

GÜLEN'S THEORY OF *ADAB* AND ETHICAL VALUES OF GÜLEN MOVEMENT

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Abstract

This paper seeks to explore and explain the prominent place of '*adab*' (roughly, good manners) in the description and building of Muslim identity and personality, and the implications for Muslim individual and collective behaviour in contemporary societies. In particular, the paper examines the role of ethical values in the formation of character, through Fethullah Gülen's discourses addressed to, and successful in inspiring, Muslim youth: the definition of moral character on the basis of religion provides the movement's members with the ideal and a roadmap to the ideal of the 'perfected human being' (*insan-ı kamil*). Gülen seeks to reshape modernity through the concept of moral character informed and made stable by religious consciousness. As a result, attitudes to the 'other' and the frontiers between 'outward' and 'inward' are reconfigured. The concept of *insan-ı kamil* encourages self-transcendence through service of others (*hizmet*), and the patient, peaceful resolution of tensions between different ideologies such as 'Islamic' and 'secular'. The Gülen movement conceives of and, through the practice of its members, presents the ethical domain as the common ground of shared values.

Derived from the Arabic words of *khuluq* which means to create, to shape and to give form; *Akhlaq*; corresponds to ethic, is a subject of *Ilm al-akhlaq*. *Akhlaq* embraces all of the details of human character and life. It describes not only the religious injunctions containing the beliefs, but also gives a map of social behaviour Muslims adhere to. *Adab*, which the practical dimension of *Ilm al-Akhlaq*, is the base of morality, prescribes a way of living according to the Islamic rules of ethics involving every aspect of daily life. It reflects the good manners, education and self-training that indicates a high valuation of correct order, behaviour and taste. The term is understood by moral formation which is going with *akhlaq* (ethics).¹ *Ilm al-Akhlaq* is a branch of knowledge, which deals with the rules and norms to increase human values and virtues, to avoid misconduct and to do what is correct. There is also the other meaning; that the knowledge which leads to cultivation of intellectual culture, Arabic literature and poetry. In this paper, I examine the discipline, training and self-cultivation through *adab* rules and its relationship with knowledge that makes up “Muslim anthropology of man”.

This paper has two central objectives: First, it aims to recover the ethical theory among the Islamic scholar and Gülen’s views, to defining *adab* in relating with Islamic morality. We give such views of *adab* interesting implications for religious morality. Second, it aims to analyze how ethical norms as *adab* rules play a central role in identifying Muslim behaviour and character creating new universal discourse of human ideal. The Islamic manner and body are reshaped by this universal ethical discourse, one claims that the rationalization and secularization affects² Thus, Gülen’s view of *adab* identifies and formulates some new theoretical and practical options imitate by the Muslim young generation and lead the articulation between secular and religious ethical models. As Yilmaz argues, Gülen’s definition of *adab* and ethical body can be explained as a new *tajdid* by conduct.³ My interest is to understanding the conceptualization of *Adab* and morality in Gülen’s followers and sympathizers and different modalities of ethical action which create new modern Islamic subjects, in other terms *Islamic habitus*. My intention is to understand how Gülen reformulates and urges the ethical imperatives which set up behavioural norms connecting ideal Muslim personalities. Arguing Talal Asad, the behavioural set has some relation with moral structures of the self in which emotional, behavioural, repetitive ritual play a crucial role to achieve.⁴ He does not represent classical theories and debates among the Muslim thinkers; however he also does not attain to disconnect the “cumulative tradition” of Islamic ethical views.⁵ This ethical formulation with drawing up the Islamic conscience is changed and appropriated in different ways and contexts as Hodgson remarks that the Muslim conscience is manifested differently in every case to survive God’s commitment by Muslims.⁶ In different centuries, Muslim

1 B. D. Metcalf, *Moral Conduct and Authority: the place of “adab” in South Asian Islam*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984, p. 3, F. Gabrielli, “*Adab*”, in E.I.

