge of managing the nafses of both wives and children, namely by keeping their minds occupied with what they should be doing or learning. While girls become ideal wives, boys are supposed to surpass their fathers in their ethical training because they will grow up to lead households themselves and be a force for spreading societal ethics by taking their place in the social hierarchy. This is done by preparing them for taking on a trade, which as I mention in Chapter 2 and return to in Chapter 4 in relation to the homosocial environment, determine’s one’s place in the social hierarchy.

Specializing in one field occurs after being exposed to all of the branches of knowledge. As an interesting precursor to modern day notions of liberal arts learning, and evidence of the high value placed on well rounded learning along with the creation of hakims and polymaths in the middle periods, Tusi and Davani advised that one should excite the student by exposing him to both branches, javam'a 'ulum va adab (sciences and humanities). By exposing them to both branches, a student will have a balanced education and even in specializing, he should be able to study elements in each branch relevant to his own profession.212 The rationale for this exposure is that one can use skills and knowledge from other branches in order to achieve one’s calling fully. If he is learned, Tusi says to let the boy first learn about 'ilm-i akhlaq (ethics) then 'ulum-i hikmat-i nazari (speculative philosophy) because the second will confirm the first and he will be pleased about the manner of his upbringing.213 If the child is faltering at one branch of science or at a particular craft, Tusi and Davani warn the father against forcing his son; rather they say to allow him to switch to another field. The principle here is that one’s calling should excite a person. Once the child’s education is complete, make him enjoy the fruits of his labor by applying his education in an occupation.

212 Tusi, 228.
213 Tusi, 227.
Once he begins supporting himself, he is ready for marriage. Tusi and Davani end the parental journey when sons grow up, start earning, establish separate households and get married.\textsuperscript{214}

The guidelines for raising boys closely mirrors the goals of the ethics treatises for the reader himself. Through their discussion on how to raise sons, the ethicists explain the ways that an ethical man can be raised from the beginning according to the science of \textit{akhlaq}. Tusi strongly feels that, “An upbringing following this law requires a love of virtues and avoidance of vices and prohibits the \textit{nafs} from pleasure and appetite and expenditure of [the child’s] thoughts on them so that he becomes successful in higher practices.”\textsuperscript{215} Ethical manliness was associated with virtuous behavior, ethical comportment, and knowledge. In relation to others, it meant one had to have self-respect in order to command respect from friends, peers, and later, from a wife.

The fact that the ethics treatises are addressed to men, yet include detailed instructions on how to raise sons, raises questions about what amount and kind of parenting fathers and mothers were responsible for, respectively, and what role each was meant to play in a child’s life. None of the texts tell men to convey the parenting plan to the mother, and in fact, after giving birth, there is no stated role for mothers to play, save for the command to fathers to ensure that children, both boys and girls, respect and obey their mothers, fathers, and tutors. Perhaps the mothers were responsible for the details of daily minutiae such as whether the children ate their supper, did their chores, and completed their lessons. However, we do not know their roles for sure since the texts do not discuss a notion of co-parenting children, nor do they discuss women’s ethical behavior as anything but wives. Even Ghazali, who mentions hadiths with regard to the blessings to be had in having girl children, had to do with settling them

\textsuperscript{214}Tusi, 229. Davani, 199.
\textsuperscript{215}Tusi, 227.
down and marrying them off.\footnote{Ghazali, 321-322.}

It is possible that especially with respect to boys, Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani expected fathers to be very hands-on, teaching life lessons to the child and making sure that his education, physical exercise and daily routine match the guidelines. The level of detail in parenting advice to the male audience is impressive in that it puts great responsibility on the shoulders of fathers to condition their sons, secure their ethical masculinity, and make them ready for the trials of adult male life. With the absence of similar details about raising girls or roles mothers play, it is also possible that Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani expected that parenting would also be gender segregated; fathers were meant to be in charge of the boys in a family and mothers took charge of raising the girls.\footnote{I have not been able to verify this in Giladi’s works or in Kueny. With regard to girls’ education, Asma Sayeed and Richard Bulliet argue that in elite and ‘ulema’ families, girls would have instruction in reading, writing, reciting the Qur’an, but it is not clear who is in charge of their lessons. The Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures has a few entries about the Ottoman period with references to girls learning arts and crafts skills from women.}

The idea that caring for and raising children are wholly the responsibility of the mother did not exist in these texts. Giladi, Tucker, and Kueny, all show that mothers did play much more expansive roles than the normative and theoretical texts let on. Kueny argues, and I agree, that the discrepancy between real life and textual assertions of fatherly contributions could be attributed to the texts function as arenas in which men asserted and codified patriarchal order against the potent Qur’anic and real life functions of motherhood. Kueny further argues that pre-modern Muslim mothers’ agency is located within the patriarchal system: “believing women, through pre- and postnatal rituals, habits, and practices, often create corresponding, inward dispositions that conform but also contribute to the ‘ideal mother’ within a medieval context.”\footnote{Kueny, 6.}
Following Foucault’s idea of how power emerges, by prescribing guidelines in ethics
texts, the ethicists create and exert patriarchal power in shaping children’s lives over
maternal power. The roles mothers and fathers are meant to play in the ethics texts
are reflected in the ethicists’ guidelines to the readers about how they should go about
respecting each parent.

3.4.3 Mothers and Fathers: Rights of Parents

The ethicists assume that parents love their children unconditionally as a dictate of
nature, while children must labor to return that affection as it does not come naturally
to them.\textsuperscript{219} Tusi and Davani justify their recommendations for what is ethical behavior
towards one’s parents as a function of the physical and intellectual care each parent
provides. They expanded much more than Ghazali on the biological underpinnings of
fatherly responsibility, namely the male role in conception. Their reasons for doing so
are to make the male reader cognizant of his ethical responsibilities, but more impor-
tantly, because they prioritized the father’s biological contribution in conception of a
child and the financial support he provides above any contribution from the mother.
They hold that fathers are responsible for shaping a child’s physique, education, and
personality.\textsuperscript{220} Thus, their discussions on the rights of parents tell us about the ways
the ethicists understand how sex and physiology are connected to gender roles.

Just like his discussion on raising girls, Ghazali’s narrative on parents’ rights is
comprised of a series of hadiths, which shows how he views the Prophet as the ulti-
mate authority on ethical conduct in the family.\textsuperscript{221} By doing so, Ghazali’s discussion

\textsuperscript{219}Tusi, 339. Davani, 207.

\textsuperscript{220}Tusi, 237-238. Davani, 206.

\textsuperscript{221}Ghazali, 430.
on rights of parents contrasts that of Tusi and Davani; Ghazali avoids the discussion about men and women’s biological contributions in conception and development of a fetus as the basis of parental rights. He elevates mothers’ sacrifices and rights above those of fathers through hadiths, but does not mention suckling or any physiological basis for her rights.

However, like Tusi and Davani, Ghazali presents parents’ rights as part of a broader cosmology of ethical social relations, starting with the rights of Muslims in general, then the rights of neighbors, relatives, parents, children, ending with the rights of slaves. The male reader becomes a vehicle for spreading *sa‘adat* by acting ethically with all these people. The section on the rights of children is about three times longer than the section on parents’ rights, even though he states that the later have far more rights than the former.\(^\text{222}\) We can draw a parallel with his sections on the rights of wives compared to the rights of husbands in which he likewise states that husbands have far more rights over their wives despite the discrepancy in length of his descriptions. Keenly aware of the power differential between the male readers and their wives and children, in both sections Ghazali emphasizes that the male reader must observe the rights of the women and children in order to be ethical men. The work is not celebratory of men’s power, but rather instructive of men’s responsibilities in maintaining an ethical household.

Lev Weitz interprets discrepancy in section length (with respect to the section on marriage in the *Ihya*) between rights of the wife (much longer) and rights of husbands as Ghazali keeping the central focus on men. The section on marriage is actually about the ideal characteristics, rights, and responsibilities of women as they are oriented towards men and the safeguarding of men’s interests. The section on what makes an ideal husband does not then actually instruct men on how to be ideal husbands to their wives, which would be the converse discourse, but rather continues to focus on men by

\(^{222}\)Ghazali, 430-432. Tusi and Davani’s sections on children’s upbringing are also three times as long as the sections on the rights of parents.
discussing what qualities to look for when contracting a marriage for one’s daughter.\(^{223}\) The discrepancy in length between the rights of children and the rights of parents in Ghazali, could be read as his way of keeping the focus on the utility of raising sons for dispensing men’s responsibilities, rather than safeguarding children’s rights. The section is, after all, about raising them correctly, even though it is cloaked in rights-based discourse.

On the other hand, Ghazali includes a discussion on one’s debt to one’s mother, in addition to one’s father, by way of employing a series of hadiths. The first hadith Ghazali narrates in the section on rights of mothers and fathers emphasizes the importance of having family ties: “Whoever is not rebellious or cut off from kinship, can smell the scent of heaven from a distance of [a journey of] 500 years.”\(^{224}\) He provides a quotation from Moses to emphasize parental obligation, even over-allegiance to prophecy: “God most high sent a revelation to Moses, peace be upon him that ‘Whoever obeys the command of his mother and father, I will record him as obedient; and whoever obeys me but does not obey them, I will record as disobedient.’”\(^{225}\) The next hadith likewise places the station of both parents very high, next to God, in terms of priority of doing good since performing good deeds for them is better than all of the obligations one performs for God: “doing good deeds for one’s mother and father is better than prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and war.”\(^{226}\) The next hadith that Ghazali quotes builds upon the idea that children are a source of one’s own spiritual rewards: “What is wasted if someone

\(^{223}\)Weitz, 219-220.

\(^{224}\)Ghazali, 430.

\(^{225}\)Ghazali, 430. Ghazali’s quotation is not Qur’anic quotation but Khadivjam, the editor of the manuscript, has still set off in the text in italics.

\(^{226}\)Ghazali, 430. Ghazali uses the term ghaza for war instead of jihad because specifically means that doing good deeds for parents is better than the lesser jihad for the sake of Islam. Throughout the work Ghazali describes many things as being better than ghaza and jihad. See example on Ghazali, 303.
gives charity, for reward for his deceased mother and father, for they are rewarded and nothing is lessened from his reward?" 227 Along the same lines, he narrates an exchange someone had with the Prophet that keep both parents on equal footing: “My mother and father are deceased, what rights of theirs have remained upon me to accomplish? He said ‘Pray on their behalf, ask for forgiveness, carry out their testament, hold their friends dear, and do good deeds for their relatives.’” 228 Ghazali closes the section on parental rights with a frequently cited hadith that elevates the status of mothers: “The rights of a mother are twice the rights of a father.” 229 Elsewhere, in the section on children’s rights, he also states the hadith in which he sends a young man who wanted to go to battle to go sit beside his mother because his “heaven lies beneath her feet.” 230

Ghazali emphasizes the role of fathers in the patriarchal hierarchy through two quotations. He says, “Know that the right of an elder brother approaches the right of a father; it is known that ‘the right of an elder brother over a younger brother is similar to the right of a father over a son.’” 231 The saying is not attributed to anyone but the editor, Khadivjam, puts it in quotations because it is a common saying. Although this particular tradition does not necessarily diminish a mother’s status, the fact that a father’s power transfers to an elder brother over a mother, indicates a well-developed cultural hierarchy of male power. He also quotes a hadith in which the Prophet said, “No person has fulfilled the rights of a father until he has become his slave: he buys and frees him.” 232 Essentially, a son is indebted to his father and only a father has the ability to free him so one should do good towards him and perhaps even spend on him.

227 Ghazali, 430.
228 Ghazali, 430.
229 Ghazali, 430.
230 Ghazali, 432.
231 Ghazali, 432.
232 Ghazali, 430.
since there is a material debt to the father but not to a mother. Although this is not explicit, money is a primary distinction between what a father provides and what a mother provides in Ghazali’s worldview.

Tusi privileges fathers more explicitly than Ghazali and for similar reasons as Tusi and Davani; fathers hold more money and power, and thus command great respect from their sons. 233 Additionally, however, Tusi focuses on the ways in which a father’s biological role brings a child in debt for his existence. Like Ghazali, but more explicitly, Tusi states that “observance of the rights of one’s mother and father is being devout in the worship of the creator.” 234 He quotes the first half of verse 17:23, “Your lord has decreed do not worship but him alone and to the parents be good” explaining that kindness to parents belongs alongside worship of the creator in the verse because of its importance.” 235 Respect for parents flows naturally from worship of the creator, giving parents a God-like status. Tusi even says that kindness and respect for the parents are even more important than worship of God because, “the Creator does not need compensation of his bounty” but parents do look for that in their children and even rely on it in their old age. 236

The father’s role as immediate cause of creation is more prominent than that of the mother. In fathering a child, a man carries out an act of God’s viceregency by being a

233 Tusi himself writes that he added the section some thirty years after the initial publication of his treatise when prompted by Emperor of the world, ‘Abd al-'Aziz al-Nishapuri, the name that Tusi uses to refer to Hulegu. As G.M. Wickens hypothesizes, it is possible that the addendum was suggested by Hulagu’s son after he succeeded his father, since Tusi dates the addendum to 663, about ten years before he died. G.M. Wickens, “Nasir ad-Din Tusi on the Fall of Baghdad: A Further Study” Journal of Semitic Studies 7, no. 1, 27. Tusi explains that Hulegu wanted a specific discussion about virtues and avoiding vices in the treatment of parents. Tusi defends the first version of his work as mentioning the rights of parents in several places but he admits that there was a serious lacuna that warrants the addition of the section on parents’ rights.

234 Tusi, 236-7.

235 Tusi, 238. Tusi quotes the verse fragment in Arabic.

236 Tusi, 238.
sabab (means) of God’s act of creation. The father is God’s instrument of creating and sustaining a child’s vajud (existence):

First, the father is the primary cause in the contiguous causes of the child’s existence. After that, he is the cause for his upbringing and perfection and until he also reaches bodily perfection due to the advantages of the father’s body, such as growth, nourishment, and other causes of stability and perfection of the child’s nafs. 237

The father is *avval sababi az asbab-i malasiq*, the primary cause among contiguous causes, for existence as well as bodily form of the child. Although the ethicists considered finding a healthy wife who was not too close in blood relations important for the strength of the offspring, mothers were not thought to have much physical contribution to a child’s physical and mental attributes. They thought breast milk could transmit diseases, but not all women nursed their own children and certainly no other biological information was thought to be transmitted. Gestation affords mothers respect and explains their unconditional love for sons, but does not contribute to the child’s perfection. Sons especially were thought to “inherit” the bodies and minds of their fathers, perhaps because they are of the same sex; the ethicists do not discuss a mother’s role in a daughter’s physicality or upbringing.

The ethicists acknowledged a much smaller, even if important, role for mothers. All three ethicists consider mothers to have more intense love for their children because it is conceived of as instinctual and based on a mother’s desire for the physical protection of her child. Tusi and Davani write:

The mother in the beginning of the child’s existence is the collaborator and partner of the father in causality, in the way that the mother is receptive to the effect led [or performed] by the father, she is weighted with the hardship of nine months, endures the dangers of giving birth and pain and suffering of that state, and is also the proximal cause of giving strength to the child, for she is the feminine matter of life. She is occupied with direct physical

237 Tusi, 237-238.
nurture in drawing benefits to him and warding off harm from him for a long time. From the excess of her affection and benevolence she prefers his life to her own life."

In this description, a mother’s biological function is passive. Although she is the father’s collaborator, it is in the manner of receiving and growing his seed. She gestates the child, possibly nurses him, and cares for his physical needs, protecting him out of love. The love even stems from the physical labor: “a mother loves her child more ardently than a father, for she had suffered greater pains and privations in its nourishment.”

According to Judith Tucker, court records from Ottoman Syria and Palestine also show that a mother’s “fullness of affection” was never questioned and sometimes was the basis of courts awarding them custody of their children in divorce cases.

In her study of how medieval Muslim maternal identities were constructed, Kathryn Kueny explains that “following Hippocratic thought, many Muslim sources assert male and females both emit seed that carries traits inherited by offspring.” Thus, theoretically a child can resemble one’s father or mother, or even neither as it was thought to believe that the seeds of both parents contained information that resulted in children resembling distant ancestors. However, she continues:

despite the fact that the Qur’an and subsequent medical literature assert that men and women contribute equally to the generation of life, and that only God—not men—imparts the life-giving “breath,” male physicians tend to favor the seed/soil theory of procreation in that clinical discussions of the maternal body. Although medical scholars confirm a woman’s “sperm” must mingle with the man’s to generate life, they still cast the mother as the passive partner in whom the privileged male seed is planted[...] the majority of medieval scholars contradict [...] sound prophetic advice, along

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238 Tusi, 238. Davani, 206. I have quoted Tusi here, but Davani has an identical passage.

239 Davani, 181.

240 Judith Tucker, In the House of the Law, 113, 118.

241 Kueny, Conceiving Identities, 54.
with the Qur’anic edict that God fashions in wombs what he pleases, by claiming that offspring must always resemble the fathers that sired them.\textsuperscript{242}

Kueny explains that scholars constructed maternal identities as passive through the mechanics of reproduction, despite their Qur’anic and medical knowledge to the contrary. Tusi and Davani’s descriptions of reproduction from Irigaray’s and de Beauvoir’s points of view, treat mother’s roles as vessels that carry children and thus fulfill one of the ways in which their husbands can achieve transcendence. Kueny explains that, the male impulse to assert control over the maternal body suggests a certain level of discomfort with the Qur’anic ideal that God creates in wombs whatever, and however, he pleases. Such a statement assumes an erotic intimacy between women and God that leaves men completely out of the equation. In order to privilege their own procreative power, men usurp God’s omniscience and omnipotence through a variety of authoritative discourses to guarantee the entire reproductive process is directed toward their desired outcome of self-replication.\textsuperscript{243}

Tusi and Davani’s privileging of men’s biological contributions in reproduction asserts men’s \textit{power-over} women and the way men become more God-like in the process of creation.

Tusi then ends all discussion of mother’s roles in raising the children, which essentializes their roles in the text as biological containers for children whom the fathers will then rear to perfection.\textsuperscript{244} He shifts discussion from the father’s biological privilege to his acts of shaping the child’s personality: “Also, from the father’s management he attains perfections such as etiquette, talent, skills, sciences, and way of living which are the basis of growth and perfection of the child’s \textit{nafs}.”\textsuperscript{245} Assuming that only a

\textsuperscript{242}Kueny, \textit{Conceiving Identities}, 52-55.

\textsuperscript{243}Kueny, \textit{Conceiving Identities}, 9.

\textsuperscript{244}There is one reference quoted above about a child’s requirement to respect his father, mother, and tutor. Tusi, 227.

\textsuperscript{245}Tusi, 238.
father can provide this guidance to the son, the father becomes wholly responsible for the son’s upbringing, body and soul. Up until the son is still mastering balance of his nafs, the father-son relationship is analogous to the one his father has with his wife. He is in charge of her body and soul, through seclusion and keeping her nafs occupied, because she does not have the self-control to manage her own nafs. While she remains infantilized, the son grows up and is indebted for the provisions that his father provides: “And with many kinds of hardship, trouble, and carrying burden, he makes a worldly accumulation and savings for [his son], and after his death, puts [his son] in his place.” The continuous financial support of the child and inheritance a father leaves, are the actions for which his son owes him respect.

