

The Thoughts of Imam Ash-shafi'ie on Interpersonal Skills in Self Development: A Conceptual Analysis

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Abstract: Interpersonal skill refers to an algorithm of mental and communication adopted in social and communication interaction in achieving specific impact and decision. Fundamental concepts of interpersonal communication include self-independence, attitude, personality, value and goal. These attributes undeniably help create an individual capable of interacting confidently with his surroundings which is a prerequisite for the development of a civilized society. One prominent figure who contributed significantly to this field was Imam ash-Shafi'ie. Even though Imam ash-Shafi'ie is well known in the Muslim world as a notable legal scholar, this article attempts to expose his valuable thoughts and contributions to this field which acclaimed him as one of the reformist in the field of self development.

Key words: Self Development • Interpersonal skills • Ash-Shafi'ie • Conceptual

INTRODUCTION

Amongst the leaders who possess the values of interpersonal skills that can be brought into society in our efforts to develop a glorious civilisation, is Imam ash-Shafi'ie. Although he is widely known as an academic leader in the fields of Islamic laws and fiqh, a large number of the Islamic community in Malaysia have not had much exposure to his views and his leadership in interpersonal skills, which are able to contribute in the development of quality human capital.

Whereas when studied, he is amongst the best choice of luminaries to be put forward to society in respect of self development through interpersonal skills which is in line with his expansive knowledge of Islamic teachings. This is because not only did he have a very in-depth knowledge of Islamic Law, he had also used that knowledge practically, in his interaction within the community. Armed with a strong sense of self independence, the attitude, an outstanding personality and noble values, he utilised his interpersonal skills while building a community of high ethics and morals. This skill set not only involved his families, friends and the Muslim community, it extended too to the non-Muslim and international communities, government officers and the

then government. In this paper therefore this writer shall attempt to reveal some of Imam ash-Shafi'ie's experience in the use of interpersonal skills in interaction with the government, the intellects, the public and government insitutions. The writer will also put forward several ideas and advice on self development through interpersonal skills.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study aims to explore the interpersonal skills used by Imam ash-Shafi'ie in self-development as well as in spreading the religion to the extent of establishing Shafi'ie School of Law denomination. The study of interpersonal skills in modern times have been put forward and discussed scientifically by western scholars since the 20th century. This study will focus on the use of interpersonal skills by Imam ash-Shafi'ie in his life, based on secondary data compiled. According to Syed Arabi [1], secondary data is data taken from other sources, in order to produce a different interpretation. A secondary analysis is used to analyse documents such as Malay and Arabic essays by several Islamic scholars, which touched on Imam ash-Shafi'ie's interpersonal skills. Bailey [2] stated that secondary analysis is an analysis of

documents or data compiled or written based on the impressions of those who had not seen the events directly, but had been given for the purpose of arrangement, by reading primary documents.

Imam Shafi'i's Experience in Interpersonal Skills:

In this limited article, the writers will put forward only a few aspects which are felt to be able to help society to understand and know Imam ash-Shafi'ie from the angle of his background which can contribute towards the development of man through interpersonal skills, from his youth to adulthood. One of the important factors which led to Imam Shafi'ie's credibility in human development through interpersonal relationship is the fact that he was from a noble lineage [3].

Imam Shafi'ie's relationship with his loved ones and with the outside world could be seen and was described by Allah while he was still in the womb. While she was carrying him, his mother once dreamt that the light from the planet Mars shone out of her privates to Egypt, spreading to other countries. He was born in the village of Ghaza, Palestine, in the year 150 Hejira, as an orphan who never had his father's love. That however proved to be an advantage to him as it strengthened his character, allowing him to be independent, self-sufficient and able to learning from his experience in facing a hard life and the society's various reactions to him [4].

Imam ash-Shafi'ie was also considered as a man with high interpersonal skills in his family life. He had 4 children from his marriage to Humaydah bt Nafi' b. 'Uyaynah b. 'Amr b. 'Uthman b. 'Affan. With this skill set he was able to educate his eldest son, Abu 'Uthman Muhammad b. Idris as a *Qadhi* (Islamic judge) in the town of Halab. Imam ash-Shafi'ie was also able to keep his emotions in check and faced the severe test given to him stoically when he lost his second son, al-Hassan who died in childhood. Imam ash-Shafi'ie had two daughters, Fatimah and Zaynab. He and his family faced many adversities in life, yet, equipped with a high interpersonal skill set in raising a family, he managed to face bitter experiences with calm, especially when attacked with slander during his time in Yemen [5].