With fathers being responsible for existence, growth, nourishment, education and morals, at least for boys, there is very little left for mothers to do in the domestic economy. The husband-father is the source and distributor of all resources, genetic, financial, educational, and otherwise. These gendered roles of father as complete guardian, primary live-giver, caretaker, spiritual and ethical guide, and mother as a secondary life-giver and initial nurturer, create gendered responsibilities upon sons.

Children’s responsibility to respect their parents is also gendered and based on biological assumptions of what each parent does for a child. Before that, there are three gender neutral ways one should show respect to both parents. First is to:

have pure love for them in the heart, intent to please them in promises and action, like honoring [them], obedience, service, softness of speech, humbleness, and such things that are not against the pleasure of the Great One,

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246 However, she is still thought of as a free agent whose choices which affect the marital relationship. Davani, 189 and 193.

247 Tusi, 238.

248 Since these texts are addressed to men, it is unknown exactly what reasons the ethicists would suggest to daughters for their indebtedness to parents. But likely it is also that they are the biological causes of their existence (perhaps the father more so than the mother—but we do not know for sure) as well as the financial resources fathers pour into their upbringing.
most high, or anything damaging that He prohibited and if there is a request of one of them, you need to oppose but in a polite way, not by exposing it or fighting.249

The second is to “help them with things before asking, without putting them under obligation or expectation, in the measure of possibility. Finally, the third way to honor both parents is “expressing good will to them in private and public, for the world and the hereafter, protecting their testament and works for which they have given instruction, both in their lifetimes and after their deaths.”250

The specific acts of respect for each parent though, are gendered and exemplify the ways in which the patriarchal family is a microcosm of the city that runs on economic principles of “justice.” Tusi and Davani outline the gendered differences in what a son, or the reader, owes to his parents based on what each has provided:

The difference between rights of the father and rights of the mother is evident from what we have said, for the rights of fathers are more spiritual, and for that reason awareness of this comes to children after acquiring intellectual understanding. And the rights of mothers are more physical [or bodily] and also for that reason from the beginning of sense of feeling children understand it and show more inclination towards mothers. With this reasoning, rights of the father are fulfilled by putting forth obedience, good mention, supplication and praise, which are more spiritual. Rights of the mother are fulfilled by giving money and bestowing means for living, and conferring various kinds of favors that are more physical.251

In this passage, the ethicists set up gendered modes of respecting parents. Tusi and Davani interpret a mother’s physical contribution to a son’s life as repayable with money and provisions for her physical comfort. Sons are indebted to fathers in ways that cannot be repaid monetarily. Instead, fathers deserve prayers, obedience, and

249Tusi, 238-239.
250Tusi, 239.
251Tusi, 239. Davani, 208.
good mention. Although this list of what a son owes a father closely mirrors the three ways one respects both parents, the verbs he uses to explain what each parent is due are telling of differences in attitudes reserved for each parent. For fathers, Tusi states one’s debt is “fulfilled” by “obedience, good mention, and supplication and praise.” For mothers, he states that the debts are fulfilled by the *ithar* (bestowal) and *ihsan* (confer-ring an obligation). The subtle addition of these terms indicates Tusi’s discomfort with awarding mothers for what he sees as limited contributions to a man’s existence and self actualization. The addition of the terms also reiterates the nature of the home and family functioning as a domestic economy, with resources distributed to each member based on their deserts, which make it a microcosm of the broader polity and one of the sites where a man dispenses his ethical duties.

### 3.5 Chapter Conclusion

Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani prescribe marital dynamics that focus on the husband’s ability to dispense his ethical duties. A proper wife preserves a man’s dignity and manhood by respecting him and attending to his needs such as running his household, providing care for children, keeping his books, managing his servants, maintaining his public reputation, while also guarding her own purity and reputation. A husband’s responsibility is to create a family, provide for the family ethically, keep his wife’s mind and *nafs* occupied with his affairs, show measured affection, and be an involved father. In ethics, the ability to unilaterally divorce one’s wife poses an ethical challenge to a man. On the one hand, given the responsibilities a man bears for a wife’s maintenance and livelihood, divorce can be cruel. On the other hand, staying married to an unworthy woman detracts from one’s manhood.

Man’s role as primary and woman’s role as instrumental in the domestic economy
stems from the ethicists understanding of men as rational, spiritual souls and women as embodied, irrational, limited by biological function. While the utility of marriage is bound with procreation, the ethics texts reveal a host of guidelines for choosing a suitable marriage partner and married life that have little to do with marital love, and much to do with running an ethical household. In all three treatises, we see concern for men dealing ethically with their wives, children, parents, and servants, which meant managing each with the appropriate amount of provision, love, respect, kindness and provisions in exchange for contributions to the household. It is a notion of justice in which everyone serves the role they are meant to play according to their skills and intelligence in order to establish a collective true happiness in which the men actualize their ethical potentials and women play instrumental roles to help them do so.

Ghazali states that ‘whoever cannot control his own nafs, it is better that he does not take charge of someone else’s nafs.’252 Likewise Tusi advises “whoever is incapable of fulfilling the conditions for the treatment of wives should rather remain a bachelor, for the mischief of associating with women, quite apart from its disorder, can only result in an infinite number of calamities.” Their caution to the male-only audience stems from the view that womankind are an ordeal that must be dealt with properly, or else not at all. The texts attempt to demystify life with women, who have a predilection for wayward activities or going astray because they do not have the capacity for tahdhib-i akhlaq. Their incapacity to control their own nafses forever infantilizes them and is indicative of the metaphysical tension in the texts. Women are fully human with agency to make choices that affect a marriage, but remain defective in their rational capacity, thereby giving up decision making power to their husbands.

Drawing from the organization of the domestic economy—the relationship between husband and wife, parents and their children, and obligations of children to their

252Ghazali, 308.
parents—I have been able to tease out an internal contradiction in women’s metaphysics in the Islamic ethics texts. Both the Qur’an and their studies about human rationality in comparison to that of animals demand the ethicists to think of the nature of the individual nafs of men and women are the same. The human nafs is prone to base behavior because of its animalistic or self-indulgent tendencies but is, in theory, capable of reform and being steered toward ethical directions. However, the worldly hierarchy that exists between men and women, and husband and wife in particular, was based on the understanding that women are unable to reform their nafses. The texts reveal women’s conceptual natures as bound to their roles as wives. Tusi summarizes his rules as “the foremost condition for ruling womenfolk” as though they are a different species from men and “thus the one who should command—commands, the one who should obey—obeys, and the regulator—regulates.”²⁵³ Men are commanders and regulators and women naturally obey. All three ethicists associate manhood or maleness with rationality, prestige, and concern with issues of universal and spiritual importance. Women by nature can be emotional, jealous, foolish, or petty.

The metaphysical tension in the ethics texts is also evident in the mentions of women’s bodies and their biological functions. Again, the ethicists recognize women as full human beings, but are perhaps troubled with their ability to birth children and nourish them. Kathryn Kueny’s work on the maternal body sheds light on how normative Islamic texts’ focus on men’s power in conception, over God’s omnipotence in creation allows for “the innate, dichotomous, and hierarchical relationship between men and women based on reproduction, and the male’s self-proclaimed authority within the context of that relationship to govern and suppress the maternal body so that he alone may proliferate the type of life God commands in an earthly capacity.”²⁵⁴

²⁵³Tusi, 217.

²⁵⁴Kueny, Conceiving Identities, 8.
mothers and fathers do not command the same kind of respect. The father’s rights are all encompassing and spiritual, while mothers only deserve worldly, and therefore lowly, compensation of money for their physical contributions.

The husband-father disseminates provisions and is in charge of all the *nafses* in the domestic economy. In the domestic economy, a man dispenses his divine charge to become a microcosm of God’s work through *khalifat* (vicegerency) and by achieving *sa’adat* (happiness) through taking charge of his wife and children’s *nafses*. He is responsible for keeping the wife instrumental as his deputy and raising (male) children in accordance with *tahdhib-i akhlaq*. In the next chapter, I discuss how the *akhlaq* texts imagine an ethical man dispenses his duties on the broader scale of society.
Chapter 4

Homosocial Masculinity and the Ethics of Living in a Community

This chapter is about how cosmology, structure, and power construct the ethical man in the male homosocial realm of community and public. In the akhlaq treatises the third level of ethics is the world outside the home: one’s community, city, society, or state. Tusi explains the cosmological relationship of the individual man to society: “just as each person is a part of the household, so each household is a part of the locale, each locale is a part of the city, each city is a part of the nation, and each nation is a part of the inhabitants of the world.”¹ This statement reiterates the idea that an ethical man is a microcosm unto himself; when he perfects his own nafs, he can be the source of ethics on all these scales of human existence. The ethicists use the term siyasat or governance to describe the ethics of how to live amongst and treat a combination of male individuals in a community, city, and the world; it is the same term as they use to describe household management and domestic ethics. Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani also imagined the structure of society to be gender segregated. While women served as instrumental players in the ethics of the household, in their minds, the outside world was almost entirely dominated by men interacting with other men, regardless of historical reality that indicates pre-modern Muslim women participated in some public

¹Tusi, 254.
activities.\textsuperscript{2} According to the ethicists, because a man can only be ethical through his association with other human beings, in order to dispense his ethical responsibilities fully, he must study \textit{siyasat} to understand his place in society’s hierarchy of power and his relationship to other men.

However, there is a tension between attentiveness to personal ethics and relations with others. Drawing on Aristotle, Davani states “It is not proper that a man dedicate all his abilities to sociality [...] rather, his powers should be employed in acquiring a Godly life, for although he has a small body, he has great ability, noble intellect, and his intellect is more nobel than all other creations.”\textsuperscript{3} In the cosmic scheme, sociality is but one small aspect of living ethically. Yet a man’s public reputation is integral to his overall character and intimately tied to his masculinity as well as his ability to secure income for himself and his family. As I demonstrate in Chapter Two, discussion of manhood appears in the texts sometimes as a circular definition in which manhood is defined as the ethically balanced soul while the balanced soul defined an ethical man. The tension is never really resolved in the works since ultimately man is supposed to focus both on the self and on ethical relations with others. Thus, throughout their chapters on public social relations, the ethicists focus on how the male ethical subject encounters social institutions, different classes and calibers of people.

In the previous chapter, I examine ethical masculinity in the domestic realm through analysis of both husband-father and wife-mother roles discussed in the texts, and in the occasional presentation of masculinity as defined in contrast to femininity. In the exclusively male social arena, femininity continues to be present as a contrast to masculinity. But without obvious roles in the texts for women to fulfill outside the domestic realm, the contrast is not readily available in the analysis of how social ethics in the all-male

\textsuperscript{2}See Chapter 1 for overview on pre-modern Persianate women’s education, mosque attendance, patronage, and other public activities.

\textsuperscript{3}Davani, 239.
public realm are gendered and constructed as normative male. Instead, we need to look at the institutions and social relations that construct masculinity. Luce Irigaray’s contends that not only is the masculine considered the universal form in philosophy, but also the entire edifice of ethics is constructed with a male centered view. She calls for re-interpretation of “everything concerning the relations between the subject and discourse, the subject and the world, the subject and the cosmic, the microcosmic and the macrocosmic” precisely because all of these have been articulated with the males as the universal humans.  

Her critique of the male as universal in philosophy illuminates the ways in which the Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani imagined the entire world as belonging to men. The principles of ethical relationships between humans on all levels of interaction are entirely oriented by the universal male’s goals in life, to be a means of \textit{sa’adat} and \textit{khalifat} for all people. For the ethics of every human relationship that Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani articulate, the ethicists keep in mind man’s universal position and goals. The same is true for men’s relationships with one another outside the home.

Men continue to perform gender when they interact with men of all classes, ages, religions, and races in various social situations such as interacting with superiors, employees, or friends. The nature of particular institutions, such as the court, intellectual circles, the open bazaar, neighborhoods, and the broader city, call for particular kinds of male, homosocial behaviors. Within their premodern Muslim milieu, the ethicists describe ethical comportment in social interactions with various classifications of men in such institutions. These interactions all shape ethical masculinity. I argue that the things that make a man ethical in the male public realm, namely the acts of the balanced \textit{nafs}, such as treating others according to what is due to them, are all gendered elements of his knowledge of society’s intellectual hierarchy and ethics training, even when not acting in relation to women.

\footnote{Irigaray, \textit{An Ethics of Sexual Difference}, 6.}
In this chapter I will explore the ethical precepts as Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani imagined for the urban and homosocial environment in order to uncover how they constructed masculinity and men’s ethical relations with one another. The ethicists present theories of urban and civic association, justice, love and friendship that explain human social behavior and association, as well as specific guidelines for interaction with superiors, equals, subordinates, friends, and foes. The people they refer to in each of these categories are all men, but they are all classified by their intellectual abilities, which shows that ethics is not just gendered, but also subject to social hierarchy. I ask what are the ideal kinds of masculinity for men interacting with each other in society? Is there possibility for social and intellectual mobility? What are the elements that make social behavior ethical? The picture of the ethical man that emerges is of one who is mindful of his surroundings and station in society, responsible for himself and his friends and family, and careful with his words and actions. In this responsibility to hold himself and those around him accountable, lies structural power of social institutions to shape ethical discourse. In the ethics texts, ultimate masculinity is defined in terms of power, intellectual hierarchy and ethical comportment in homosocial structures of court, civic, and community life.

4.1 Institutions Shaping Homosocial Masculinity

In *akhlaq* a man’s ethical responsibilities are shaped by his intellectual and social place in society. Thus, the very definition of what it means to be a man in society is dependent upon power dynamics and hierarchy present in a given city or locale. Sociologist Michael Kimmel encourages thinking about masculinity in relation to other markers of human identity:

Men and masculinities are not formed by gender alone [...]. Men and mas-
culinities are shaped by differences of age, by class situation, by ethnicity and racialization, and so on. The gendering of men only exists in the intersections with other social divisions and social differences. Indeed, paradoxically, it might be argued that as studies of men and masculinities continue to deconstruct the gendering of men and masculinities and assumptions about them, other social divisions, such as age, class, and disability, come more to the fore and are seen as more important.\(^5\)

Men are gendered through the processes of social interaction that take place on the basis of their age, class, race, ability and more. Deconstructing masculinity in this way allows us to see how various social elements shape it. As I explain in subsequent sections, in the \textit{akhlaq} texts we see these social processes particularly taking place on the grounds of rational ability, class, and age, wherein a man’s rational ability is often tied to his occupation and social class, and his age determines what stage of involvement he has with society.

A man’s social class determines how he participates in broader social institutions. Specifically, in the ethicists’ minds, where a man falls in the hierarchy of intellect and his class situation (often related to each other) determines the proper situational conduct required with various kinds of other men. Thus, in addition to social processes, institutions shape masculinity. Kimmel explains:

\begin{quote}
institutional arenas and processes form the framework in which masculinities are experienced and expressed. Gender identity is more than a simple psychological property belonging to a person, something one "has" as a result of socialization and that one consequently inserts into all interactions. Gender identity is a constant process, always being reinvented and rearticulated in every setting, micro or macro.\(^6\)
\end{quote}

Gender remains a product of socialization; that aspect of the definition of gender does not change when we study men—rather, in studying men and masculinities we look at particular things that construct masculinity. So in the last chapter, I examined


\(^6\)Kimmel et al, 7.
masculinity in terms of men’s roles in relation to that of women in marriage. In this chapter, I examine masculinity in the context of men’s relationships to each other in large scale civic institutions that make up the homosocial public. In other words, masculinity constantly develops as a result of social and institutional interactions. Men not only assert masculinity in institutional settings but they adjust their performance of masculinity according to the standards and norms of the institutions. As I argue in the below sections on city planning and the ideal ethical cities, masculinity in the texts is in large part created by the social institutions of court, mosques, bazaars, and neighborhoods where homosocial interactions occur and uphold social and intellectual hierarchies.

Sociologist David Morgan explains the relationship between masculinity and class power. He argues that, “class is gendered, and men have assumed or have been allocated, the role of class agents.”\(^7\) Men define the standards of their class, and when men are in positions of power, they hold power in gendered ways. Additionally, the world is ruled by patriarchy in both the public and private spheres under a unified sense of masculinity. However, as Morgan explains that unity of masculinity breaks down when considering class:

> On the one hand we have the identification of men, all men, with the public sphere, the sphere of production, which contained those areas in society where the action was. Many men, whatever the amount or source of their income, could identify with the provider role [of the household] and the sense of moral responsibility that this implied. But at the same time, class experiences and practices pointed to different ways of being men, different ways of being constituted as effective social actors. These differences [...] become embodied in a range of finer distinctions, such as those between ‘mental’ and ‘manual,’ ‘skilled’ and ‘unskilled’ [...].\(^8\)

So while all men are heads of households and privileged in the domestic sphere over

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\(^8\) Morgan, 169-170.
women, they relate to each other on the basis of their class, alongside other identity markers, when they are among men. As we see below, the ethicists recommend how men should behave with superiors, inferiors, and equals on the basis of their own social class. Masculinity in public homosocial settings depends on one’s social class relative to others, which is in theory determined by one’s rational abilities and skills.

4.1.1 The Virtuous and Un-virtuous Cities

In the genre of Islamic philosophy, a city is a cohesive collaboration of people who associate with one another out of need for survival. Davani defines a city as “an analogy of the home, a place of public congregation which is disciplined to organization of affairs.” The ethicists describe cities, their conditions, and rightful and objectionable things that go on in cities based on the cosmological notion that personal ethics of man and the politics of a city are one. The connection between ethics and social order were well established in Islamic discourses by philosophers such as al-Farabi (d. 950), Ibn Sina (d. 1037), and Ibn Rushd (d. 1198). The cornerstone of Farabi’s political philosophy is that man’s virtue can lead to political ordering of virtuous cities in order to achieve happiness. Ibn Sina departs from this in that he privileged individual ethics over domestic and societal politics, but held that political science enables man to fully realize divine wisdom and prophecy on a broad level. Ibn Rushd, whom Tusi and Davani quote directly, synthesizes that ethics are inseparable from politics because ethics involves people living together in civic association and people’s relationships with each other.

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9 Davani, 221.


one another.\textsuperscript{12} He expands upon the Platonic idea that justice means that each person serves the role that he is meant to play in the city according to his skills and intelligence.

Because the urban environment is an essential location for ethical behavior, Tusi describes the ideal, virtuous city and four types of un-virtuous cities. He posits that cities can have their own dispositions and the inhabitants of a given city can be characterized as having particular qualities and temperaments.\textsuperscript{13} Also, as a result of the cosmological connection between personal ethics, which I argue is gendered as male, the primary character of cities is largely determined by the ethics of its male inhabitants. Tusi assumes that it is the behavior of the men of a city that creates its character. A city, in turn, serves as a fundamental part of a man’s identity.

In her study of travel narratives that chronicle journeys to and within Muslim lands, Roxanne Euben argues that “cities rather than larger political units, such as states, served as first source of identification and allegiance.”\textsuperscript{14} From a normative ethics perspective, this identification with a city was gendered since the ethicists strongly advise readers to limit women’s involvement and presence outside the home. The ethicists explain the nature of cities in order to provide the male reader with an aerial perspective for measuring the collective ethical character of his locale. The passages provide us with a macro-level view of how the ethicists imagined men were meant to live together and cooperate in sustaining human life through creating social structures of power and hierarchy.

The virtuous city or \textit{madinah-i fazilah} is a macrocosm of the virtuous individual

\textsuperscript{12}Butterworth, 236.

\textsuperscript{13}Tusi, 299. Davani omits this discussion but retains discussion of the profession-based classes of mankind.

\textsuperscript{14}Euben, 66. Euben makes this case using Ibn Battuta’s strong self-identification as a Tanji (from Tangier) throughout his \textit{rihla} as an example.
and the virtuously led household. Tusi explains that it is a combination of a peoples whose efforts are destined upon acquiring good and the removing evil [...] Their agreement in actions means that everyone recognizes acquiring perfection in the same way, and the acts that proceed from them discharge in the mould of wisdom and set in intellectual refinement and right guidance and are destined to follow the laws of justice and conditions of governance; so that even with people’s disagreements and differences of their states, the end goal of their actions is one, and their ways and manners are consistent with one another.\(^{15}\)

His concept accounts for differences among individuals, likely in terms of their rational abilities or skill sets which, as I discuss in more detail below, comprised the various social classes of men according to Tusi and Davani. However, the overall character of the virtuous city comes from the fact that it is composed of ethical men who are kind and aspire to do good. The inhabitants of the city act together and agree on the same values of goodness.

The un-virtuous cities or *madinah-i ghayr fazilah* contain a critical mass of unethical men whose *nafses* are imbalanced in some way, and exhibit behavioral symptoms outlined in Chapter Two, such as greed, anger, or laziness, depending on which faculties are deficient or over performing. In ignorant cities or *mudun jahilah*, the first kind of un-virtuous city, people do not use their faculties of rationality. These cities are usually made up of materialistic, greedy, hedonistic, opportunistic, dominating, or self-serving people, or some combination of these.\(^{16}\) Among the several sub-classes of the ignorant city is one called the “city of freemen” or *madinah-i ahrar* which is admired because of the individuality of its inhabitants, which are all seemingly equal and do not attempt to better one another or use each other. This kind of city accommodates all appetites and characters. However, because no difference is made between stranger and resident, wise men and fools, the distinction between good and evil is lost in this kind of city.

\(^{15}\)Tusi, 280-281.

\(^{16}\)Tusi, 289-296.
and good and evil are expressed in extremes.\textsuperscript{17}

The second kind of un-virtuous cities is impious or \textit{madinah-i fasqah}. Among the men of these cities, other faculties dominate over the faculties of rationality. These men recognize the good from the bad but they give into the bad because they succumb to the desires of the concupiscent or irascible faculties.\textsuperscript{18} The third of un-virtuous cities, errant cities or \textit{madinah-i zaalah}, contain people who are deficient entirely in the rational faculty so they are never able to fully achieve true lasting happiness.\textsuperscript{19} Finally, growth cities attempt to improve their own ranks by developing close to virtuous cities. They consist of hypocrites, impostors of the virtuous, rebels against the rule of law, apostates who negate the laws of virtue or ethics because they do not understand them, and delusional leaders.\textsuperscript{20}

Tusi and Davani also hold that the leadership of a city has the responsibility of setting the ethical tone for the entire city by dividing goods, services, and resources fairly. It can set the course of a city’s fate and character. The institutions of the city such as the learning centers, mechanisms of producing and distributing goods and services, and the military or royal order are all part of a city’s ethical character.

\section*{4.1.2 The Historical Premodern Muslim Cities}

As seen throughout this work, Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani create their \textit{akhlaq} guidelines in response to real life challenges and moral dilemmas they observed personally, at home, and in society. They hold that the urban environment is a macrocosm of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17}Tusi, 296.
\item \textsuperscript{18}Tusi, 299.
\item \textsuperscript{19}Tusi, 299.
\item \textsuperscript{20}Tusi, 299.
\end{itemize}
ethical man, and the third level of ethics where he can fulfill his ethical duties. A look at the historical elements of the premodern Muslim urban centers gives us a context for the ethics that Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani prescribe in this third level of ethical responsibility.

Throughout the Saljuq, Ismaili, Ilkhanid, Aq Qoyonlu, and other periods, ruling dynasties sought to build their legacies through superior statecraft and establishment of lasting urban and civic institutions. At the high points of their careers, each of the three ethicists was supported by court funds to enhance the intellectual, religious, and ethical profile of his ruler. Their discussion about ethics in the city is a combination of ethics for non-royal courtiers and for rulers themselves because it speaks to their observations about behavior in the urban environment as a whole, in and outside of court, and in line with their ideals about how an ethical society should function.

We can also contextualize Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani’s distaste for women’s presence in the public sphere and their meddling in public and political affairs with the historical presence of women at mosques, bazaars, and at court. While the texts support a relationship between male power and structures of urban space and visibility, historical evidence of women’s involvement upsets this prescribed gender segregation as the ethical structure of society and men’s exclusive hold on power.

City Plans

Before the Umayyad period, urban Muslims lived in cities that were developed in antiquity by settled Arab tribes or in Byzantine or Sassanian towns and cities. The

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21 Susan Ossman reviews the substantial work of scholars such as Janet Abu-Lughod and Leslie Pierce who refute the Orientalist view of the “Islamic city” in which women were “powerless and homebound.” Susan Ossman, “Cities: Islamic Cities” in Encyclopedia of Women in Islamic Cultures Suad Josef ed., Vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 23-26.
Umayyad period saw expansion of Damascus and Jerusalem and the establishment of several garrison cities. The Abbasids established themselves in Baghdad and the surrounding regions. Amira Bennison explains that their cities “adopt[ed] a more Persian style of planning, construction and statecraft, influenced by the Sasanian legacy in Mesopotamia and the integration of Persian converts to Islam at the highest echelons of government.”\(^{22}\) They built well-planned, culturally oriented cities between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, in the Khorasan region, and beyond, incorporating ancient Persian styles and ruins.

Baghdad itself was built as a circular city with the caliph’s grandiose palace in the middle, complete with a mosque and an open plaza space for parades. Bennison describes Baghdad as a plan of concentric circles, segregated along class lines, with gates that were oriented towards Makkah:

There was an inner ring of residences inhabited by princes and high officials and then an outer ring of less sumptuous dwellings for the caliph’s Khurasani army, their families and assorted serving staff. Four thoroughfares cut through these rings from the central plaza to four city gates located in the outer double walls.\(^{23}\)

Concentric circles with the ruler at the center and ancillary staff situated in the outer rings, is a key image that emerges in a number of ways in ethics, including the idea that the ethical man is a microcosm of the world. In this case, the city plan of Baghdad as the quintessential modern Muslim city quite literally translates to the cosmology of social classes and an individual’s place in society. As I discuss later in this chapter, all three ethicists treat the ruler as the central figure who sets the ethical tone of justice for the land, thus it is apt that he is located at the center of the city’s plan.

Naturally, a city built on such a grand plan was a vibrant commercial center with


\(^{23}\)Bennison, 70.
many suburbs and regions of the Abbasid empire catering to its needs:

Everything which the empire had to offer could be made or found in Baghdad, and its huge population lived off the produce not only of Iraq but of the empire as a whole: grain from the fertile farmlands of the north was shipped from Mosul downriver, dates and fruit came from the Hijaz, Syria and many other regions by caravan, while the ‘Abbasids raised horses on northern Persian stud farms and imported richly embroidered ceremonial fabrics from the southern Persian province of Khuzistan. The wealthy denizens of the city –including princes and princesses of the blood –constructed luxurious secluded homes sheltered by high walls along the Tigris [...].

The suburbs were teeming with support labor and people of all classes lived in and outside the city in their respective communities. The Umayyads in Spain and Fatimids in Egypt were inspired by Baghdad to build cities that made similar regal statements of power residing at the city centers. Although Baghdad was the preeminent city of its region and time, multiple cities in Persianate lands developed along similar plans, but to lesser scales.

Due to the diversity in philosophical and sectarian beliefs and practices, older cities such as Basra and Kufa continued to be important for intellectual or religious activity. As I describe in Chapter One, the major philosophical debates between Mu’tazilis and Ash’aris took place in Basra, even though Baghdad was the center for scholarly patronage. All of the cities, and thus their tradesmen and intellectuals were connected. Bennison states that “Muslims conceptualized their empire as a series of highways connecting an endless chain of cities, towns and villages.” This network was a structure of power that excluded many classes of men and almost all women, who did not participate in trade or intellectual pursuits. Ethics of the urban realm reflect this social reality in that it privileges the men of upper classes and the intellectuals by addressing mostly their ethical conduct. In fact, all three ethicists show their discomfort with

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24 Bennison, 71.
25 Bennison, 80.
women’s presence in public with comments about restricting their presence or ignoring them.

The cultural and trade activities of the networks of cities did not cease as the Abbasids weakened and gave way to Saljuq and other powers’ rise to prominence. The architectural and urban plans of cities established by other dynasties did not necessarily remain circular, but certainly did retain the major elements of basic urban needs such as city walls, gates, mosques, madrasas, a main bazaar, hamams, soup kitchens and other amenities, depending on the size of the populations they served. These places serve as the backdrop and the physical locations where homosocial interactions took place and required ethical regulation. For instance, Ghazali discusses ethical conduct between men in the bathhouse, at the bazaar, and the mosque.26

Under Saljuq patronage, religious and educational institutions had expanded beyond the mosque to include schools, colleges, libraries, smaller community mosques, khanqahs, and charitable hospitals and soup kitchens.27 Members of the ruling family and rich urban elites dedicated to community welfare, a few exceptional women included among them, would endow waqfs or charitable trusts for the founding and upkeep of these institutions. A most famous example was the Saljuq vizier Nizam al-Mulk’s madrasa, the Nizamiyya, where Ghazali taught at the height of his career. The faculty, teachers, doctors, librarians, and managers of the charitable endowments were unsurprisingly all men. However, many were supported by female patrons. Khanqahs, many of them also built by Nizam al-Mulk, were Sufi lodges, that were predominantly strict about male only entrance. Khanqahs were the place where mystical knowledge and practice, as well as convictions of javanmardi or young manliness, could be perfected. The ethicists do not specifically refer to khanqah life, but speak of centers of

26Ghazali, 520-524.
27Bennison, 88.
learning as male spaces and of the knowledge of ethics to be available only to men, not unlike the notion of javanmardi imparted to men in textitkhanqahs. Farhad Daftary explains that the interaction between Ismaili and Sufi ideas is apparent in concepts of javanmardi, including parallels between ethics of the relationship between teachers and disciples.\textsuperscript{28}

### Mosques and bazaars

Two major institutions in any city or town were the great mosque and a neighboring marketplace. In her legal and social history of women in the mosque, Marion Katz argues that jurists often reacted in response to, rather than set the standards for, women’s participation and activities in the mosque. She explains that “scholars seeking evidence of women’s presence in mosques have often taken male duties and activities as representative of mosque usage in general and simply examined the extent to which women did or did not partake in these same religious pursuits.”\textsuperscript{29} However, “women’s mosque-based activities were not simply more limited or constrained versions of men’s.”\textsuperscript{30} Her work shows that like men, women used the mosque for a full range of social, leisure, and legal purposes, much to the chagrin of ‘ulama’ at various periods in history. The ethicists likewise express their disapproval at women’s presence in public spaces, which they view as male-only. However, they do not explicitly recommend keeping women from the mosque.

The urban mosques were large enough to accommodate the major Friday prayer con-


\textsuperscript{30}Katz, 7.
gregation of a city and the madrasa. The male only ‘ulama’, who taught and studied at
the mosque, played an important role in showing political support to the rulers during
Friday sermons and otherwise.\textsuperscript{31} Mosques functioned as central civic, educational, and
legal institutions, as well as prayer spaces. The open courtyards

were often places where ordinary people took naps, ate meals, peddled
wares, sought legal redress for their grievances, and sometimes took up
temporary or long-term residence. With the exception of the marketplace,
before the rise of the coffeehouse in the sixteenth century the mosque was
one of the few places were an adult could tarry and socialize outside of the
domestic courtyard or the neighborhood cul-de-sac. \textsuperscript{32}

The \textit{qadis} would decide cases at the mosque as well, surrounded by secretaries and
record keepers. There was plenty of shouting, political debate, and hustle and bustle
associated with the mosques. They also attracted notaries, astrologers, and male and
female peddlers to set up shop in or outside their gates.

The marketplace, bazaar or \textit{suq}, was another place of hustle and bustle in Muslim
cities.\textsuperscript{33} Generally close to the mosque, it housed sellers of goods, services, produce,
meats, grains, and groceries. Bennison describes it as “a second public space for people–
primarily men–to gather and communicate as well as buy and sell.”\textsuperscript{34} Manufacturing
of goods from raw material also took place:

Small producer-retailers tended to work in close proximity to other produc-
ers of the same or similar items, making and selling their own products.
Markets of this type included those of the shoemakers, tentmakers, brass-
workers, carpenters, jewelers and numerous other craftsmen. Other goods

\textsuperscript{31}Bennison, 81-82.

\textsuperscript{32}Katz, 6.

\textsuperscript{33}Mohammad Gharipour explains that the many definitions of cities in Muslim lands, orientalist and
otherwise, all have in common the bazaar as a unique element. Mohammad Gharipour, “The Culture
and Politics of Commerce: Bazaars in the Islamic World” in \textit{The Bazaar in the Islamic City: Design,
1-2.

\textsuperscript{34}Bennison, 85.
Many of the local rural producers of textiles and fabrics were women. Women’s groups in Turkic dynasties from the 9th to the 15th centuries were “stationed within the market as textile producers and weavers.”\(^{36}\) According to Yosef Rapoport, in late medieval Damascus, the textile industry largely relied upon women’s ability to spin fabrics at home due to their need for private income apart from their husbands’ provisions or if they were divorced, as was common. Apart from this participation, the market was primarily where men dealt with each other as they exchanged both money and ideas. Customers were also mostly male but it was common for women to venture into the marketplace to purchase goods and services for the home. Rich women would often stay at home and send male or female servants to the market.

Poets, storytellers, and orators would gather in the marketplace to recite original verse for passing by patrons in Persian and Arabic.\(^{37}\) In cities such as Shiraz, Shahrastan, and Balkh, prominent gardens adjacent to the bazaar were places of respite from the urban bustle and a site for contemplation for scholars and poets. Public baths for men were not only a place of retreat, but also a location for the urban elites to meet and gossip about each other and politics.\(^{38}\) The ethicists were concerned with the goings on in the urban environment. For example, Ghazali outlines bazaar and bath-

\(^{35}\)Bennison, 85.


\(^{37}\)Bennison, 86.

house etiquette as he saw both as potential places were unethical acts such as cheating, backbiting, or conspiring could take place. The ethicists’ discussions on ethics of just dealings and friendly demeanor remind men how to behave in public.

4.1.3 Theories of Social Classes

Tusi, and Davani each describe how society is divided into social classes that are hierarchical based on power, wealth, and intellect. The classes correspond to the series of concentric circles in city plans, which reinforces the idea that power and privilege reside at the core with the ruler and those close to him. The ruler is located at the center, followed by those who practice those rules, those who enforce them, and the ancillary supporters of these primary classes in the outermost ring. Although any ethical man is the microcosm of the city and of the world, the ethicists really speak of elite men as possessing full ethical potential to be microcosms of the world. They include this material in the treatises to give their audience knowledge of who belongs where and how to treat others and navigate society.

Tusi describes the classes of people in passages on characteristics of the virtuous city and where he discusses the conditions for justice to be served. The premier social class regulates the city and its members are called “men of virtues, the perfect philosophers, who are distinguished from peers of their own kind by their rational faculty and well-directed opinions on significant affairs. Knowledge of realities about existent things is

39 Although she recognizes that Tusi and Davani are speaking of ideal societies, Ann Lambton argues that Tusi and Davani are important sources of social history as well since very little writing was done by non-elites in medieval Persia. She also points out that Tusi’s social theory was modeled after ancient Sassanian structures. Lambton, 221-223. See also Ann Lambton, Theory and Practice in Medieval Persian Government, (London: Variorum Reprints, 1980), Section VII, 4. Louise Marlowe explains the widespread influence Tusi’s discussion on society had in Turkish, Arabic, and Indian Muslim contexts. Marlowe, 8.
their skill, and they are called the most virtuous.” Tusi believes that the intelligentsia of a city set the moral compass and influenced what laws and policies, at least in theory, were enforced in the virtuous city.

The second class is made up of the practitioners of the ideas that the first class generated. They are called the “masters of tongues” or sometimes called the “men of the pen.” Their function is to

bring the public and the inferior peoples to degrees of relative perfection, and invite the general people of the city to that which the first group believes, so that whoever is fit to accept their exhortations and counsel progresses above his own rank. Their craft involves the sciences of scholarship, jurisprudence, delivering sermons, rhetoric, poetry and calligraphy.

In this passage, we see not just a snapshot of the hierarchy of social classes, but also the idea that men can uplift other men, particularly through following the ethical ideals set by the wisest men of society, the philosophers. As such, the people of the pen serve as intermediaries even though they are made up of high class officials such as, “the masters of the sciences and knowledge, the fuquha, judges, secretaries, accountants, geometrician, astronomers, physicians, and poets, upon whom the constitution of the worldly and faith affairs depend. In the natural elements, they are water.” Tusi and Davani also employ an analogy of earthly elements that must be in balance for the virtuous city’s existence. The analogy uses the term mathabat, which implies the scheme in which people will be rewarded by God for playing their part. In order for there to be justice, or for Davani, in order for cities to remain virtuous, the elements of fire, water, earth, and wind need to each do their part in creating equilibrium.

Third are the people who are in charge of measures and justice. They “oversee the

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40 Tusi, 286.
41 Tusi, 286.
42 Tusi, 305.
laws of justice among the people of the city, observe necessary measurement in taking and giving, and advocate for equality. Their crafts are sciences of accounting and demanding and receiving, geometry, medicine, and astronomy; they are called the measurers.”  

Some professions overlap between the second and third classes, but ultimately one’s function in society, establishing and practicing rules for society or measurement, determined which group one belongs. Also included in this class are “the men of the sword” who are members of the defense forces of the state. Tusi explains that “the order of the world is kept by their interventions and they have the position of fire in the natural elements.”  

As I discussed in Chapter Two, the ethicists thought of justice as a virtue that could be acquired and perfected by individuals. They also thought of it as a societal virtue in so far as individuals in the community were practicing and enforcing it (but not as a theoretical ideal as I discuss in greater detail below). Thus, professions of measurement and law enforcement are conceptually linked to justice because on the societal level justice are a tangible, measurable, and equitable division of resources.

In his section on the conditions for justice in society, Tusi deviates slightly from his description of social classes in that he adds warriors as constituting their own separate fourth class, “who are marked with have to protect women’s quarters and defend the dignity of the people of the city, preventing the lords of the un-virtuous cities from coming to them. They possess the conditions of bravery and zeal in fighting and defense.”  