Among the efforts and factors that shaped Imam ash-Shafi'ie into a leading academic icon and one with outstanding interpersonal skills, is strong character development. Not only was he a keen researcher, student and seeker of knowledge, he was also deeply pious and diligent in his faith and prayers to Allah Almighty and these led to his mental and spiritual brilliance. His untiring diligence in performing religious deeds was recorded by al-Rabi'b. Sulayman [6]:

“Imam ash-Shafi'ie divided his night into three parts, the first to write, the second to pray and the third to sleep”

From early age, his mother had taught him not to sever relationships especially with his close family members, concerned that his identity as a Quraysy will be lost together with his rights as Bani Hasyim, which enabled him to obtain the basic necessities to survive even in hardship. His migration with his mother Hafidah from Ghaza, Palestine to Mecca, opened a new chapter for him to develop an extended and expansive interpersonal relationship as Mecca was then the centre and agent of Islamic globalization, as it is now [7].

The hardship faced by Imam ash-Shafi'ie in life had taught him to be an excellent personality, one that could not easily be influenced by worldly goods and affluence. These are factors which contributed to him having purity of soul as well as encouraging him to appreciate the emotions of those around him and for him to understand and appreciate various aspects involving them and their lives. This produced the sense of social responsibility required in managing the affairs of the society and in creating relationship between its members [8].

Although his life was cloaked in poverty, he never displayed any adverse reaction towards his mother or society by resorting to begging on the streets. What he did do was to note down the hadiths that he learnt from his teachers onto tree barks and animal hides. However, with the interpersonal skills that he possessed, he approached government offices requesting permission to recycle their used paper. With divine blessing he was able to memorise many of the *hadith* which led him to successfully memorise the “Muwatta” kitab by Imam Malik b Anas at the age of 10 [9].

Amongst that which showed him as a person who understood the interpersonal relationship of a teacher with his student from the aspect of education was the honesty he personified [10]. While still young, Imam ash-Shafi'ie had been exposed to life in the rural areas. He had been sent by his mother to a location outside the city of Mecca, the village of the Huzayl tribe. The Huzayl tribe was a large Arab tribe in the north of Arab Peninsular, a nomadic tribe that was entrusted to their uncle Huzayl b. Mudrikah b. Ilyas b. Madar. Here, Imam ash-Shafi'ie learnt and gained much experience including in skills involving the culture of Arab society and interpersonal relationships, as the Huzayl tribe is one that was rich in knowledge in the Arabic language, literature and culture [11].

At the same time he had the opportunity to gain mastery in history and other skills, such as horseback riding, archery, medicine, astronomy and prophesy [12].

Therefore it is not surprising that at the tender age of 15, his teacher Muslim b. Khalid al-Zinji allowed him to issue a *fatwa* (ruling) after observing the skills that Imam ash-Shafi'ie possessed from the aspect of knowledge, delivery of knowledge and his relationship with his teachers, peers and the community. This concurrently led to the development of a society with high degree of intellectuality [13].

While in Mecca, Imam ash-Shafi'ie succeeded in creating a social network between the teachers and students and the community at large, by appearing as an academician highly educated in the fields of translation, fiqh and the Arabic language. This was acknowledged by his teacher himself, Sufyan b. 'Uyaynah and those who had visited Mecca to perform their haj. This is because in his young age, he had been granted permission to hold various knowledge seeking events in Masjid al Haram [14].

In his search for good teachers and scholars of caliber, Imam ash-Shafi'ie had never once neglected his relationship with his beloved mother. He had first requested for her blessing and advice, although he was then 20 years old and an scholars. His mother had listed a few scholars and ulema from whom Imam ash-Shafi'ie should be learning from [15].

Although he was by then accepted as a respected scholar in Mecca, he considered his knowledge to still be insufficient. He always wanted to improve himself and his personality by creating an interpersonal relationship with a hadith scholar in Medina, Imam Malik. Before Imam ash-Shafi'ie verbalized his desire to further his learning in Medina, he had first gathered his courage to ask for his mother's permission. This is proof of his value of his relationship with his mother, even in the field of his own career. In the beginning, Imam ash-Shafi'ie almost cancelled his plans to study further in Medina, seeing his mother's sadness and reluctance to allow him to do so. He then asked for her to forgive him if his request had grieved her and was willing to not go through with his intention, by staying in Mecca [16].