The term Tusi uses for women’s quarters is harim, which generally just means private quarters where women lived. Tusi does not mention protection of the harim anywhere else in the text and does not elaborate on what the tasks of this group would

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43 Tusi, 286.

44 Tusi, 305.

45 Tusi, 286. The term I have translated as dignity is actually baizat, which literally means egg, testicle, or the center of anything, especially a city, which suggests that the center or essence of a city is sexualized in the context of needing protection against pillage from another city.
be, nor do we see it in Davani’s treatise. Because male relatives, particularly husbands, are responsible for women’s safety, this force to protect women’s quarters might be akin to a police force specifically watching to maintain women’s location out of public or gender segregation in public.

The fourth class (or fifth, if the warriors are a class of their own) is the community that “puts in order the sustenance and provisions, whether by way of transaction or production or by way of tax-collection or other means, and they are called the men of property.” They are also called the “the men of negotiation, such as merchants who bring goods from region to region, artisans, masters of crafts, tradesmen, and tax-collectors, without whose assistance life for the species would be impossible. They take the place of air in the natural elements.” This class of people are essentially the middle men and merchants who deal the goods and services to the people above them in rank. They share their social class with the producers of these goods such as “the men of husbandry, such as ploughmen, farmers, tillers, and agriculturalists, who organize provisions for every community perpetuity of individuals would cease without their help. They take the place of earth in the natural elements.” All four (five) classes are construed as essential in sustaining life for the human species, that lives in association with one another.

Notably, the ruler of the city is not included in the scheme of social classes. He stands apart, not because he can’t be compared to common folk, but rather because he is responsible for the acts and order of all the common folk. Tusi describes the head of the city as the one who “brings every class in its place and district and arranges leadership and service, such that a group is inferior relative to another group but leads

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46 Tusi, 286.
47 Tusi, 305.
48 Tusi, 305.
relative to another group, until one reaches the people who do not have aptitude for leadership and these are the absolute servants.” In this passage, the hierarchy of society is based on fitness for authority, which comes from knowledge for the upper classes or skill set for lower classes. Thus, intellectual ability is essential to placing one in the class structure. The ruler orchestrates the structure.

Davani has a slightly different organization than Tusi for the classes that constitute the righteous city, as well as the specific occupations that make up the classes. Instead of holding up the philosophers as a separate social class as Tusi does, Davani combines the philosophers and the various types of scholars in one class. For Davani, the first are the scholars and savants, “on whom organization of the city depends. They have the ultimate practical wisdom and perfect philosophy by whose power they achieve excellence.” Later in the text he broadens the premier class to include all men of the pen: “religious scholars, jurists, judges, scribes, accountants, engineers, astronomers, physicians, and poets–for the foundation of faith and the world is dependent and bound upon the virtuous efforts of the boldness of their pens and their graceful knowledge.

The second class stands intellectually below the first but is important for transmitting knowledge to the common folk. They “are a group that invites the public toward human perfection and prohibit evils with words. Their work includes rhetoric, jurisprudence, oration, poetry and such.” As in Tusi’s formulation, this class represents the element of water, which can transmit light more luminous than the sun, an important metaphor of emanating wisdom and spirituality for Davani.

Third is a class of “measurers. They are the group that watches over the laws of

49 Tusi, 284.
50 Davani, 247.
51 Davani, 257.
52 Davani, 247.
justice among the people of the city and their opinion is entrusted with the assigning the measurements of things. Their work includes mathematics, accounting, engineering, medicine, and astronomy.”

As stated above, in a different passage Davani moves physicians and astronomers to the first class, since they are men of the pen, and replaces them in the second class with artisans and craftsmen. Again the notion of measurement and equity come together in this class. Fourth are soldiers “guard the city from enemy oppression and takeover [...] their work is bravery, pageantry, and awfulness.” Fifth are the “tradesmen. They organize food and clothing for the above groups,” whether privately or through the state.

Davani also presents another ordering of his division of classes, which correspond to the natural elements in equilibrium, as we see in Tusi’s work. The scholars or men of the pen remain first as the element of water but he places the men of the sword, representing the element of fire, as second instead of fourth. Third come the tradesmen as the element of wind. Fourth, are the men of agriculture, who represent earth. Privileging the men of the sword as second perhaps is a response to the political uncertainty of Davani’s time.

He also outlines five classes of “weeds” of society. They are hypocrites who act like philosophers and scholars, while they are self serving; the inverted ones who accommo-

53 Davani, 247.
54 Davani, 257.
55 Davani, 247-248. Note that the term for awfulness here is haybat, the same adjective used in the domestic management chapters to describe how a husband should appear to a wife. Haybat means to have awe, gravity, dignity, or to command respect out sternness. Here it would be the kind of fear and awe that a uniform would command.
56 Davani, 248.
57 Davani, 257.
58 Davani, 258.
59 Davani, 248.
date religion to their worldly and bodily desires; rebels against the righteous state, the
distorters who lack enough intellect to correctly interpret religion, and impersonators
who misrepresent themselves in order to gain financial and social capital. These men
are the lowliest of all, even if they are located in the uppermost echelons of society,
because they are unethical. Once again, the notion of the imposter of virtues and ethics
emerges as someone to recognize and avoid in personal dealings. But also, as I mention
in Chapter Two, the description of the imposter serves as a mirror for the reader to
check his own sincerity in the acquisition of virtues.

Having discussed the homosocial institutions that shape masculinity in the ethical
texts, I now turn to specific principles in the texts for inter-personal homosocial asso-
ciation.

4.2 Principles of Human Association: Love, Justice, and Hi-
erarchy

Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani each articulate distinct visions for how human associa-
tion coalesces with various emphases on the force of naturally occurring mahabbat or
love for one another, the human need for division of labor for the sake of survival, and
ultimate goal of justice. I noted in Chapter Two an incompatibility between notions
of metaphysical equality of all beings and concepts of justice. Namely, the dissonance
between ontological equality between husband and wife and power relations between
them is contrary to definitions justice based on equality. However, Ghazali, Tusi, and
Davani define justice in their texts as a virtue, and thus as a continuous struggle on
an individual and societal level against evil and oppression for fair division of resources

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60 Davani, 249.
among people. Their premise for fair treatment of people is individual deserts.\textsuperscript{61} Justice as a virtue of fair treatment does not preclude inequalities of society based on class, race or gender. This is because inequalities are not a result of social structures in the texts, but rather due to individuals’ possession of particular traits such as physical strength or intelligence. This is consistent with the idea that the city or social collective is made up of individuals who are categorized in classes according to their abilities. Love is a related concept that carries a similar tension with justice. The ethicists define love as the force that causes humans to associate with another and it ought to yield good acts for the sake of God and justice as well. The care and affection for fellow man again appears within the context of justice based on moral deserts.

\textbf{Ghazali: Love for the “Sake of God”}

For Ghazali the foundational reference for association with people is the “sake of God.”\textsuperscript{62} He uses the analogy of a journey to how the earth is a station in a long journey to God, similar to the allegorical references of life as journey to God from the philosopher Ibn Sina or the poet Farid-ad Din Attar from the century following Ghazali. Ghazali explains, “Know that the world is a station among the stations on the path of the Truth (most high); everyone in this station is a traveler; and the caravans of travelers, like the purpose of that travel, are one […] between them should be friendship and union and mutual assistance. They should observe the rights of one another.”\textsuperscript{63} As he later explains, “all as one” does not mean one has to treat individuals equally,

\textsuperscript{61}Sophia Vasalou, \textit{Moral Agents and their Deserts}, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008). Vasalou takes a comprehensive look at mu'tazilite concepts of justice, morality, and right and wrong. However, she does not account for the idea that justice was relative to social status for some mu'tazilite thinkers, including Tusi and those sympathetic to rationalism, including Davani and arguably Ghazali.

\textsuperscript{62}Ghazali, 391.

\textsuperscript{63}Ghazali, 395.
but that everyone deserves to be treated thoughtfully according to what he deserves.

Ideal love between humans is for the sake of God; it is when there is no expectation of return and when passion for that person stems from an excess in passion for God, such that one loves all of God’s subjects. Ghazali relates how this love reaches the boundaries of passion:

Anyone who falls in love with someone, loves his town and neighborhood. He loves the walls of his home. He even loves the dog that stays in his neighborhood, and he loves that dog more than other dogs. He has no choice but to love the friend of the beloved himself, and the beloved’s own beloved, and anyone who obeys his beloved, be it servants or his slaves, or his relatives [...] Thus, whoever is overcome by the love of the Truth –most high–until he reaches the boundaries of passion, loves all of His servants, especially His friends, and he loves everything that has been created, for all things in existence, are an effect of His creation and power.64

Loving a friend passionately is the same as loving God and God’s creation. For Ghazali, love is a function of faith – the higher the faith in God someone has, the more he will love his fellow man as the creation of God.

Tusi: Natural and Utilitarian Love

According to Tusi, love is the natural force that causes human beings to crave association with one another and prompts people to identify with one another and feel each other’s triumphs and pain. Sympathy, in turn, promotes justice. Love is natural but the species can easily lose feelings of love, giving rise to injustice.65 Tusi says that love can have degrees and thus, because men can have more or less love for others, this leaves room for graded treatment of others and corruption.

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64 Ghazali, 395.
65 Tusi, 143-145.
Based upon this definition of love as a natural human attraction, Tusi then appropriates a Farabian approach based on utilitarian organization of labor to explain how society works. Tusi refers to Farabi on the natural purpose or functions of animals and their role in the ecosystem in general as a blueprint for human association. He explains that for the preservation of human individuals and the human species, the aid of other human beings and use of other species are necessary for performing collective and delegated tasks because “every individual of the human race has limited power, but when many individuals come together, inevitably their power is many times that of the individual.” More specifically, human beings depend on each other for their collective skills and trades:

If every individual should arrange his own sustenance, clothes, dwelling, and armor, first acquiring the tools of carpentry and metal-smithing, and knowing the tools and instruments of farming, harvest, milling, kneading, spinning, weaving, preparing other skills and crafts, then with this becomes busy with important matters, his survival without food all this time will not last [...] When they aid one another, each one attending to one of these important tasks sufficiently, and observing the law of justice in transactions by giving in excess in exchange for taking of the labor of others, the basis of living comes together. The succession of the individual and survival of the species becomes possible and arranged this way.

For Tusi, cooperation, giving, and taking in accordance with the laws of justice amongst human beings is a necessity for survival of the human race, thus association and love between them comes naturally, as a matter of survival. The ordering of humanity according to wisdom is necessary because human beings come together in both ethical and non-ethical ways. That wisdom that creates social ordering is essentially the gendered and class or race based assumptions about individuals’ skill sets. Many of the tasks

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66 Tusi 248.
67 Tusi, 303.
68 Tusi, 250.
Tusi lists above are part of the domestic work that women are charged with, or fall under the purview of lower classes of people, as defined by the ethicists as possessing less intellect but likely associated with lower socioeconomic and racial status.

According to Tusi’s decision of choosing one’s career, roles in society are ideally based upon aptitude and skill set.\textsuperscript{69} Yet, similar to gender assumptions about skills in the domestic realm, in the public realm, the notion of occupational aptitude was based on other assumptions rooted in hierarchy such as stereotypes about skills people of various classes or races possessed. Additionally, particular displays of masculinity such as strength, smarts, or problem-solving skills, which were not essential traits of masculinity in the texts but certainly exclusive to men contributed to ideas about which people were suited for which jobs.

### Davani: Love vs. Justice

Davani’s approach to bringing about order in human society calls into question how “natural” love is between human beings and how much desire they have to associate with one another positively. He says,

> If they were left to their own natures, their cooperation would not be possible, for everyone views their own profit in harming others leading to disputations and causing them to be busy with thieving and corruption against each other. Thus, there should be management in which everyone is content with their rights and cut off from aggressing his hand over others [...] \textsuperscript{70}

This management is the law of the state, which ensures that people who have come to live together out of necessity follow the rules of civilization, since natural desire for association is not the same thing as love for fellow man.

\textsuperscript{69}Marlowe, 58.

\textsuperscript{70}Davani, 221.
In no uncertain terms, for Davani, “love is superior to justice.”\textsuperscript{71} Justice is still a goal of civilization, but does not flow from love. He explains how the two are incompatible:

love is unity of nature and justice is unity of effort. It is a truth that nature is a step above effort. Because love demands the dismissal of the rule of duality, for this reason it does not necessitate justice. \textit{Insaf} is a term that means cutting into two halves. Meaning a just person divides a thing under dispute into two halves between himself and the other party. In this way it is a kind of plurality. \textsuperscript{72}

In other words the two are incompatible because love causes unity while justice requires division. The idea that love is unifying while justice is divisive aligns with his thinking that if left to their own devices, human beings would not help one another out of natural affection. Davani solves this problem of love and justice being at odds by requiring, as Ghazali does, “the sake of God” to be included in notions of love, so that love does not become selfish.

Still, even though love is not natural in Davani’s conception, he holds it to be the paramount force that theoretically causes human beings to act ethically toward one another to cooperate with one another for the sake of God and for producing conditions on earth that would dispense with human responsibility as vicegerents.\textsuperscript{73} He closes his exposition on affection by saying that while there are people who love the wisdom and the divine naturally or can be taught to do so, there are those who are good “because of the law. And the law with respect to this group is like water with respect to someone who food stick in his throat.”\textsuperscript{74} In this statement, Davani is prescribing love for God as an ultimate metaphysical goal, and proposes that love for God can be built into society and the institutions that human beings create, perhaps through mosques, centers of

\textsuperscript{71}Davani, 225.
\textsuperscript{72}Davani, 225.
\textsuperscript{73}Davani, 239.
\textsuperscript{74}Davani, 242.
learning, and ishraqi-sufi practices that he discusses elsewhere. Whether or not the law inculcates love of the Divine is debatable, since Davani understands the apparent trappings of religious practice to be for the less intellectually sophisticated.

**Justice within Social Hierarchy**

Whether or not love and justice are compatible, Tusi and Davani both agree that people situated in the various social classes of a city cannot cross boundaries of their social station for the sake of justice itself. Both their texts contain a variation of the following passage that explains why this is so:

> Justice requires that each one should stay in his rank and not transgress that rank. A person should not be employed in [many] different crafts [...] firstly, natures have peculiarities and not every nature can be employed in every work; secondly the master of a craft attains authority in the rules of that craft with scrutinizing vision and ascending ambition over a long lifetime. When that vision and ambition are divided and distributed over different crafts, all remain attenuated and fall short of perfection.\(^{75}\)

In an ideal world where careful consideration is given to a child’s aptitude, disposition, and ability (as described in Chapters 2 and 3), from a young age a man will find his rightful place in society given the profession for which he is suitable. It is unclear whether there are standard elements in education for every child, but it was common for boys to enter into the tutelage of a particular teacher based on his interests and his father’s social connections as indicated by the texts themselves. What is clear, however, is that the ethicists’ minds limited social mobility and participation in social hierarchy is part of justice.

Tusi says that class based inequalities in society are a result of occupations and the roles each person plays in society:

\(^{75}\)Tusi, 288.
Diversity in their states in wealth and poverty and smartness and stupidity is predetermined, for if everyone were wealthy they would not serve each other, or likewise if they were all poor—in the first case out of being independent from each other and in the second case out of lack of ability for pay in exchange for service to each other. Because crafts vary in their nobility or ignobility, if everyone were equal in their faculty of discernment, they would choose to be one class and the other classes would remain unfilled and their purpose would not be attained. This is why the philosophers have said, ‘if people were equal, they would all perish.’ However, because some are excellent in management and others are blessed with strength, and some have great dignity, others by excessive capability, and there are people devoid of discernment who are tools and instruments with respect to the people of discernment.  

Skills and ability determine social class, and natural predilection, in turn, determines man’s skills and ability. So the hierarchy of society, in which some men are in service to other men, is predetermined by nature, by God. This description of society as rightfully unequal resembles the explanation Tusi and Davani provide for why the “free city” is un-virtuous. In the free city, even though everyone’s ideas, professions, and actions are considered equally valid, and no one tries to “better” another, the notions of good and evil and right and wrong are eluded. If people were equal, human beings would be selfish and no one would help anyone. Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani concur that given the chance, people are greedy and domineering, especially those who do not have their nafses in balance or let their other faculties rule over rationality:

A kind of management is necessary to make each one content with the station that he deserves and bring him to his rights, and to cut off each one’s hands from usurping and aggressing against the rights of others, and busy with work that is entrusted with the matters of cooperation. And that management is called politics.  

The term for management here is siyasat, the same term used for household order, which confirms that justice and other virtues ethics cosmologically link the domestic

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76 Tusi 251.

77 Tusi 252.
and societal planes of human behavior. In this passage, the kind of siyasad under consider-
sation is the principles of akhlaq in righteous government of the broader society. The principles of ethics remain the same, but are applied differently in the case of homosocial interaction in society and in government.

4.2.1 True Love: Mind Over Body

In the ethics texts, love is a natural feeling for fellow humans born out of human beings’ visceral need to associate with one another. How one loves and whom one loves are all ranked according to the principle that loving with the mind is better than loving with the body. This principle of love follows the ontological idea of emanation in which nobler people and acts are the ones closer to God (such as philosophers in the act of contemplation) and the lowliest people and acts are closer to corporeality (such as farmers working the land to nourish the body). Hierarchical principle of love, in turn, excludes women from the more lofty forms of love, since women were not thought capable of higher order rationality. Even though the term that Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani use is insan or human, to describe between whom love exists, the deepest love they discuss is homosocial love between men. Since they have already discussed the ways that men need women, and are not prone to repeating topics in their treatises, here they mean that men need other men for enhancing their own perfection and role in society. In general, the ethicists discuss women explicitly when they mean to include them.

Tusi states that because man “has been created with natural tendency toward per-
feccion, he has natural desire toward collaboration. This yearning for collaboration is

78Marlowe, 159.
called love.”\textsuperscript{79} Man as the primary being needs and feels natural love or \textit{mahabbat} for other men for the purpose of societal cooperation. Ghazali defines two degrees of love. As I discuss above, the higher degree of love is the one that emanates from excess of love of God for God’s servants. It is love for friends, who in turn, remind one of God as opposed to any friend that one may acquire in school, in a neighborhood, and so on. The second degree is the affection for someone with whom one is linked for a religious purpose. This includes finding friends based on their good deeds or through collaboration on a good deed, such as feeding the poor together or giving someone “bread and clothes to free him up so that he can worship; this is friendship for God, for the purpose of freeing him up is worship.”\textsuperscript{80} Ghazali provides two examples of friends who share this degree of love:

A great many scholars and worshippers have friendships with the powerful and rich for this exchange. Both of them are among the friends of God, Most High. In fact, if one loves one’s own wife for guarding him against depravity and on the basis of bringing forth children who make innocent prayers for him, this is love for the sake of God. And every amount of maintenance spent on her is a charity.\textsuperscript{81}

In the first example, even though at the time of writing the \textit{Kimiya}, Ghazali had foresworn association with the “rich and powerful,” he sees the spiritual good that comes out of such an alliance. It is not very different from the utility of a wife in the second example, who not only “gives leave” to the husband to pursue religious activities, as I discuss in the last chapter, but also is the vessel for providing children. The fact that her \textit{nafaqah} (maintenance), is counted as a \textit{sadqah} (charity) in Ghazali’s view, indicates that the sentiment of love itself is not separated from the legal, and gendered, arrangement in which a wife is paid \textit{nafaqah} in exchange for her sexual availability.