The principle that was showed by Imam ash-Shafi'ie touched his mother's heart, not because Imam ash-Shafi'ie wanted to further his studies, but she was saddened because she had not been able to support him financially while he was travelling to Medina. His mother had even said one of her dearest wish was to see him to be someone who loves knowledge, loves wisdom and

become a pious and faithful servant of Allah. His mother then allowed him to continue his studies to Medina, armed with strong determination and hope for Allah's blessings and assistance [17].

The interpersonal skills that Imam ash-Shafi'ie possessed was clearly evident when he succeeded in obtaining a letter of support from the Governor of Mecca and his former teacher, Ibn Khalid al-Zinji, prior to his departure for Medina. Armed with knowledge and the letter of support, Imam ash-Shafi'ie left for Medina and submitted the letter to the Medina Governor. At first, the Governor of Medina refused to bring Imam ash-Shafi'ie to meet with Imam Malik as he was a much respected scholar, not only by commoners but by the leaders at that time. However, it was due to the brilliant communication skills of Imam ash-Shafi'ie that the Governor relented and brought him to meet with Imam Malik [18].

Among the top scholars in Medina who became very close to him was Imam Malik b Anas. Imam ash-Shafi'ie was one of his most loved disciple, to the extent that he was most attracted to the communication skills displayed by Imam ash-Shafi'ie when conversing. Imam Malik had once instructed Imam ash-Shafi'ie to read a page of the *al-Muwatta'* book to the students of Imam Malik and when he ended, the Imam Malik asked for him to continue reading as he was fascinated by the Imam ash-Shafi'ie's voice and his strong method of reading and powerful intonation [19].

He also had good relations with other scholars such as Ibrahim b. Sa'ad al-Ansari, 'Abd al-'Aziz b. al-Darudi, Muhammad b. Abu Sa'id b. Abu Fadik and others. With this he was able to master the Medina stream of fiqh which was introduced by Imam Malik and other scholars in Medina [20].

After the demise of his teacher Imam Malik, Imam ash-Shafi'ie made the decision to return to Mecca as he was no longer able to support himself financially in Medina. As fate would have it, when he returned to Mecca, a delegation of Yemeni leaders were visiting Hijaz especially Mecca. The prominent leaders of the Quraysy tribe then introduced Imam ash-Shafi'ie to the delegation. Due to his noble personality both intellectually and spiritually, he was offered the post of an officer in Najran by the Yemeni leaders. He accepted the offer and carried out his duty fairly and responsibly [21].

It was also while he was in Yemen that Imam ash-Shafi'ie had the opportunity to form academic relationships with several scholars. He learnt fiqh from Matarraf b. Mazin, Hisyam b. Yusuf, 'Amr b. Abu Salamah, the student of al-Awza'i; and he mastered *al-Layth fiqh*

from Yahya b. Hassan, the student of Imam al-Layth. He had an open and tolerant attitude in forming interpersonal relationship, he not only learnt from the Sunni ulemas but also with the Syi'ah ulemas such as Sulayman b. Muqatil and others [22].

Despite the just and responsible character displayed by Imam ash-Shafi'ie while carrying out his duties, there was still a faction of the Najran community who was not pleased with those traits. This is because they liked to flatter higher officers and dignitaries in order to gain personal benefit. They accused Imam ash-Shafi'ie to be a rebel and leader of the group wanting to topple the Abbasiyah government which was at that time led by Harun al-Rasyid. This was said to be one of the factors which drove Imam ash-Shafi'ie to Iraq [23].

In addressing the conflict, Imam ash-Shafi'ie and those accused were brought to the 'Abbasiyyah centre of government to be tried before Khalifah Harun al-Rasyid. Due to his intelligence and excellent communication skills, he was able to address the conflict and be released from the accusations and was freed [24]. However, his release had to be supported by a guarantee from Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Shaybani, important scholar then. He was the one who played a major role in ensuring that Imam ash-Shafi'ie was cleared from the allegation. This was because Imam ash-Shafi'ie had established a friendship with Muhammad b. al-Hasan while they were both studying and living in Medina [25].

The intellectual atmosphere that existed in Baghdad then greatly contributed to the expanse of and openness of Imam ash-Shafi'ie to knowledge. Much of the knowledge found in Yunan, Persia and Hindi were translated into Arabic which may have helped the growth of many fields of academia. With this growth, it is not surprising if Imam ash-Shafi'ie had seized the opportunity to learn all that could benefit him as well as inspired him in his thinking and academic debate. Hence, he was able to face society and uphold truth and reject any ignorance in the academic debates [26].

The uncertain political scenario in Baghdad during the reign of Khalifah al-Ma'mun, had forced Imam ash-Shafi'ie to migrate to Egypt in 199 Hejira/815 A.D. despite being offered by the Khalifah al-Ma'mun the position of *qadhi* in Baghdad. His move to Egypt was to enhance his academic discipline as there in Egypt was several of Imam Malik and Imam al-Layth's students. Imam al-Layth, the acclaimed Egyptian ulema had however, died by the time Imam ash-Shafi'ie arrived. In addition, the Egyptian government was then led by al-'Abbas b. 'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbas b. Musa b. 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas who was of the Quraysy lineage [27].

Academic events continued to be held by Imam ash-Shafi'ie in Masjid 'Amr b. 'As on a daily basis. This helped uphold his reputation as he established good relationship with the scholars and the local community. He died on a Friday night after Isya' prayer time, 27 rejab in the year 204 Hejira equivalent to 4 January, 820 A.D. at the age of 54 [28].

Ideas of Imam ash-Shafi'i on Interpersonal Skills: Imam ash-Shafi'ie had many thoughts on the development of mankind through the use of interpersonal skills which can be used as a guide in daily life in particular when involving personal relationships between individuals. This would encompass the development of one's self independence and personality in forming interpersonal relationships, social skills, communications, conflict and how to address it, leadership and the advantages of forming interpersonal relationships.

Self Independence and Personality: In forming self independence, attitude, character and values of a person in interpersonal relationships, Imam ash-Shafi'ie had stressed how important it was for an individual to have knowledge to effectively achieve the objectives in that relationship. This is because, if a person has wide knowledge, it is a gift that this can benefit others. This is important because a person with knowledge will discuss and communicate with another individual in an educated and considered manner, as opposed to those without knowledge, who will communicate using the mentality he has at the time [29].

For Imam ash-Shafi'ie, one of the uniqueness of an individual that has a developed character and self is that the individual knows himself in private as well as in the public. In this matter, Imam ash-Shafi'ie had once stated that the honour of a person is in hiding his poverty such that others think of him as affluent. A person is also honourable when he hides his anger such that others would think that he approves that certain matter. An excellent sense of self independence would be evident when a person can hide his extremeness; to the point that others would think he was a calm person [30].

In building a good and outstanding personality, Imam ash-Shafi'ie had suggested that one should avoid associating with those who are not intelligent as well as being out of reality. Imam ash-Shafi'ie had measured credibility of, satisfaction with and trust of a person by the number of people wanting to be close to him or the number of friends he has. To realize the objectives, an individual needs to work hard to build relationships with others by enhancing mutual understanding and appreciation [31].

Interpersonal relationships which are nurtured by a person can help him to achieve a higher degree of personality in the eyes of the Allah Almighty and be given privileges and advantages, including as Imam ash-Shafi'ie said, a person will receive blessings from Allah as He and His angels look very favourably on those who create interpersonal relationships. In addition, with interpersonal relationship a person will be respected by those around him, adding to his good deeds when he has gone. Interpersonal relationships can build love and mutual happiness in daily interaction and connection and may lead to increased wellbeing and fortune and provides long life. In addition, interpersonal relationship is disliked by the devils and cause anxiety to them [32].

Social Skill: Imam ash-Shafi'ie had also set out guidelines for society to find and get a friend or true individual with whom an interpersonal relationship can be formed. This is because according to him, a true friendship is difficult to find and only those who enter the friendship with a true and pure heart and intention can find the meaning of a true friendship [33].

According to Imam ash-Shafi'ie, a true friend would not harm a person who cannot be depended on during adverse times may be able to be an enemy and certainly would not be a friend. There is nothing as eternal and friendship as pure as when a friend helps another in need. One of the suggestions put forward by Imam ash-Shafi'i is to visit a friend who is sick and suffering [34].