\textsuperscript{79}Tusi, 258.
\textsuperscript{80}Ghazali, 394.
\textsuperscript{81}Ghazali, 394.
Love for a woman remains corporeal and for her ability to produce children, while the greater love is spiritual and between men. He quotes a Sufi, Hasan Basri confirming this idea: “brothers for us are dearer than the wife and children, for they teach us about faith, and the wife and children teach us about the world.”

Love between a husband and wife may in some part stem from the need of their association in organizing a family and household. However, scholars discuss love between husband and wife more in terms of physical (and occasionally emotional) comfort in which a woman provides a man with refuge from the tough world. Women, in turn, need protection and financial support; however, we surmise this from what husbands’ responsibilities are, not because the ethicists address women’s needs directly. Since love mahabbat for the sake of pleasure or lazzat is the basest kind of affection, love for a woman does not rank high in terms of ethics of affection.

Davani clarifies the difference between bodily and mental pleasures:

As the human body consists of various temperaments, so every bodily pleasure which is concordant with one temperament is against another temperament. Thus, bodily pleasure is not unsullied from the mixture of pain. As the human nafs is a simple essence, which is absolved and free from contradiction, every pleasure that is particular belongs to its own essence is an unmixed pleasure. That pleasure is wisdom, and love is the origin of this type of pleasure of perfect degree. And that is complete and divine love.

Love that comes from the body yields physical pleasure and pain, while love that stems from the perfected human nafs is not only perfect, but it is also disembodied. Thus in the ethicists minds, for whom men could only have perfect nafses with full rational faculties, only men could be capable of the perfected kind of divine love. Women, for lack of full rationality, could only be capable of the corporeal love. The only form

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82 Ghazali, 403.
83 Ghazali, 305.
84 Davani, 228.
of divine love that women possess is the love for their children. That too is entirely non-intellectual and mostly physical and relates to their maternal role of protecting their infants: “if the [natural] type of love were not innate in the mother’s nature, she would not nurture the child, and survival of the species would not come about.”

Tusi describes maternal love as natural or tabiʿi not intentional or aradi.

The lowest forms of love are tainted by physical pleasure, such as conjugal love. One can deduce, given the relative status of wives, mothers, and sons, that love for a daughter would be next, ranked above love for a wife. We cannot say this for sure because the ethicists do not mention daughters specifically, save for a paragraph about their upbringing and marriage. Although both daughters and sons are biological offshoots of a man, a daughter’s education does not include rigorous ethical training like that of a son. A man’s love for his son would be higher ranked because it is rooted in rationality. Father and son share an intellectual connection. That love is based upon a father’s desire for his son to surpass him in accomplishments. His affection is akin to that of a king or patron for his subject or ward. But this relationship is still not the ultimate love because a father’s love for his son still stems from his physical replication in bodily and mental traits. Love between brothers is even lower because, as Davani states, brothers compete. Thus, the most perfect, divine-like form of love between humans can only occur between male peers, specifically between true friends.

Davani refers to Plato, Aristotle, and Heraclitus in his exposition on love. But his own concept of true love seems to be a mixture of Plato’s eros (love) and philia (friendship). This love is a deep, visceral affinity based on one’s own existence, likes, dislikes,
or tastes. It is not something that is supposed to last forever between people or exist with a constant intensity. Davani and Tusi agree that people can fall in and out of love based on three reasons: pleasure, profit, or seeking good. Tusi explains:

Love on the basis of pleasure is quick to contract and conclude, for pleasure with its all encompassing existence, is characterized by its speed of alteration and demise [...]. Profit is a basis of love that is slow to contract and quick to conclude [...]. Good is a basis of love that contracts quickly and is slow to conclude, quick to contract because of agreeability of being between good people and slow to conclude because true intimacy that is necessary to the qualities of good [...].

Davani maintains these categories but adds that a combination of these motives for friendship or affection can produce different results. He explains that love and affection are general feelings that can extend to many people, while friendship, which I describe below, is a special kind of affection that is reserved for very few people. Passion, on the other hand, is a reprehensible form of affection in Tusi and Davani’s views because it is characterized by excess of seeking pleasure. But when passion is channeled into seeking the good, by training of the virtues of the nafs, it can be a most praiseworthy feeling.

Tusi provides a sequential order of who an ethical man should love. This list is more of a sequence of whom one should love, as opposed to the quality of love one is supposed to have, save for the first on the list. The first love, which is also the best love, is for the Creator and belongs only to men of divine learning and cannot be disturbed. Because the Creator is the reason for one’s existence, this love can also be considered instinctual stemming from loving oneself. The love of parents is next, though Tusi specifically only mention the father in this instance. The father is the

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89 Tusi, 261.
90 Tusi, 270.
91 Tusi, 270-271. He does however mention the love and respect mothers are due elsewhere (Tusi, 238; Davani, 206).
proximate cause of one’s existence. Then there is love for one’s teacher because he completes one’s existence. Because spiritual existence is superior to the physical one, the love of a teacher can stand above the love of the father in rank.

While Davani specifically quotes Tusi’s ranking, he has one of his own: love for the divine, love for parents, a king’s love for his subjects and vice versa, and last, love of friends and companions. He notes that it is an “one should observe the principle of equity between the Creator and creation by loving each one according to their rights.” Otherwise, God’s love for a man is lessened. Davani reasons that a benefactor loves his supplicator far more than the reverse because of the hardship he suffers and effort he puts into the supplicator. For example, a creditor wishes for the longevity of his debtor so that he may be paid back. Davani also provides the example of a mother, who loves a child more than a father because of her physical labor in birthing him. Elsewhere, he discusses how the gratitude for a mother is repaid with her financial and physical support. Thus, a favor itself requires gratitude in return. This principle of loving God equitably as God’s creations also illustrates the idea that equity, or ‘adalat, which is the same term for justice in the texts, is achieved not by loving God and humanity as the same, but according to each of their deserts. Justice is relative to the one receiving it and equity not not denote equality.

Apart from the ranks of affection, Davani posits in more detail two underlying principles of praiseworthy kinds of love. The ultimate pleasure that comes from love and affection only happens when there is a “complete separation” between body and soul. It is the love for the divine that one experiences when one can metaphysically

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92 Davani 235-236.
93 Davani, 237.
94 Davani, 237.
95 Davani, 207-208.
96 Davani, 229.
transcend the shackles of one’s body. In other words, concerns of the worldly life and the corporeal needs and experiences encumber the heart to truly know the divine (thus love with the body is base and lowly). 97

The second principle in praiseworthy love lies in Davani’s conception to hold dear what is good. Human beings have natural propensity to associate with one another, help one another, and affect civilization, so love enables them to do this constructively, instead of in competition with one another. Society is organized in cities and the community prayers during Fridays, Eid holidays, and pilgrimage are instituted in order to reinforce humanity’s love and association with each other in service and worship to God. 98

There is a third principle of affection for Davani, but it is a lowly kind of love: human association for pleasure or profit. Both motivations are fickle and the “lovers are querulous and aggrieved, whereas in reality they are oppressive themselves. For they demand for the pleasure of vision and quick fulfillment of their wants and delay in compensation of profit.” 99 This kind of affection is marked by one-sidedness in terms of giving and selfishness in receiving, even though both parties stand to benefit from the friendship. Examples are the relationships between people of different classes: kings and subjects, rich and poor, and owner and slave. These relationships conform a definition of affection that has to do with human beings’ need to associate with one another as social animals that profit from each other, rather than the more lofty kinds of love. The remedy for the imbalanced relationship is to act according to the rules of justice and allow each person to have his due according to his need and station.

Unsurprisingly, Davani explains that “the best kind of love is that which caused by

97 Davani, 229-230.
98 Davani, 230-231.
99 Davani, 232.
a love for good and true perfection” since it has to do with achieving true happiness
and fulfilling one’s purpose on earth. Davani then engages with the idea that God
can befriend a man and become his guarantor. He quotes Tusi as rejecting it because
to him it is an Aristotelian idea, which is unfounded in “our texts.” It is not like
Tusi to reject an Aristotelian idea that may not be found in the Qur’an or Sunnah,
but he felt that this was foreign phrasing that could not be reconciled. For Davani, the
Qur’anic verse about God’s friendship and God as wakil or guarantor for those who
befriend God, is exactly of what Aristotle is speaking.

The rank of different kinds of love in Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani, show that love
conducted with the mind and soul is superior to love with the body. This not only
means that sexual pleasure is lowly, but also that blood relations and kinship are not
as strong as love for fellow man of no relation. Love itself is gendered in that the lower
forms of love are tainted with interaction with the female body or reproduction. As
I discuss below, this is consistent with placing the concept of true friendship between
men as the purest kind of human love, that it becomes God-like.

4.2.2 Homosociality: Relationships Between Men

Interpersonal homosocial associations with friends, neighbors, acquaintances at insti-
tutions such as court, bazar, mosque, bathhouses, and even enemies all have a place in
shaping and testing one’s ethics. The ethicists mostly emphasize friendship as the sa-
cred bond between men that leads to their ultimate happiness or sa’adat, which involves
spiritual success. Men do not share this intimacy with women. As Fedwa Malti-Douglas

100 Davani, 238.
101 Davani, 239.
102 Davani, 239.
explains in her book on gender in Arabic and Islamic literature, that the rare female character such as Shahrazad, “attempts to create a functioning heterosexual couple played out against a greater civilizational pull for a male homosocial couple.”

This kind of friendship that promotes personal growth suggests an element of utility and expected reciprocity involved in forging and honoring friendships. However, Ghazali explains that friendship, when forged for the sake of God, is a great selfless act of worship. He quotes several hadiths about friendship and brotherhood between people and discusses the merits of caring for fellow man. Tusi says explicitly: “Failure to acquire friendship of one who loves greatly becomes failure to acquire happiness.” The ethicists reflect on the preciousness of the bond between honorable men who see eye to eye, which undoubtedly contrasts with the cutthroat nature of social interaction at court and in public life in general. They explain how to make friends, what to look for in a friend, how to keep friends, and what to do in sensitive situations that involve friends. From the ethicists concrete commentary on friendship we find specific characteristics of the ethical man in relation to his social circle such as one who is compassionate and forgiving.

For them, true friendship is finding “true enjoyment and Divine pleasure, as we have said, not bestial pleasure.” Comparing it to salt and seasoning, Tusi and Davani say that friendship can be potent but it is a rare thing (used sparingly); spices are necessary but cannot take the place of food itself. Quoting Aristotle, Tusi and Davani say that,

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men are dependent upon friends in all states: in a state of comfort because of their need for visitation and assistance, in a state of difficulty because of their need for consolation and companionship [...] The search for the virtue


104 Ghazali, 390.

105 Tusi, 334. The term happiness is sa‘dat.

106 Tusi, 321.
of friendship, which is natural in the souls of men, causes them to cooperate in transactions, be sociable in fair societies, play [sports or joke] with one another, and gather for exercise, hunting, and prayers.\textsuperscript{107}

In other words, a full range of social activities from recreation to worship are conducted in male homosocial contexts in which men are meant to be full companions of one another. Tusi says emphatically, in a rare use of the first person voice, “it is my belief that the worth of friendship and power of love are greater than all the treasures and buried resources of the world, the kings’ reserves, the profits that the people of the world are known to covet, and the jewels of the land and sea.”\textsuperscript{108} This is the superlative value of love and affection between male friends.

4.2.3 Ethics of Male Homosocial Friendship

Friends cultivate ethical behaviors in one another. In her essay on the key role of friendship in the 20th century renewal movement of French Catholicism, Brenna Moore argues that religion scholars must look at “interpersonal relationships,” and friendship in particular, as a “crucial matrix for analyzing th[e] intermediary realm between individual and society,” whereby interactions with individuals are just as responsible for creating “religious sensibilities” as large scale institutions.\textsuperscript{109} Specifically, she calls for attention to “practice of friendship and the power relational bonds can exert on the inner lives of the subjects we study.”\textsuperscript{110} While Moore studies religious exchanges in letters between historical individuals, her focus on the “affective intensity of friendship

\textsuperscript{107}Tusi, 322. Davani 281-282.

\textsuperscript{108}Tusi, 322.


\textsuperscript{110}Moore, 441.
[as the] key factor in generating religious experience, deepening or losing faith, and converting or returning to the religion of [childhood]” is a useful lens into how how the ethicists expected friendship to work in mens’ lives. The ethicists create guidelines for friendship under the assumptions that men carry affective influence on one another, form close bonds, and are intimately involved in each other’s lives, thereby intimately involved in one’s practice of ethics.

Ghazali employs a rights-based discourse to explain the bond friendship because “when a brotherly contract and association is made, it is like a marriage contract in that it has rights.” This moves friendship from casual to a deliberate, ethical realm of human association. Friendship is like marriage in that it is contractual and there are certain rights that friends have upon each other. However unlike marriage, the bonds of friendship are forged between intellectual equals, and thus, are much more intimate than those between husband and wife, which are intimate because of their corporeal, thus lowly, association. Moreover, friendship is egalitarian in that friends’ rights are reciprocal. The first right of friendship is sharing one’s property. There are degrees of this from giving one’s own share up to a friend, considering property as jointly held, or simply giving to a friend as “one gives to one’s slaves and servants.” One should be giving in excess if a friend requests aid. The second right of a friend is to anticipate his needs before makes requests. This could be kind gestures like asking friends who live nearby if they need any firewood or bread. Third, are rights of friends upon one’s tongue. One should speak well of friends in their presence and absence, but not unnecessarily flatter them. Listen when they speak and not argue with them. One should not

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111 Moore, 440.
112 Ghazali, 401.
113 Ghazali, 401.
114 Ghazali, 403.
reveal his secrets or speak about his family, children, and possessions to others, even if one cuts off relations. This particular right is meant to maintain the line between public and private, which friends can transcend. One should seek forgiveness from friends for transgressions or violation of these rights.

Fourth is to “declare affection and friendship with the tongue. The Prophet says, ‘If one of you loves his brother inform him of it.’ Whoever loves someone, should inform him.” This is important so that a friend can reciprocate and love can grow between them. Fifth is that one should counsel his friend about God’s kindness and mercy and teach his friend religious knowledge, especially if he sees shortcomings in his friend. This instruction should happen in private so that the friend is not shamed. If a friend is aware of his own shortcomings, then one should be indirect in providing counsel. If a friend’s shortcoming affects one’s self then it is better to forgive one’s friend on the grounds that he was being momentarily thoughtless, for bringing up the issue will lessen the friendship. The goal in friendship should not be to change one’s friends, but rather to “refine your own disposition in being patient with brothers.”

Friends may test one’s ethics. The term for disposition in this statement is khulq, which implies that one should always be reflexive and paying attention to one’s own nafs and ethical behavior when confronted with someone else’s shortcomings.

Following from this, the sixth right is that one should be forgiving of friend’s errors and shortcomings. Ghazali argues against the school of thought that states one should cut off relations with a friend who has sinned. He argues instead for the way of Abu Darda, “when a friendship is contracted, it is like kinship, and it is improper to cut

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115 Ghazali, 403.
116 Ghazali, 406.
117 Ghazali, 407.
118 Ghazali, 408.
off blood relations because of transgression.”

Ghazali provides an interesting story about two Jewish friends who were praying on a mountaintop that demonstrates this principle, as well as the closeness he expected between male friends. One of them went into the city to find something to eat when his eye fell upon a bad woman. He fell in love with her and became hopeless. He stayed together with her. After a few days went by, the other came in search of him and heard of his state and went close to him. Out of embarrassment he said, ‘I do not know you.’ He replied, ‘Oh brother, do not worry your heart, I have never felt the affection and friendship for you that I feel now.’ And he put his hand on his neck and kept kissing him. When he saw his affection, he knew that he had not fallen in his eyes. He stood up and repented and they departed together.

In this story a friend’s steadfastness in the friendship and ability to love his friend while overlooking his sins appears as a form of compassion to the sinning friend. He immediately is overcome by the show of his friend’s love. Paired with another enumerated right of friends, that “formality between them should be taken away; one should be with his friend the same as if he were alone,” this story also indicates how intimate Ghazali expected relations between between men to be.

Although Ghazali refers to the woman as ”bad,” his friend’s staying with her for days without discussion of marriage and his later repentance indicates that likely she is a prostitute. Friends can not only rescue each other from sexual depravity, but be a part of each other’s personal space and make physical interventions such as embracing and kissing friends, in this case to help deliver him from sin.

Returning to the comparison above between spiritual and corporeal love, this story supports the idea that the ethicists viewed homosocial male friendship as the comprehensive human relationships that were based on male spirituality and physical love,

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119 Ghazali, 410.
120 Ghazali, 410.
121 Ghazali, 412.
while simultaneously placing men above women. Since sexual intercourse could only take place with women in the ethical worldview, this comprehensive male homosocial friendships is, I argue, the way that the texts are heteronormative. In other words, the kind of heteronormativity prescribed by the ethicists was that conjugal relationships with women were not much more than corporeal (sexual and physical protection and maintenance) while relationships with men were cerebral, rational, spiritual, and also physically proximate.

The next right of friends is for one to remember them and their families and children in supplications and prayer, both while he is living and after he dies. The following right is “guard loyalty to friends.” This means being faithful to a friend’s personal interests such as honoring his family and children after his death and being compassionate with his students and slaves. One should also be faithful to preserve the friendship if one’s own circumstances changes, if one comes into money, rank or property. Tenth and finally, one should “think of oneself to be lower than all of one’s friends. One should not expect things from them or hope for any consideration from them.” This means that even if both men are ethical and would care for one another, a man should never actually create expectations in his heart because it leads to thinking of oneself as superior, which is a grave sin. Although this final rule is a prevention against arrogance, it also shows that one should strike friendships with peers who are equals in many ways. They too have wives, children, students, and slaves and are engaged in similar activities.

Tusi and Davani comment more on the criteria for friendship. One should try his best to “associate with people of virtue, consider it incumbent to seek benefits from them, and appreciate [opportunity to] help and assist them, and struggle to become

\[122\] Ghazali, 411.
\[123\] Ghazali, 413.
one of their kind."\textsuperscript{124} For the young, presumably unmarried man, Tusi and Davani recommend he should find out how a potential friend acts with his parents, relatives, and other friends, and how he takes care of himself. However, they do not discuss testing one’s comportment with one’s wife and children as a criterion for older friends, presumably because, as Ghazali explains in his discussion on divorce, matters between husband and wife are always private.\textsuperscript{125} One should find out about how he has acted in response to favors and benefits given to him because the first and foremost quality one must look for in a friend is gratitude. A grateful person is generous, verbally expresses his thanks, and according to them, is likely pious. Next, how strong is his desire for amassing wealth or for acquiring elite status? Someone enamored of authority, domination, and superiority will not be affectionate. Excessive indulgence in “foolishness and dribble” such as too much sport, music, or gossip, or “cavorting with singing women” signals someone who would be distracted easily and not available to a friend in his time of need.\textsuperscript{126} This speaks to the utilitarian aspect of friendship in Tusi and Davani –that human association fulfills needs, even though one should be generous without expectation of reciprocation.

Next they discuss how to be an ethical friend is like being a brother. One should be sincere with friends, be supportive of them. True love involves complete trust and familiarity with the friend’s disposition. One should share good news and joy as well as sorrow and misfortunes with friends. It is a \textit{nafs} to \textit{nafs} affinity that is deeply rooted in one’s nature to associate with other people, especially like minded people. One should freely share one’s accomplishments or knowledge of his trade and craft.

\textsuperscript{124}Tusi, 340.
\textsuperscript{125}Ghazali, 322.
\textsuperscript{126}Davani, 283.
prevent feelings of superiority against friends.\textsuperscript{127} Further, “if one achieves a rank of greatness or lordship, he should absorb his intimates and friends with himself into that nobility.”\textsuperscript{128} One should bestow favors upon friends without their asking. Davani sums up the responsibilities towards friends succinctly: ”One should include friends in one’s own riches and ranks [...] protect the act of generosity from disgrace of obligation. If a calamity befalls, one should help them with one’s wealth and self and one should join them in griefs.”\textsuperscript{129} A true friend is there at times of vulnerability, when others would forsake one. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the sign of a true man is one who treats his friend like a brother. Thus, the fraternal comparison that the ethicists make has to do more with treating one’s true friend as one wishes to be treated. However, Davani says regarding true blood brothers that because brothers are equals in terms of existence and parentage, brothers are only beloved if they are true friends; or else a friend is better than a brother.\textsuperscript{130} Again, a cerebral love out of choice for someone or a true friendship stands above a physical relationship, in this case, blood relations. Treating someone the way that one wants to be treated can be self-serving, but the ethicists saw that as a sign of male equality. The best love that the ethicists can imagine is between men who are of no relation to one another because they exercise and enhance one another’s virtues in being friends, and thus their friendship is for the sake of God and seeking the good.

Tusi warns that there are several supposed friends who are not “true friends” but show “artificiality and empty flattery.”\textsuperscript{131} The proper course of action to take with them is “as much as possible be courteous and kind, and not waste a minute to give

\begin{footnotes}
\item[127] Tusi, 330.
\item[128] Tusi, 328.
\item[129] Davani, 285.
\item[130] Davani, 234.
\item[131] Tusi, 335.
\end{footnotes}
t tidings, be reconciliatory, patient, and transact honestly. And keep hidden one’s own secrets and shortcomings, and likewise the special news and circumstances, one’s means of profit, and one’s amount of wealth.”132 One should also not really criticize them or demand anything from them but lend a hand in dire circumstances. Some may become true friends, while others may not, but one must always present oneself in a manner that invites true friendship such as showing “characteristics of generosity, ethics,133 good manners.”134 The same goes for “foolish people” who are not really friends or enemies but act clever: “one should not attend to or heed their foolishness so that they abstain from their annoyingness. If one is overtaken by their abuse and foolishness, he should discounted it [...] with patience and calmness improve the situation, or else quit and abandon conversation with them.”135 Davani explains that the test of a true friend is that if one is in distress, he is able to rely on that friend.136 We see the underlying principle of the properly balanced nafs here: acting with restraint, caution, and being generally congenial. This middle of the way approach is not just non-confrontational, it serves as a defense mechanism against potential transgressions of the nafs. This in turns protects one’s dignity and masculinity, which are occasionally synonymous terms in the texts.

If one’s true friend becomes less interested in the friendship, Tusi recommends to frequent him more often and exert himself to keep the friend. If one commits an offense against a friend, similar to Ghazali, Tusi and Davani recommend that he should repent to him with an open heart. If on the contrary the friend is an offender, then one should

132Tusi, 335.
133The term here is khulq, which could also be translated as temperament in this context.
134Tusi, 335.
135Tusi, 339.
136Davani, 284.
be gracious even while pointing out his friend’s error.\textsuperscript{137} It is a kindness to the friend to point out his flaws or errors, but one should do it in a way that helps him. Also like Ghazali, Davani says that if one finds fault in a friend he should first employ circuitous methods to point it out, and if he does not realize his error, then by alluding to him with hints. Finally, if he does not correct himself, then one should tell him in private so the “edifice of affection” is not harmed by others brandishing his faults to him in public.\textsuperscript{138} One must be careful not to get caught up in heated debates that turn into \textit{ad hominem} attacks, whether in public or private because such acts diminish love between friends. A person who does this “is of the people who are oppressors and tyrants of the age, for tyrants, when they become insolent out of great wealth and prosperity, besmirch each other as despicable and insignificant, and they slander each other’s manhood. They consider it commendable to investigate each other’s faults and defects.”\textsuperscript{139} Here Tusi not only makes explicit discussion of manhood or \textit{muruwwat} as one’s reputation and public persona, but also implies that manhood and human perfection are equivalent since probing into ”faults and defects” is the thing that attacks manhood. Human beings without flaws amounting to \textit{muruwwat} confirms the male gendered nature of ethical virtues. Additionally making a man’s faults public would be an attack against his manly pride, or \textit{ghayrat}, a term that implies that privacy protects male pride, as I discussed in the last chapter.

One should also beware of people who pretend to be intermediaries or counselors between friends who destroy the friendship. Tusi tells a story about a lion and an ox from the \textit{Kalila wa Dimna} in which “a strong beast was brought to a place of anni-

\textsuperscript{137}Tusi, 329.  
\textsuperscript{138}Davani, 286.  
\textsuperscript{139}Tusi, 330.
hilation by a great animal, through the deceit of a weak fox.” Tusi’s telling of this story indicates the treacherous terrain of the social sphere, which may be a reflection of social or political tensions in the historical context in which he was writing. Bonds of friendship, no matter how ideal or rooted in the “sake of God,” can be broken. Further, the importance of preserving friendship again, is not just a matter of personal ethics and being a good friend to someone, but a much more serious matter related to the individual man’s role in human existence: “caution in the protection of love, the necessity of which is apparent in the needs of civilization, the most important of important matters.” For Tusi, the preservation of love and friendship is the same as preserving civilization itself. Perhaps this sentiment from him is also a historical reflection on men who might be conspiring against each other in Tusi’s observations at court.

Homoerotic, Homosexual, Heteronormative Love

The intensity and passion with which men are supposed to love their male friends in the ethics texts raises the question of whether homosociality can be erotic or sexual in nature. I argue that the intense proximity prescribed in the texts can be read as a pre-modern prescription of heteronormativity, whereby men are supposed to be intellectually, emotionally, and even physically involved with one another but only supposed to be sexually involved with women. It was normal and expected for men to forge intimate relationships with other men and be familiar with one another’s physical person. As demonstrated in the example above in which a man rescues his friend from the prostitute’s hold, true friends regularly reached into each other’s personal, physical space. Kissing, embracing, or caressing in casual or dramatic circumstances would all be un-

\(^{140}\text{Tusi, 332.}\)

\(^{141}\text{Tusi, 333.}\)
questionably normal forms of physical interaction between the most intimate of male friends. However, this level of familiarity would not necessarily be acceptable between superficial friends, because the object of the physical contact would be to convey sentiment and care. I call this pre-modern heteronormativity because in the ethics texts, men were expected to have close friendships of this manner with men, since women were not their rational equals, while only having sexual contact with women.

Regardless of acceptable physical familiarity between men, they are not supposed to see each other in a state of undress. In a discussion on bathhouse etiquette, Ghazali explains the limits of exposure and physical contact: “prohibited acts in the public bath are that nakedness from the navel to the knees is not clothed, or that one presents his naked thigh to the bath attendant for massage or exfoliation. In fact, it is not appropriate it put the hand under the waistband, for rubbing has the same significance as seeing.”

In her study of prescriptive discourses on sexual intercourse in pre-modern Persian sources, Susanne Kurz considers Sayyid Isma‘il-i Jurjani’s (d. 1136-1137) medical treatise, Zakhira-yi Khwarazmshahi, several Persian adaptations of the Indian erotological treatise, Koka Shashtra, known as Lazzat ul-nisa, and the akhlaq genre, including the works by Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani I discuss in this dissertation. She argues that across these genres we find common ways of thinking about sexual intercourse. These include viewing intercourse as “an activity conducted solely by men and rather ‘applied’ to

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142Ghazali, 523.
In medical treatises, intercourse is about expelling heat from the internal organs and preventing disease. In ethics, it is to sire children, and prevent oneself and, to a lesser extent, prevent one’s wife from committing adultery. In erotology, the science of sexual domination over women while affirming masculinity is framed as a religious duty to preserve chastity. This would also imply that same-sex sexual activity, which presumably would be for pleasure, would not fit into the “purposeful” modes of intercourse. Kurz also observes that this was one of the reasons that sexual activity was seen as normatively heterosexual.

Both Ghazali and Jurjani condemn pederasty; the former for a sin of excessive shahwat, and the latter for medical reasons. Kurz explains that Jurani’s position on pederasty is that it is “against nature and procreation, but also harmful from the medical point of view: Since boys do not attract semen, one has to put in much effort and motion and this is regarded harmful for health” for both parties. Other treatises that Kurz explores condemn sexual relations with “children as well as women not suitable for marriage or having an ugly face” because their fertility is questionable. Ultimately, the ethicists agree that shahwat exists independent of marriage, though ethically it only takes place within the boundaries of marriage. The ethicists do not even discuss having licit sex with female slaves directly, even though Ghazali mentions one example of a historical figure who did in another context. Thus, the limits of physical contact are prescribed in the ethics texts to exclude sexual contact between men, even though

\begin{footnotesize}
  \footnote{Kurz, 24.}
  \footnote{Kurz, 6.}
  \footnote{Kurz, 8.}
\end{footnotesize}
men can theoretically be intimate and proximate during the course of a friendship.

However, in mentioning pederasty, Ghazali and Jurjani clearly are arguing against an extant practice. Hodgson comments that relationships between adult men of elite social classes and teenage boys were common and fetishized in literary sources including the popular poetry of the half Arab, half Persian poet, Abu Nuwas (d. 814), which Tusi dismisses as “unsubstantial poetry which are poems of love and drunken wine.”\textsuperscript{147} It is easy to assume that homosexuality was tolerated in light of the literary tradition and general legal policy of concealing shame and sin. For instance, Ghazali includes in his discussion on public morality, that spying is not permissible, nor is accusing someone of a sexual crime without the pre-requisite number of witnesses needed to attest to it—though he is only referring to illicit heterosexual relations.\textsuperscript{148} Even if an imam witnesses a wrong doing, “it cannot be assumed that the imam can act on his own knowledge of this; he is obligated to hide it.”\textsuperscript{149} Although, Ghazali is referring to illicit heterosexual acts here, the same policy of tolerance could be extrapolated for same sex sexual activity.

However, Khaled El-Rouayheb argues it is a mistake to assume tolerance of homosexuality was a broad social policy, even in light of extant practices described in literature because homosexuality itself is a limited, modern concept that does not explain forms of acceptable same sex love in the pre-modern Arab-Islamic world.\textsuperscript{150} He shows that

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what unfolded in public was presumably such things as courting and expressions of passionate love...Islamic religious scholars of the period were committed to the precept that sodomy (liwat) was one of the most abom-
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{147}Hodgson, Vol. 2, 146 and Tusi, 223-224.
\textsuperscript{148}Ghazali, 507.
\textsuperscript{149}Ghazali, 507.
\textsuperscript{150}El-Rouayheb, 1.
unable sins a man could commit. However, many of them clearly did not believe that falling in love with a boy or expressing this love in verse was therefore also illicit. Indeed, many prominent religious scholars indulged openly in such activity. 151

El-Royayheb’s argument sheds light on how I would describe the ethicists’ conception of same-sex love, as more akin to homosocial than homoerotic love. Apart from the fact that it was considered illegal, the practice of sex between males was also seen as an overindulgent and hedonistic practice, resulting from excess of shahwat. However, the ethicists viewed passionate love that would include loving every aspect of a friend’s being, including the street where he lives and the stray dogs in his neighborhood, and the expression of that love as both normal and a sign of loving another human being for the sake of God.

4.2.4 Enmity Between Men

Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani expected it to be normal to have enemies, given not just the difference in temperaments and opinions of people, but also aggressive and tyrannical streaks in people without balanced nafses. They discuss local enemies in one’s social circle, whose actions affected others in a community, and whom members in the community would judge based on their intellectual, religious, and neighborly, behaviors. Most importantly, in the ethics codes, homosocial male enemies, as much as homosocial male friends, affect one’s reputation and reflect on what kind of a man one is thought to be. The ethicists’ discussion on enemies also sheds light on how resentment and unfair treatment was occasionally thought to be a result of power struggle between men of the same or proximate social classes.

For Ghazali, enmity should be practiced for the sake of God in order to detest sins,

151El-Rouayheb, 3.
oppression, or disbelief in God. In the case of disliking Muslims or having Muslim enemies, the enmity should be for their sin and oppressive behavior, rather than for their person: “if there is a sinful Muslim, you should love him for his being Muslim and have enmity for his sin.”\textsuperscript{152} He then explains that love and enmity for someone can coexist in the heart when considering that it is for that person’s own good: “One must add together friendship and enmity, just as one rewards a child and also punishes and beats a child. From one perspective he loves him and from another perspective, he is his enemy.”\textsuperscript{153} This statement is representative of Ghazali’s almost paternalistic attitude toward how ethical men should behave with people on various social planes, including one’s wife, children, and Muslims around him. In love and in enmity, one is supposed to act as an exemplar or teach a lesson.

In the same passage, Ghazali discusses how Ahmad bin Hanbal refused to speak with Yahya Ma’in without an apology following a statement Ma’in made about being content with his wealth but accepting something from the king if he offers. Ma’in defended himself stating, “I was making light and joking.’ [Ibn Hanbal] said, “Your nourishment comes from the faith; do not play with the faith.”\textsuperscript{154} Although Ghazali meant for this example to convey that one must punish sinful behavior just as Ibn Hanbal did, the example also tells us about the role of the scholar in society. Since Ma’in’s livelihood depends on religion, a joke regarding religion is off limits to him. Ghazali sees the role of learned men and students of the \textit{rah-i din} to be educating others (as well as themselves) in matters of religion and faith in God. This plays out in the ethics of love and enmity.

According to Ghazali, one should reciprocate both the kind of opposition and level

\textsuperscript{152}Ghazali, 396.
\textsuperscript{153}Ghazali, 396.
\textsuperscript{154}Ghazali 397.
of agreement he receives from the enemy. Treat him exactly as he treats you. One should “be serious and as he transgresses limits, give him harsh language and make him unhappy” in encounters with him. If someone is being unjust, one should treat him the same way. However, if someone takes away one’s rights, then “forgiveness and endurance are the right course.” This last piece of advice takes a turn for restraint and tolerance, perhaps because a person depriving one of rights would be someone in power and it may not be possible to reciprocate with contempt without serious repercussions. Later when Ghazali discusses comportment with kings, he suggests subtle ways to confront the powerful on their abuses.

Tusi summarizes that conflict between men potentially arises as a result of five issues: “dispute over property, dispute over rank, dispute over things missing, acting on lust that renders dishonor to womenfolk, and disagreement in opinions.” If one has such disputes with someone, then he should attempt to repel harm from the himself by trying to reform the enemy’s soul if possible, if not then “the relationship between them must be reformed.” Tusi advises to refrain from all interactions with him by moving to a different neighborhood or going away on a long journey. This is a defensive response designed to protect a man’s reputation.

One can take actions against an enemy under six conditions:

First, is that the enemy is wicked by nature and there is no way to correct him; second is that one sees no escape from his oppression by any means except suppression; third, one knows that if victory is his, he would use

155 Ghazali, 397.
156 Ghazali, 397.
157 Tusi, 336. The term for womenfolk here is haram, which as we saw above refers to the private or women’s quarters of the home. In the plural, harim, the term also means those under a man’s protection, which would be more than just his womenfolk. However here it is likely to mean womenfolk. Dishonor could be of the sanctity of the haram itself or the actual women who live there, since Tusi is referring to acting upon one’s desire or shahwat, which includes inappropriate kinds or amounts of lust.
158 Tusi, 338.
more than what one would use; fourth is that one witnesses that he reveals intension and effort to destroy one’s goods; fifth is that in suppressing him, one should not be characterized by any baseness such as betrayal or perfidy; sixth is that from which no despised ending should be expected, whether in this world or the next.

In summary, one must be very careful in acting publicly against enemies because one can easily invite worse calamities upon oneself, including notoriety or sin for exceeding ethical bounds of vengeance. One should find out about one’s enemy’s tactics, his news, his every fault, weakness and sources of anxiety. One should also truthfully inform princes, masters, and other men about the ruses and unethical behaviors of their enemies in order to gain advantage over him, but with careful circumspection, lest the enemy is unaffected by constant publication of his faults and one becomes untrustworthy in the eyes of his audience. As another tactic, one should feign friendship with the enemy and cavort with his friends.

Finally, there is a kind of mercy suggested for engaging with enemies that has to do with the damage it causes the nafs as well as a man’s public reputation. In all cases “articulating abuses and curses and attacking the bodies of enemies is extremely despised and remote from intelligence, for these acts bring no damage to their souls or property but nafs and essence of the transgressor are damaged in that moment.”

A man should warn his enemy that he will publicize the enemy’s actions in order to instill fear in him. If there is a conflict of interest and “the enemy comes under a man’s protection, making a refuge out of his sanctum, or entrusts you with something that requires loyalty or trust,” then a man is required to be both generous and courteous.

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159 the term is khayrat so it could mean one is under threat of destruction of one’s good deeds, rather than material goods
160 Tusi, 338.
161 Tusi, 336-337.
162 Tusi, 337.
towards his enemy because his “beautiful faith and good disposition will be known to everyone.”

This last piece of advice for how to treat an enemy under one’s protection includes the idea that a man’s conduct with enemies is public knowledge. The same is not true for homosocial friendship, which is in many ways private, as discussed above. A man’s reaction towards enemies or those posturing against him, reflects on how treacherous the ethicists understood the public homosocial environment to be and also shows how they imagined this environment to shape a man’s honor and *muruwwa*. One’s conduct with men, friendly or unfriendly, contributed in part to how ethical he is.

### 4.2.5 Ethics at Court

In the ethics texts, rulers and subjects have a symbiotic relationship. At times, the ethicists use the terms love, affection, and paternal and filial responsibility as their description of the theoretical, ideal power relationship. At other times they are more realistic, likely responding to corruption and court conspiracies, and address how to manage the hierarchical power dynamics between ruler and subjects, as well as high ranking officials and their subordinates. They also use the specific guidelines from court ethics as a blueprint to generalize ethical behavior between all male masters and subordinates. A ruler, as a philosopher-king, serves as a model for all other men. Because the homosocial public sphere is a macrocosm of individual human condition and the domestic realm, ethics at court demonstrate how structural power is integral to ethical masculinity.