The practice of visiting the sick is one that is very much demanded by Islam as it will lead to closer interpersonal relationships. This practice should be carried out all the time and not just when a person falls ill and in fact the practice had been done by the Rasulullah s.a.w towards his family, the elderly, those unmarried and others.

Therefore Imam ash-Shafi'ie had always hoped to get a true friend who fully commits to a friendship, unwavering in good and bad times. This wish was embodied in his prose which means as follows [35]:

“I have yet to find on this earth, a friend who is faithful during hardship. When in fact my life is full of grief and joy. In times of joy, I always ask: “Who will be my friend?” In good times many will commonly be envious, however when I encounter hardship, many will be happy.”

According to Imam ash-Shafi'ie, the characteristic of a good friend includes being an individual who would always be by one's side and also protects one's good

name in life and death. This type of interpersonal relationship is always dreamed about by all individuals and will of course be long lasting and cherished by one another [36].

Among the steps that must be taken to preserve interpersonal relationships are mutual respects, not having any negative perception, or degrade or create hate between each other. As Imam ash-Shafi'ie said, whoever respects another, will also be respected. Just as whoever insults another, will also be insulted. This is why a person who does a good deed to another will be rewarded by Allah and those who do an evil deed will be punished horribly [37].

In creating interpersonal relationships, Imam ash-Shafi'ie once reminded the community of the tides of a friendship between individuals, as some individuals are not faithful to the relationship, whereas positive interaction is vital to the friendship. Many now have friends but those friends only will be there when times are good or if there exists any personal interests, but will leave during hard times or suffering. As such, it is important to find a good friend. This advice can be seen in Imam ash-Shafi'iesyair which means [38]:

“I can freely associate with others in good times. However, when hardship falls, I find that they are like wheels of time, unwilling to befriend events.”

Whereas, a good friend and companion is actually able to help stabilize emotion and reduce stress when one is facing hardship or is grieving. This is because a friendship is an effect of interpersonal relationship that is not given sufficient attention, whether by the young, or the society in general. According to Imam ash-Shafi'ie, a person's character shines from his soul. A person has the potential to do two things, to deceive and to appeal. Imam ash-Shafi'ie likened the two situations to holding thorns in respect of lying and looking at flowers, for appeals. When someone needs help, do act as a fire that can burn the thorns or the deception [39].

Imam ash-Shafi'ie had clarified that amongst the characteristics that should be avoided in a healthy friendship is the tendency to ridicule and also to neglect a friend who is in pain. These individuals possess a selfish envious nature, envious of their friends if their friends are happy and they would be happy if their friends meet with misfortune. It is unfortunate and sad if a person wishes for good things to be enjoyed by his friend and that friend instead wishes that he meets some misfortune [40].

Communication: Communication is a skill that was most emphasized by Imam ash-Shafi'ie as according to him, a person, even prophets, cannot escape from verbal threats and words. Imam ash-Shafi'ie therefore suggested that people guard their tongues from careless words that embarrass others. In fact, he also stated that a person who is talkative and often speaks can lead to him having a weak personality. The tendency of a person to communicate well or badly is due to his having gotten used to that way of communication. A person's character is seen from his tongue. A person who seeks to find his own flaws is much better than the person who keeps looking for others' flaws. [41].

According to Imam ash-Shafi'ie, sometimes verbal communication will be ineffective if not in line with the unspoken desires of the person making that communication. This is because verbal communication would be much better if it is in line with the nonverbal communication of the other person [42].

During the process of interaction, Imam ash-Shafi'ie had advocated several methods and necessary steps to be taken by a person during a negotiation or a debate. Among them are that, a person who is putting his idea forward should not be arrogant or egotistical in doing so. Instead he should be discussing his point politely and ethically especially if he is in public. Aside from that, advice and criticism made to or of a person needs to be well placed in terms of timing and location. Never criticize a person in public as this may embarrass him. It is better to criticize for the sake of Allah and made in private with the person involved, so that he would not feel embarrassed [43].

In addition, Imam ash-Shafi'ie had provided useful ideas and tips to the Islamic community on the ethics of discussion and giving criticism regardless to whom. He had asserted *inter alia* as follows [44]:

“If you are one with an advantage and knowledge of the past and present disputes and discourses, discuss with the person whom you have asked to debate with, with a calm heart, with wisdom, humility and appreciate his opinion and do not act proud. Take what you accept is right and good from those who oppose you, regardless of whether they are friendly or hostile. In addition, show your sincerity to those around you who insist that they are right and are arrogant. This is because, being emotional in those circumstances, will lead to disassociation and division of self”.

In communicating, Imam ash-Shafi'ie further advised that one refrains from being influenced by emotions that can bring attention to oneself. That is why he suggested that during a debate or communication, a person refrains from showing anger and from mentioning the weakness of others as the objective of such a communication or debate would be to seek truth and not status [45].

When someone communicates with a person who is uncouth because he is uneducated or perhaps less intelligent, Imam ash-Shafi'ie advised not to give any response or answers to the words or insults that the person makes. Imam ash-Shafi'ie also drew a beautiful analogy in his prose [46]:

“Say what you want to insult my honour. My silence to you is an answer. It does not mean I do not have an answer, but it is not suitable for a lion to respond to the antics of dogs”

Imam ash-Shafi'ie once said that a person's anger can be seen either through verbal communication or non-verbal communication. He stated that when nobility or academicians feel angry they show it through actions, however when lesser intelligent or uneducated persons are angry they verbalise it through words [47].

In delivering any information through the communication channels whether verbal or written, Imam ash-Shafi'ie had outlined several guidelines which should be followed during a communication especially if writing poetry as follows [48]:

- A poet will not be accepted if his poetry contains any elements that can lead to desires, especially that which idolise women in an arousing manner, elements of undue praises which do not reflect the sincerity of the giver of praise and is in fact hypocritical, or if his poetry brings moral and material benefits and if the poetry contains elements which can incite trouble amongst society and poetry which contains elements of insults or contempt for others.
- A poet will be acceptable if in his poetry there exists elements which do not encourage wrongdoing or immoral conduct. In the same manner, what is said in the poetry or poem will reflect the real emotion and will mirror spiritual beauty and moral perfection.

Conflict and How to Address It: Imam ash-Shafi'ie had submitted several ideas and guidelines in problems involving conflicts and how to address them. The best reference and resource available to see the thoughts and

ideas of Imam ash-Shafi'ie (1309H) discussing conflict in detail can be found in his book *al-Risalah*. Generally, he (1309H) had classified conflicts in 2 ways, prohibited and not prohibited (allowed) conflicts. These classifications can be understood from his perspective.

"Indeed I find that ulemas in the past and now, have different ideas (conflict) in certain of their affairs. Hence can it be so? Imam ash-Shafi'iesaid to them: Conflict comes in two (2) forms, one, the prohibited conflict(*al-ikhtilaf al-muharram*) and to the second form, I do not say that it is prohibited. *Haram* (Prohibited) conflicts are those involving matters which had been clearly determined by Allah in the Quran through his prophets with clear explanation. It is not allowed that those who are not in the know enters into a conflict about it".

Whereas conflicts which are deemed as permitted are those in respect of certain texts in the al-Quran and hadiths which may be considered open for interpretation. Then, scholars who wish to interpret and make analogies rely on the interpretation found within the context of the text or analogy, although different from other views. The ideas of Imam ash-Shafi'ie (1309 Hejira) are clearly demonstrated in his book *al-Risalah*:

"And whatever can be interpreted or understood through analogy and the interpreter or maker of that analogy stands by the meaning within the literal meaning or by way of an analogy; if there are other views to this:- I do not say that there is imposed upon him a strict interpretation on the text".

At the same time, Imam ash-Shafi'ie had also proposed steps that can be taken by a person when in situation of conflict or trouble during interaction with others, be they conflict of ideas, interest or such like, including being patient when mistakes are made by beloved friends. Try to forgive as doing so will extinguish any desire for revenge and ill feeling. Such counsel by Imam ash-Shafi'ie is clearly evident through his prose which means [49]:

"When I become a forgiving person, free from spite, my heart is at peace, my soul is relieved of the burden of conflict. When my enemies are before me, I will always accord him respect". "All this I do to preserve myself from evil. I show pleasantness, courtesy and sense of friendship to those who I loathe, as I do to those I love".