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163 Tusi, 338.
The Ethics of Kings, Rulers, and Masters

Akhlaqi-Nasiri and Akhlaq-i Jalali are most famous for their comprehensive discussion of ethics of rulership, commanding military in wartime, and maintaining justice. Although Ghazali’s comprehensive discussion on ethics of governance appears elsewhere, he devotes a section in the *Kimiya* to characteristics of a just king, which largely resembles the hellenic concept of the philosopher-king, also found in Tusi and Davani’s works.\(^\text{164}\) Although this is originally a hellenic vision of a ruler, it becomes a “native” concept to Islamic political ethics. There has been much scholarship on ethics of kings in these texts, parsing out the responsibilities of the ruler in order to extract Islamic political theory and political ethics. In particular, Muzaffar Alam outlines how influential the *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* and *Akhlaq-i Jalali* were as political ethics texts during the Mughal period.\(^\text{165}\) Often scholars reduce the comprehensive ethics texts, which contain a broad range of subjects, to their political ethics, akin to *fürstenspiegel* or “mirrors for princes” genre from medieval and renaissance Europe, or political works from similar contexts such as Farabi’s *Aphorisms of a Statesman* or the *Qabusnama* of Kay Kavus Ibn Iskander (d. 1082).

My focus here is to unpack the gendered meanings of the philosopher-king and the gendering of his subjects by asking what kind of man a king needs to be, how are courtiers are supposed to behave, and what kind of manhood subjects were supposed to have in relation to the king’s manhood, in order to reflect upon how structural power in directing societal ethics is a key component to masculinity. All three ethicists held, with slight variations, that management of society was best done by virtuous government. Ghazali’s rules for kings are about prevention of the abuse of power and being

\(^{164}\) Ghazali’s treatise *Kitab Nasihat al-Muluk* (Book of Advice for Kings) is particularly dedicated to discussions about the religious principles that a king must observe and contains more specific ethical advice for him and other members of court than the *Kimiya* contains.

\(^{165}\) Alam, 50.
mindful of responsibilities. In line with his sectarian leanings, Tusi held that the virtuous government was the imamate, which could embody the ideal traits of leadership.\textsuperscript{166} Although Davani does not share Tusi’s sectarian allegiance, the seven qualities he describes of a leader are similar. All three hold justice as the key condition that makes a king ethical. As discussed in Chapter Two, justice is one of the major virtues of the perfected \textit{nafs}. Thus, as a worldly lawgiver, a king has the potential to be exemplarily ethical.

The central theme of Ghazali’s discussion on “governance and the running the state” is the sheer power of the sovereign and the potential for his rule to be the “vicegerency of God, most high, on earth if it is run in the way of justice. If it lacks compassion and justice, it is the vicegerency of Iblis.”\textsuperscript{167} A king alone has far reaching power to affect so many lives, set the agenda for public institutions, and institute laws that create a just society. As such, he is the ultimate ethical subject of the \textit{akhlaq} training. Non-royal courtiers and educated elites, who are the audience of the ethics texts also hold power to affect change, but to lesser degrees, within their jurisdictions, or at least over the members of their own households, as all men are imagined to have.

The king should be aware that the world is only a station on the journey of life, similar to the awareness that any ethical man must possess, and that he will leave all the riches and power of this world behind when he dies. Ghazali admits that this is not an easy idea for a king to grasp. However, with the emphasis on his power and potential to do good for the land he rules, Ghazali is able to show how a king can be truly ethical. Ghazali then outlines ten rules a king must observe to create justice in his land.

\textsuperscript{166}In \textit{Sayr wa Suluk}, Tusi describes the Ismaili imamate as the only legitimate form of government since he was most impressed with Ismaili knowledge and was attempting to join their court at the time he wrote the work. Badakhchani, 11-13.

\textsuperscript{167}Ghazali, 525.
First, he should “what ever events occur, he should asses as if he is the peasant and the other is the ruler: whatever he dislikes for himself, he should dislike for other Muslims.”¹⁶⁸ Second, he should attend to the needs of the people before engaging in supererogatory acts of worship.¹⁶⁹ Third, he should not “he should not make himself accustomed to being occupied with pleasures such as wearing fine clothes or eating good food; rather he should be content in everything, for justice is not possible without contentment.”¹⁷⁰ This is the same advice given to the broader audience of the text for moderation in food, clothing, and other human needs, in order to focus on sufficiency of the rational faculty over the indulgence that marks the other faculties of the nafs. Fourth, the “the foundation of works should benevolence as much as possible, not cruelty.”¹⁷¹ There should be an overall atmosphere of compassion at court and in governance. Fifth, one should strive for mutual amicability between oneself and one’s subjects, and not think that one is better than others from hearing the praise that is customarily given to kings. Sixth, one is not to violate the law in order to please anyone.¹⁷²

The seventh rule is the heart of his advice: a king should know “the danger of having power is that it is difficult and to execute the work of God, most high, is a great undertaking. Whoever has obtained this favor achieves a happiness beyond which there is no happiness. If he fails, he will fall upon a misery beyond which there no misery like it.”¹⁷³ This rule reminds kings of the responsibility that comes with power and that their good and bad deeds have high stakes consequences. Ghazali elaborates on this

¹⁶⁸Ghazali, 527.
¹⁶⁹Ghazali, 528.
¹⁷⁰Ghazali, 528.
¹⁷¹Ghazali, 528.
¹⁷²Ghazali, 529.
¹⁷³Ghazali, 530.
rule at great length with hadiths from the Prophet about the responsibilities of just rule that also extends to associates of the king. More significantly, this rule states that just and correct rule can bring about the ultimate happiness for the ruler as an individual and for the society he rules. Holding power provides the unique opportunity to exercise ethical behaviors widely. The same is the case for a husband’s ethical behavior with his wife, children, and servants. And thus the king’s ethics are not just important as political ethics, but demonstrates how hierarchy of power keeps the cosmological structure of ethics stable.

In the eighth we see that a king should actively seek counsel from pious religious scholars and be wary of corrupt ones. The ninth rule is that a king should “discipline his own slaves, servants, representatives and not be content with their injustices, for he will be accountable for their injustices.” The rule also encompasses the idea of being just or ethical by example transfers that justice to others through the bestowal of justice upon them or by inspiring them to be just themselves. In other words, for Ghazali, as well as Tusi and Davani, the king’s ethics are meant to be contagious to those around him.

Further, a king is not just if he is not just with his “own wife, children, and slaves.” This is the only mention of judging one’s justice through how one treats one’s wife and children within the discussion of ethics on a broader community or society level. Here it is meant as an evaluation for a king’s fitness for meting out justice. However, this condition also suggests the link between kings and non-royal readers. The average ethical man and the king both perform ethical behavior by acting ethically with members of their household.

Overall, Ghazali’s advice to kings is based on the metaphysical science of improving

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174Ghazali, 537.
175Ghazali, 538.
the nafs, the same as the kimiya formula applicable to all readers of the text. That is derived from being just, which in turn comes from “perfection of the intellect, which is seeing affairs as they are, and understanding their hidden reality, and not being fooled by appearances.”\textsuperscript{176} Ghazali then gives specific examples of reasons for why a king commits unjust acts, each of which corresponds to imperfections of the nafs:

if his purpose is that he eats delicious food, he should know that he is beast in the figure of a man, for eating greedily is the work of animals. If he does it to wear clothes of brocade, he is a woman in the figure of a man, for beautification is women’s work. If he does it for waging his anger out his own enemies, he is a predator in the figure of a man, for tearing apart and fighting is the work of predators. if he is going it so that people serve him, he is an ignoramus in the figure of a wiseman, for if he had rationality he would know that all of them are servants of their own stomachs, in service to their own pleasures and sexual organs.\textsuperscript{177}

In this passage, gluttony is a violation of the concupiscible faculty or quwwat-i shahwat. Being predatory is a violation of the irascible faculty or quwwat-i ghazbi. Even though acting like a woman is not a specific violation of a faculty of the nafs (because women have the same kind of nafses as men do) but since paying attention to one’s beauty is womanly, and therefore unmanly; in this way, it corresponds to the vice of deficiency in the concupiscible faculty. Being crafty in subordinating people is a violation of the rational faculty or quwwat-i ‘ilm. In the last sentence of the passes, Ghazali makes it clear that kings should also realize that those serving him have nafses too. The same virtue ethics of the nafs applies to kings, as it does male heads of household, and men at various other levels, but is adjusted according to their skills, office, or place in the homosocial hierarchy. Finally, the tenth and final rule is for kings to pay attention to the treatments of the nafs for anger, for that is a common ailment among kings that stems from royal arrogance. This also suggests that the same rules of ethics apply to

\textsuperscript{176}Ghazali, 539.

\textsuperscript{177}Ghazali, 539.
kings, but with the special condition that they hold power over the fate of others.\(^{178}\)

Tusi explains that, first and foremost, a ruler must have good descent and genealogy that inspires men to respect and be in awe of him.\(^{179}\) The term Tusi uses for being awe-inspiring is the quality of *haybat*, the very same term he uses to describe how a husband should appear to his wife. This reiterates the ways in which the ethical levels of the home and the sovereignty are scale representations of each other in the broader ethics cosmology. The center of this cosmology is the ethical man, who is powerful and actively “lords” over his subjects. On the domestic level the subjects are his wife, children, and servants, and on the sovereign level the subjects are the inhabitants of the city or nation. He is responsible for the ethical behavior of his underlings, as well as his own.

Davani lists family genealogy last and does not state it as a requirement for a king.\(^{180}\) Tusi and Davani’s differences in sectarian leanings could account for this variation in characteristics since for Shi’is, biological relationship to an imam legitimates rulership, or in the case of Ismailis, the imam himself is the rightful ruler. Instead, Davani states that the first quality in a king is possession of purpose and high concentration that comes from “*tahzib-i akhlaq*” or the discipline of ethics.\(^{181}\) The second quality for Tusi is “lofty ambition” that comes about when the irascible and concupiscent faculties of the *nafs* are subdued.\(^{182}\) Third (second for Davani) is the firmness of opinion and right thinking.

Fourth (third for Davani) is the ‘*azm ar-rijaal va ‘azm al-muluk* “manly resolve and the royal resolve.” Resoluteness is a distinctly manly characteristic, without which it

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\(^{178}\) Ghazali, 539.

\(^{179}\) Tusi, 301.

\(^{180}\) Davani, 254.

\(^{181}\) Davani, 254.

\(^{182}\) Tusi, 301.
is “not possible to acquire any virtue or reject any vice.”\textsuperscript{183} It is about willingness to change oneself according to a code of ethics. It is here that we get see the most direct correlation in Tusi’s work between manliness and ability to change and become ethical. This assumption is purely gendered, as we saw in the last chapter women do not possess this resolve or discipline and a very fundamental premise upon which the entire edifice of ethics is built. The story that Tusi and Davani tell of the need for manly resolve is that of the Caliph Ma’mun who had what modern physicians would call pica, or an uncontrollable urge to eat non-food items to make up for a particular nutrient deficiency. In Tusi, Ma’mun was eating dirt, but Davani changes the dirt to roses, perhaps out of respect for the caliphate, which Tusi does not share. Ma’mun told the physicians that he did not have enough manly resolve to remedy his disease so they should not bother with finding cures. In addition to the sectarian posturing seen in the two versions of the story, the episode with Ma’mun exemplifies the ways in which gendered expectations of manliness meets the qualities of good rulership.

Fifth (fourth in Davani) is “patience in enduring adversity, and persevering in one’s quest without weariness or pain, for the key to all objects desired is patience.”\textsuperscript{184} This is important advice for a king or prince with his own aspirations, either personal or for his state. But also, since kings are seen as covetous by nature, this virtue attempts to regulate the lengths at which kings would go to obtain their desires. Sixth (fifth in Davani) is being affluent.\textsuperscript{185} Tusi says that ordinary men should despise wealth and gold because of the many ills they cultivate. However, affluence is important for kings in order not to be too covetous. Seventh is bringing in external counsel for good kingship, having “upstanding assistants” who need not to be of noble descent but must

\textsuperscript{183}Tusi, 301.
\textsuperscript{184}Tusi, 302.
\textsuperscript{185}Tusi, 302.
have “ambition, opinions, greatness, and patience.” Davani describes this quality as having obedient soldiers.

The king’s true goal should be to seek faith and enable the sovereignty to reach the goals of faith, though Davani does not enumerate what these are specifically. In a cosmic metaphor, Tusi and Davani liken a king to the world’s physician. A king is supposed to cure the evils of domination, chaos, and evil. This is related to the notion of healing the *nafs* by putting the irascible and concupiscent faculties behind the rational one on the microcosmic level of the individual. Finally Davani adds, through telling of a story about the Pharaoh and Moses, that generosity is among the best qualities in a ruler as well as mercy and kindness to subjects.

A king should also be aware of the different types of temperaments of people, so that he can manage them. Tusi and Davani enumerate five temperaments:

people who are good by nature and whose goodness is contagious[...]
thus they should be the people closest to the king. [...] Second are people who are good by nature but their goodness is not contagious. This group should be held dear and their concerns should be taken seriously. Third are people who are by nature neither good nor evil. This party should be secured and encouraged to goodness, so that they reach perfection by measure of their aptitude. Fourth are people who are evil but their evil is not contagious; this group should be disposed and disdained and should be warned taught good by counsel, prohibition, encouragement and deterrents [...] Fifth are people that by nature are evil and their evil is contagious. This party is the lowliest of creation [...] These people also have grades: a group whose correction is hopeful by way of discipline and prohibition must be corrected or else should be prevented from evil; and a group whose correction is hopeless, if their evil is not all encompassing one should pacify them, but if their evil is general and comprehensive, then it is compulsory to remove their evil.

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186 Tusi, 302.
187 Davani, 223.
188 Davani, 264-265.
189 Tusi, 306.
From this passage we learn the ways in which ethics of court life is normative, or derived from standard behavior at court that Tusi may have observed. Tusi expected it to be challenging for a king or prince to determine who carries which temperament. Tactics of negotiation, using carrots and sticks, rewarding some people over others for their favors, advice, or seemingly kind gestures, were all matters of politics. The ethicists advised the rulers to evaluate men based on their demonstration of merit, aptitude, and potential benefits to government before including anyone. Along the same lines of caution, Tusi advises kings to be very careful with sentencing, punishments, and dealing with aggressive petitioners.\textsuperscript{190}

As expected Tusi does not speak much about women at court except in his final advice to kings about employing informers and spies but only ever revealing royal plans with intelligent men, but never women or children, who are “of weak of mind.”\textsuperscript{191} However, Tusi advises on staying abreast of gossip from the women’s quarters: “one can make deductions from watching and being informed from sources and places of friends and special people such as people of the haram, and that which heard from the mouths of children and slaves and their attendants who are known for scarcity of intelligence and discernment.”\textsuperscript{192} As discussed above, the reference to people residing in a haram is of women.

Historically women in royal households were part of conspiracies, politics, and gossip. Omid Safi argues that women in the Saljuq court, especially Tarkan Khatun, had a profound impact on “theological and political Muslim writings [against] the participation of women in society and politics.”\textsuperscript{193} As a result of conspiracies at court, “When

\textsuperscript{190}Tusi, 308-309.

\textsuperscript{191}Tusi, 310.

\textsuperscript{192}Tusi, 311.

\textsuperscript{193}Safi, \textit{The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam}, 71.
Nizam al-Mulk and al-Ghazali warned the sultan of the evils of listening to women’s advice and the deficiencies of women’s intellects.”  Another historical example is Saray Khatun, Davani’s patron, Uzun Hasan’s mother who mediated several power disputes with his brother; she also played significant roles in negotiations with Ottomans. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the ethicists advised men to shield their wives from idle pastimes such as gossiping about goings on outside the home. Although not much is known about women of Alamut, with no more words about women or children at court, it is clear that like Ghazali and Davani, Tusi was managing the discrepancy between reality and ideal behaviors for women. He wished court to be a man’s world in which women would not meddle.

Ethics of Interacting with Kings

Given that the audiences of the texts are wealthy or educated elites, the ethicists address how to act ethically at court. Court life is by definition corrupt according to all three ethicists but one could still act ethically in interactions with a king or government officials at court. Ghazali detests all relations with rulers and officials, based on his disenchanting experience in working for the Saljuq vizier, Nizam al-Mulk, who was assassinated. He qualifies his distaste for ‘ulama’ even to go near rulers and officials because “the safety of religion lies in [their separation].” He states that rulers are corrupt. All the wealth in state coffers is obtained from corrupt and unlawful means save for jizya or poll taxes paid by non-Muslims and property inherited from persons with no heirs, which makes up a small fraction of the state’s wealth. Their palaces,

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194 Safi, 71.
195 Woods 82, 235.
196 Ghazali, 380.
tents, furnishings, and carpets “have been seized by force, so it is improper to go inside there.”\textsuperscript{197} Ghazali proclaims it is unlawful to accept money from the ruler beyond meager wages only if one is poor or a student.\textsuperscript{198}

Ghazali also categorically rejects the need for religious scholars to initiate salutations to the ruler, bow before him, or kiss his hand unless he is just. He quotes a hadith in which the Prophet stated “the ‘ulama’ are the trustees of the messengers as long as they do not associate with the kings. For when they associate with them, they betray their trusteeship. Guard against them and stay away from them.”\textsuperscript{199} If one must offer prayers for the king, as is customary, then one should pray for him to enjoin in good deeds. Next it is common to praise a king for his fairness and generosity. Ghazali states, “Upon dispensing with this, it is customary that the tyrant say some lies, and one must nod his head and approve. All of this is sinful.”\textsuperscript{200} However, there is sin in silence too, so it is best to stay away in all circumstances except if one is interceding on another Muslim’s behalf or protesting an injustice. If a religious scholar is unfortunate enough to have a king call upon him, then one must honor him since he has been sought for his knowledge but must also speak the truth and counsel the king toward justice.\textsuperscript{201}

Tusi and Davani take a more pragmatic approach to dealing with rulers. Within their discussions on how to behave with others in the social arena, the most extensive part is dedicated to how to attend upon the ruler. This speaks to the composition of their audience of the treatises. They are not only all male, wealthy upper class, or

\textsuperscript{197}Ghazali, 382.
\textsuperscript{198}Ghazali, 380.
\textsuperscript{199}Ghazali, 381. The authenticity of this and similar hadiths is dubious since it is not clear what religious scholars the Prophet would be speaking of since he was the religious and political authority of his age, unless he was referring to scholars “belonging” to past prophets such as rabbis or zoroastrian priests.
\textsuperscript{200}Ghazali, 383.
\textsuperscript{201}Ghazali, 384.
educated elites, but also subjects of the king. It is likely that in the time period these texts were written, it was not possible to be elite or significantly wealthy without having contact with court or even the king himself. In general, men should be supportive of their kings, well wishing, obey commands, and be willing to put their life, property, house and home at the disposal of protecting the faith, community, wife, children, and the city.

However, Tusi agrees with Ghazali on how corrupting court life can be. He states that, “people who are not in service to the king should not take steps to seek proximity to them.”\textsuperscript{202} In general, distance between the ruler and the people is healthy. Tusi later states that a “a king is an obstacle between men and the enjoyment of the world and work for the hereafter.”\textsuperscript{203} So not only would working for a king rob men of opportunities to perform good acts that would help them on the day of judgement, it also destroys the pleasures of this life. Here Tusi warns readers that the supposed wealth and prestige of court life may be false. Life in service to the kings is not easy and not something to covet. It requires one to suppress one’s own ego and ethical principles. One has to “train the nafs to their duplicity and agreeing with them in contradiction to one’s own opinions.”\textsuperscript{204} One do difficult things with the intent of benefiting the greater good, such as keeping secrets and manipulating others.\textsuperscript{205} Many of these acts could be contradictory to ethical behaviors produced by a balanced nafs but Tusi makes an exception for utilitarian acts for the greater good.

One has to pay close attention to the responsibility of serving a king, be available at his beck and call, and praise his actions. One should prepare carefully when provid-

\textsuperscript{202} Tusi, 314.
\textsuperscript{203} Tusi, 319.
\textsuperscript{204} Tusi, 319.
\textsuperscript{205} Tusi, 319.
ing counsel to the king. One should guard the royal secrets and not repeat the king’s faults. The king, in turn, should not be suspicious of betrayal by otherwise competent and trustworthy advisors. Servants of the king should know that kings are both demanding of “service and devotion from all of creation, and consider themselves on the mark in that and everything they do,” and are also used to being praised by everyone around them.\textsuperscript{206} One should not make direct requests for particular benefits such as money, but rather ask for a free hand in matters that would result in accumulating some profit. A servant should be willing to expend the master’s wealth readily so that the king’s predilection for amassing wealth does not become stinginess. Because the ruler-subject relationship serves as a model for all homosocial male master-subordinate relationships, we can draw parallels with conduct at court with domestic ethics. For example, a master should not provide benefits, but rather provide the means of benefit. This is consistent with how a father is meant to raise a son, focusing on the process of training him and his \textit{nafs} before giving him access to wealth and giving him a ring to wear.

The most envied position at court is that of the vizier. The tragedy is that the ones who covet his position are supposedly his friends and associates who set traps and watch his every action. In these situations Tusi recommends that the vizier rise above the plots and act as if he has no knowledge of them because “victory is always of the patient one.”\textsuperscript{207} No matter what one’s rank, when asked a question in a group, one should not be the first to answer because that invites resentment from others. One should not seek favor over those whom the ruler holds close such as the ruler’s friends and relatives because that is known as a characteristic of “foolish” people.\textsuperscript{208}

\textsuperscript{206} Tusi, 316.
\textsuperscript{207} Tusi, 319.
\textsuperscript{208} Tusi, 320. \textit{Sufaha} are the foolish people who think they are clever.
Courtly conduct requires a man to carefully manage his masculinity, pride, and skill set for which he is employed at court, in light of the king’s authority and the political posturing of court officials and other opportunistic courtiers. As argued in previous chapters, masculinity functions in ethical cosmology in a hierarchy of both gender and intellect and spirituality. That gives the ruler the highest status of power and moral responsibility over others in the male homosocial realm. Put another way, a king is also ideally the ultimate man and his attributes are the most manly, even though the ethicists recognize that many rulers are unjust. The king’s status requires the average court official or court appointed ‘alim to maintain a particular kind of masculinity. The ethicists hold that he continue to be an ethical man at court, who is supposed to be a microcosm of the world with enhanced virtues and curbed vices. However, when he speaks at court or offers counsel to the king, he must be aware of proper behavior at court, which is seek to elevate the king at all costs without negating his own ethical standing and responsibilities.

4.2.6 Ethics for Interaction with Various “Classes” of Human Being

In addition to dividing social classes along trade and economic lines, the ethicists also consider individuals’ intellectual abilities as determinant of their social class in the hierarchy of homosocial society. Capability of rational thought, which in ethics is the best part of a man’s nafs, classifies him in the social stratosphere and determines how much power and influence he wields. However, as I discussed in the section above on theories of social classes, this stratification based on intellect is still related to wealth and power in society. In theory, the more intelligent are members of higher social classes such as the philosophers or scholars. However, less intelligent people may still
hold power by virtue of birth, such as in the case of a stupid king who by virtue of possessing great power, has potential to demonstrate the highest order of virtue.

In their advice on interaction with people of various classes, Tusi and Davani prescribe speaking to people on their intellectual level and potential acts relative to one’s own social rank. Although interaction with kings, princes, superiors, equals, and subordinates can all be described by general rules for each class, specific interaction with a person of any class is determined by the intellectual level of that person. Tusi explains how to act with people in each of these categories with the following underlying principle: “If he be above in rank, this should impel his confidence in protection of that rank so that he does not decline toward loss; if he is of comparable [rank] he should impel ascension from that rank on the stairway to perfection; and if he is below in rank, he should struggle for reaching the degree of that rank.”209 In other words, one should always focus on one’s own virtues, improving them or just maintaining them at worst. More specifically, for interaction with those in superior classes, one generally should use the guidelines of how to treat rulers and superiors as discussed in the preceding section, especially in situations in which one is employed by men ranked above himself.

Dealing with subjects of lower rank than oneself, a man should be aware of the intellect as the ultimate determinant of social rank and behave accordingly:

Watch after those who apply themselves to learn, their goodness, and natural disposition. If they are worthy of the branches of the sciences and characterized by good disposition, do not prevent them from learning or burden them or seeking their needs, but try removing their afflictions. For the masters of corrupt natures, who seek knowledge out of greed, teach them tahzib-i akhlaq and punish their faults and perfect them according to their abilities. Keep any knowledge that is the basis of reliance on decadent intent. For the less intelligent, stimulate them with the things that are closer to their understanding and more inclusive of benefits, so they avoid wasting their lives.210

209 Tusi, 334.

210 Tusi, 340.
This passage demonstrates the ways in which khulq or natural disposition, as well as mental capacity, directly contributes to social class. Thus, only in some cases, the tahzib-i akhlaq, or discipline of ethics, may prove as an effect correction to people of lower mental capacities or corrupt nafses. In general, one must be congenial but the principle of underlying treatment of men of other classes is based on whether they can be corrected, uplifted, and taught. The advice above suggests that one should assess the character and intelligence of those whom one is in charge to decide how to advise them or use them. This suggestion follows the same principle of advice the ethicists give to husbands over their wives. Since husbands are in charge of wives’ nafses, and women in general are considered to have less mental capacity, they are suitable to play an instrumental role in their lives.

Davani switches to a first person plural voice when discussing how to deal with different classes of mankind, which shows he includes himself in the elite class of men of his audience as they interact with inferiors. This is Davani monitoring his own behavior as much as prescribing ethics to others. He is also more specific with regard to treatment of inferior classes. If the inferiors are one’s students, then “hold them precious just as one’s children” and observe their natures and dispositions carefully to steer them to achieve according to their own abilities. Here Davani’s use of familial ethics to prescribe conduct with others shows how paternalism drives man’s ethical behavior on both domestic and public levels. Additionally, one must be haughty with the arrogant people and ignore the stupid. As I discuss in Chapter Two, people of all social and intellectual classes have full nafses with all faculties, but people can be deficient in one or all of the faculties. By knowing the science of the nafs one is able to recognize the intellectual merits and deficiencies of others, no matter to which social class they belong.

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211 Davani, 292.
Davani too divided classes of people along intellectual lines but included distinctions between them based on their attentiveness to their souls’ needs and abilities to perceive the unseen. Davani considers only men as having spiritual rank, and even that is rooted in a hierarchy of mental capacity and intelligence. The highest class are of the saints and sages, who

are endowed with divine favor and are free from the filth of natural relations, who know the source of truth by the attributes of majesty and signs of beauty, who know the quality of the chain of existing things came to be ordered from the beginning, and can picture the return of the *nafs* in a manner that is according to principles.”

In addition to mental abilities, as with true friendship, true spiritual and intellectual rank of individuals is confirmed by lack of intercourse with the female body, which is a filthy act. The class below this cannot comprehend imaginative conceptions or purely intellectual realities, but they understand their own deficiencies and thus are called “men of faith.” Below them are the “men of resignation” who simply do not possess imaginative faculties but admit to their abilities. Individuals in the class beneath this are known as the “weak ones” because they cannot conceive of anything beyond what they feel through the five senses. Nonetheless, “since everyone endures exertions according to measure of his own abilities, and they arrive at the limits of their aptitude, they cannot be marked with blame. Rather, everyone has their face directed towards reality.” Middle and low class men can not perceive, know, or imagine unobservable or immeasurable concepts and ideas. But their realities are relative and they only deserve according to their reality. For Davani, mental ability of comprehending spiritual knowledge is an added component to profession, which together designate a

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212 Davani, 244.
213 Davani, 245.
214 Davani, 245.
215 Davani, 245.
man’s social class in the grand scheme of society.

Helping the lowest members of society is a part the ethical responsibility of a man of power and privilege. Beggars in Tusi and Davani’s exposition belong to two classes, those who beg out of true need and those who beg out of greed and covetousness of what others possess. Only the truly needy should be given provisions and gifts.\textsuperscript{216} In the section on treatment of other social classes, Tusi makes a simple statement about the unfortunate: “Take the hands of the weak and show them mercy, and assist the oppressed.”\textsuperscript{217} The remainder of his exposition on helping people comes under the discussion of how to preserve justice. Davani adds that man’s every act should ultimately reflect upon the aspirant’s charitable actions, “so that he may reach the rank of Divine vicegerency.”\textsuperscript{218} He drives home the fact that apart from behavior on a personal and domestic level, treatment of all others in the outside world amount to the complete account of one’s actions in life. Worldly ethics are ultimately connected to one’s relationship with the Divine and are indicative of the cosmology in which an ethical man is a microcosm of the world.

\subsection*{4.3 Chapter Conclusion}

Love for fellow man in the urban homosocial environment and ethical governance come together in the third level of ethical behavior in classical Islamic ethics. In addition to training of the self and ordering the domestic realm, man completes his moral responsibilities by simultaneously being a member of the broader society (a macrocosm of the self), in which ultimate masculinity is defined in terms of power, hierarchy of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{216} Davani, 292.
\item \textsuperscript{217} Tusi, 341.
\item \textsuperscript{218} Davani, 293.
\end{itemize}
intellect and spiritual knowledge, and ethical comportment in homosocial structures of court, civic, and community life. The more intellectual and spiritual a man is, the higher his social status in the eyes of the ethicists, who also viewed mental capacity as an indicator of skill (occupation), and thus economic status. The more powerful a man is, the more potential he has to do good and create justice in his society.

Discussion of individual virtues of the *nafs* (as I discuss in Chapter Two) reappear in the ethics of social relations on a broader scale because it is only in relation to others that a man can be ethical. While the ethicists recommend refining one’s own *nafs* before marriage, i.e. before becoming in charge of someone else’s *nafs*, men are always still part of society at all ages and have to continuously correct one’s behavior in light of social experiences.

The ethicists imagined the ethical public realm to be a homosocial male world ruled virtuously. In order to be an ethical man in society, one must follow the principles of a balanced *nafs* in all homosocial settings, attract benefits to himself and his friends and repel harms inflicted by enemies, taking care to not injure others’ dignity or violate their rights. The innate tendencies of human nature, desire for association, and notion of preserving justice must be sorted out on both individual and societal cosmological levels.

The institutions of learning, worship, court, and commerce are all places in which the ethicists are concerned about men’s behavior with one another. In these locations men have the opportunity to demonstrate their ethics while attempting to earn a living, obtain an education or training, move up in social or political rank, or simply do their jobs. Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani describe the ethics of male association, pure love and friendship between men, and social classes of men in order to explain to the reader his place in society, his responsibilities, and to understand the ways in which society ought to work.
The ethicists' writings assume that public homosocial life is tough to navigate with true friends being a rare find, but well worth the effort in order to experience true love and companionship. There are many enemies or potential enemies waiting to bring down a man’s social or political standing. They recognize that court life in particular is filled with ambition and unethical behavior; they warn about its charms and are careful to advise the readers to be congenial against a backdrop of inevitable corruption. However, since their cosmology of man’s place in the world is similar to the plan of the society, in which power emanates from the center, holding power allows a man to exercise all of the ethical virtues. Being fully ethical means treating men of all classes according to their capacity and deserts.

The picture of the ethical man that emerges is one who is tempered in public, chary of revealing his feelings or secrets, and discerning of character of others. To his superiors he knows how to play a supportive role in their enterprises while maintaining his own integrity and prestige. He is a good friend, attending to his friends in their times of need and thinking about how to share his good fortune with them. He is a kind and equitable employer and generous to the poor. The masculine characteristics he possesses in social settings are nobility, uprightness, self-respect, and awareness, which are an extension of the traits of the ethical nafs. In short, he is a microcosm unto himself as he operates in society, while striving to be a representative of God’s intent for human beings.
Conclusion

I began this work describing Ovidio Salazar's *The Alchemist of Happiness* as an example of modern engagement with the Islamic ethics tradition that almost entirely ignores the gendered and hierarchical nature of the genre. The akhlaq tradition is celebrated in many Muslim countries as Islam’s cultural discourse on personal discipline and the record of Islamic moral heritage. However, it reveals the deeply male centered underpinnings of pre-modern Muslim culture that were classified as Islamic ethical conduct. I argued that any future claims about ethics in Islam must be informed by historical discourses about sources, methodologies, constructions of gender, definitions of justice, hierarchy, and power dynamics in classical Islamic ethics discourses. Although not uniformly, the ethicists authenticate their patriarchal visions of society by appealing to scriptural texts, intellectual traditions, and ideal manhood. In the texts we find justifications for male primacy, gender segregation, marginalization of mothers, and unjust definitions of justice.

*Akhlaq* draws on multiple sources, which makes it both normative and responsive to ethical dilemmas of real life. The ultimate goals of the texts are twofold: first, man must achieve *sa’adat* (happiness) and become am ‘alam-i shaghir (microcosm of the world) unto himself by ordering his *nafs* using *tahdhib-i akhlaq*; second, he must be a *khalifa* vicegerent of God by becoming a source of (sa‘adat) happiness or ‘adalat (justice) for people in his household and his city. Man subdues his irascible and concupiscent faculties to his rational faculty to promote justice by putting things where they belong and ordering provisions according to everyone’s deserts. He practices modera-
tion in all things including eating, drinking, and cavorting with friends and family. He has the ability to live a simple life for the sake of living a pragmatic and utilitarian life. All of these ethical behaviors are achieved at the expense of people who are thought to be deficient in rationality, including women, and men of lower social classes.

Because the ethicists view women’s nafses as having intellectual defects, they essentialize women’s roles in two ways. Their first role is as wives, which involves managing the home so that their husbands can occupy themselves with the lofty goals of transcendence, and become microcosms of the world. Women’s second role is being biological vessels for carrying and nourishing children in their early years. Men of lower social classes provide ancillary support to men of higher social classes by fulfilling social and economic functions according to their skills.

So given the problematic gendered underpinnings of akhlaq texts, what is their place in modern approaches to Islamic ethics? First, the texts offer a historical relevance for ethics as a viable Islamic discourse on matters of human relations. The texts reveal a way of thinking that is culturally embedded in many historical and contemporary Muslim societies. The texts’ historical relevance is closely related to its authoritative relevance. As the three Muslim philosophers transition from individual virtue ethics to domestic relations, and finally to broader social relations outside the home, they establish authority through Qur’anic, Muhammadi ethics, and philosophical (nafs-oriented) standards.

Whether or not one considers akhlaq as Islamic, is part of the broader question of what counts as religious text. Jonathan Z. Smith contends that religion is a category that scholars create for intellectual purposes of describing particular phenomenon they read or observe.219 Although Smith’s definition is about experiences and observations, not texts, we can apply the idea that the “religious” is a constructed category to notions

of classical and modern ethics. Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani’s texts are located in culture and philosophy which shows human engagement with religious revelation or ideas. Nonetheless, the question of what is Islamic, remains challenging for Muslim feminists not only because they must make sense of the intellectual tradition, but also because they must address the question of religious authority in determining which texts count as religious. Who decides what discourses are authentic in the reading and deployment of the Islamic intellectual tradition?

Second, grappling with akhlaq texts offers methodological approaches to incorporating the tradition in modern Islamic ethics discourses. Feminist engagements with Plato and Aristotle that seek to both critique and recover philosophy as a feminist discourse may serve as useful models to separate concepts of women’s natures with ideals about happiness of society and the hierarchical polis or state. For example, Gregory Vlastos argues that none of Plato’s misogynist statements imply beliefs about women’s nature and do not speak about women in a world of equality.\textsuperscript{220} Janet Farrell Smith reads Plato’s goal as the establishment of a just state that incorporates the strengths of all its citizens, not the elimination of gender hierarchy, while Monique Canto argues that gender differences were necessary for Plato to achieve a successful society, the ultimate goals of which are consistent with feminist ideals.\textsuperscript{221}

I do not appropriate the three treatises of Islamic ethics for feminist goals in this dissertation, or suggest in any way that Ghazali, Tusi, and Davani were some how feminists, if we just try to look closely enough. Nonetheless, the idea that ethics of gender relations in the texts follow a pattern of civic sa’adat(happiness) and general welfare via the concept of ‘adalat is compelling if they can be reconstructed without hierarchi-


cal power structures as their foundations. The treatises are non-gender egalitarian, but provide normative prescriptions catered to social needs and individual circumstances based on human emotions and typical human flaws; the rules for *tahdhib-i akhlaq* are in effect relative to the state of a practitioner’s *nafs*. While *akhlaq* cannot be a catch all solution for Muslims’ problems in modernity, it can historically and methodologically ground modern notions of Islamic ethics.

I hope that my study offers insights to Muslim feminists about the important ways in which an individual’s circumstances *matter* in the construction of Islamic gender relations. In particular, unlike other normative genres of Islamic thought, *akhlaq* focuses on the *nafs*, its default propensities and emotions, as well as its ability to account for individual’s circumstances, upbringing, and socialization. Throughout the texts, the ethicists appeal to emotions involved in relationships with wives, children, friends, and foes (albeit, only through a male perspective). This focus not only allows Muslim feminists to deconstruct cultural and religious forces underpinning sexist attitudes and power structures, but also allows them to think constructively about how to establish gender egalitarian ethics that draw on the Islamic intellectual tradition.

Ethics is very quickly becoming a panacea for all of the problems that arise when modernists or feminists seek to speak from within an intellectual tradition that is centuries old. The idea is that ethics is able to look behind layers of patriarchal interpretation at the inherent “good” that is the stuff of religion. Some scholars have chosen to focus only on Qur’anic ethics, while others focus on the Prophet Muhammad’s ethics, for very important methodological reasons. Yet, neither of these sources can be interpreted purely, without historical and contextual filters of ethical, legal, philosophical, and mystical approaches that all have attempted to answer the question of how people should live. Their epistemological distinctiveness in terms of sources, methods, and foci in determining Islamic human relations offers Muslim feminists mul-
tiple approaches to re-reading concepts of masculinity, femininity, power, and hierarchy in the tradition. My hope is that future studies that examine the relationship between prescriptive discourse and reality, will look at the ways in which the *akhlaq* has played a role in bolstering gender hierarchy as normative in Muslim texts and realities.
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