Aside from that, Imam ash-Shafi'ie also suggested that a person controls his emotions by being pleasant even to those individuals whom he loathes, as if his heart is full of love, while leaving behind any bad faith and misconception and not to be repeated. If one has peace in facing this sort of circumstance, then one will reap its benefits [50].

Among the theories that Imam ash-Shafi'ie had put forward in addressing unresolvable conflict is to separate and attempt to avoid from being involved in the conflict in the first place, this is much better than to associate with those who have bad intentions. Therefore Imam ash-Shafi'ie had appealed to mankind to find a devout friend. The alternative is to live in isolation and avoid from associating with bad individuals are those who are unable to differentiate between good and evil [51].

In aiming for success in life, a person should not form a strong relationship with any individuals who may lead him to the wrong path and self destruction. How terrible is the implication of doing so to a person that Imam ash-Shafi'ie could make such a horrible simile in that he would be happier to have dogs as companions rather than evil men who disrupt your lives. This is because according to him, the lowest dogs can still show the right path to his owner, unlike the most evil human beings who will never do so. Hence, the Imam suggested that man save themselves and guard their tongues as by doing so one is ensured of a happy life, even if it has to be a lonely one [52].

Leadership: In the context of leadership, Imam ash-Shafi'ie had many opinions whether from the perspective of qualifications of a leader, characteristics of a leader, style of leadership and such matters. Most of his thoughts and experiences on leadership are in line with the requirement of Islam. The idea and style of leadership introduced by Imam ash-Shafi'ie encompassed education, high level of creative and management values in leadership that can be emulated by leaders of Islamic community to ensure that plans and activities carried out by the leaders, will always receive the blessing and approval of Allah [53].

He once stated that a person, who is greedy for power or excessively hunger for the position of leader, is likely not to achieve his goals, due to his ego. Imam ash-Shafi'ie had once likened the way a man organizes his life such as governing and politics, to that of the animals, that it is sometimes worse compared to animals [54].

There are five instruments of leadership advocated by Imam ash-Shafi'ie for a leader to have a higher credibility, that is: truth in communicating with the people, ability to keep confidential matters secret, always giving advice to the people and carry out the duties entrusted with honesty [55]. Among the function of a creative leader according to Imam ash-Shafi'ie (1393 Hejira) is to create a favourable "win win" environment where everyone is satisfied. Although this may be difficult, when a leader has a natural sense of justice in making any decisions or taking any action, it can be achieved.

However, according to Imam ash-Shafi'ie, no one, even a leader, will be able to satisfy everyone. However what needs to be done is to enhance and improve relationship with Allah. In this way, a person or leader need not worry about what is being said or questioned by others [56].

In situations where a person is interacting with his leader, among the advice advocated by Imam ash-Shafi'ie is to rid oneself of feelings of wanting to be ingratiating with that leader and always accompany that leader for fear of that leader being unable to bring to a path blessed by Allah. His views can be seen from his creative prose as follows [57]:

"Wherever the King is, do not take refuge at his door. What do you want of a king? When he is angry, he will pursue you and when he is happy he will tire of you. Take refuge only from Allah and stay away from the doors of kings. Indeed to take refuge at a king's door is a humiliation".

A successful leadership according to Imam ash-Shafi'ie relies on harmony between the circumstances, the conduct of the leaders and the followers and the communication between them. This will create a sense of mutual respect regardless of status or rank in an organisation and simultaneously prevent conflict and dissatisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Imam ash-Shafi'ie is not just known as an academic leader, he is also a man with vast experience in human development through interpersonal skills. With his experience and wisdom, he was able to adapt to various situations in his efforts to develop society through interpersonal skills.

He not only possessed experience in human development, he also had many useful ideas and advice to contribute towards human development through

interpersonal skills. This is supported by his character as an ulema and academic leader respected not only by the people but by the leaders at that time. Many views and experience of his, relating to the development of man through interpersonal skills are in line with the requirement of Islam as advocated by the Rasulullah.

Therefore, the experience and ideas of mankind development through interpersonal skills that was displayed by the Imam ash-Shafi'ie encompasses various levels which can be emulated and serve as a reminder to the Islamic community that every form of interpersonal relationship that is carried out by them can only build and advance civilization while at the same time, receive divine blessing by Allah.

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