2 Elizabeth Özdalga, “Secularizing Trends in Fethullah Gülen’s Movement: Impasse or Opportunity for Further Renewal”, in *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, Spring 2003, v. 12 (1), pp.61-73

3 İhsan Yılmaz, “*Ijtihad and Tajdid by Conduct, The Gülen Movement*”, in M. Hakan Yavuz and John L. Esposito (eds), *Turkish Islam and Secular State, The Gülen Movement*, New York, Syracuse University Press, pp 208-237

4 Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion, Discipline and Reason of Power in Christianity and Islam*, London, John Hopkins University Press, 1993, p. 65

5 The cumulative tradition means “... a change in the way the whole tradition is to be understood”. p. 6. I took this term from W. C. Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion*, New York, MacMillan, 1963 cited by Sheila McDonough, *Muslim Ethics and Modernity, A Comparative Study of the Ethical Thought of Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Mawlana Mawdudi*, Ontario, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, p. 2

6 M. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, London, University of Chicago Press, 1974

thinkers emphasizes on requirement of the Muslim conscience with using the Islamic words and concepts. In this modern age, facing modernity, Muslim world research an answer to live how Muslims should coexist with others without laying theirs manners. The need for an ethical character is underlined by Gülen is an embracing response for his symphatisants. Gülen is not only interpreter of Qur'an and an Islamic thinker, he emphasizes to correct individual's ethical life by raising such values as humility, loyalty, altruism, devotion, trust and repentance. This non politic message can easily entice new symphatisants.

I'm interested bodily expressions of ethical conception that Gülen underlines in his speeches. He remarks the importance of representative role (*temsil*) rather than speeches and argummentation (*tebliğ*). This bodily act constitutes the transformation of our perception on Islamic subjects and the meaning of the life. Mahmood argues that gestures and behaviours donate also the meaningful of the world with body shaped some values inherent self.

...bodily behavior does not simply stand in a relationship of meaning to self and society, but it also endows the self with certain kinds of capacities that provide the substance from which the world is acted upon.⁷

In this sense, the emotional and bodily performance is proper realization of ethical values that award the substance of world. Some of the values like humility, ascetism, devotion that I follow in this paper provide us to understand how the performatif acts produce and form not only Islamic subjects but give a critical approach in modern society and civilization. Issues raised by Elias, in his book *The History of Manners*; show us the behavioural and physical changes shifting in a *civilized* direction in the course of Western history. For Elias, these gradually changes resulted the civilizing process marked by new emotional, behavioural feelings. The new conducts are interrelated with the organization of society.⁸ Norbert Elias refers to habits and manners to understand how the civilized process developed in modern Europe. He also describes various meanings of civilization, but he brings the habits and the development of good manners to clarify their role in the formation of civilization. However Elias's historical sociology neglects the influence of religious factors in civilized process. My argument is broadly that Gülen's adap theory in which religiously oriented good manners and etiquette come to dominate social interactions is parallel to the civilizing process in which civil norms of self-restraint come to dominate social interaction as Elias describes in the "court society". These two similar civilizing processes have similar functions as a personality that is cultivated through education and discipline. We get the adap as an element of revealing the Muslim manners linking with the civilization. The question of how we can have a well-mannered character depends on the realization of *adap*. Gülen's morality, gives us the ideal of Islamic civilization related to the *adab* rules. He develops the idea of faith oriented from morality to encourage a revival in Islamic activism.

We can interpret the notion of personality guided by *adab* rules and make some comparisons with Foucault's 'technologies of the self'.⁹ Foucault takes the ancient Greek ethical conceptions Religion disciplines the person through ascetic practices and creates a perfect human being, in point of Weber; it regulates instinctual life in the interest of social order.¹⁰ Gülen's pedagogical model concerning altruism associated always with devotion, self-criticism is

7 Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety, The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2005, p. 27

8 N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process, The History of Manners*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1978

9 M. Foucault, "Technologies of the Self" in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, London: Allan lane, pp. 225-251

10 B. S. Turner, "The Rationalization of the body: reflections on modernity and disciplines" in S. Whimster and S. Lash (eds), *Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity*, London, Allen&Unwin, pp. 222-241

thought in this paper as technologies of the self in which the objective of taking care body and soul is achieved. Pursuit of this pedagogical model of morality permits Gülen's sympathizers to transform themselves in a state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection that shaped ideal human being.

My objectif is to show how, as argued Brown, the Islamic *adab* and morality originated from religious injunctions which lead to the internalization of Islamic rules and norms that give an inner world and spiritual dimension to an ascetic person with outlined religious principles, the human soul which is cultivated by the efforts of one self.¹¹

The essential purpose of *adab* is to nurture the human morality. To reach the goal of raising the human character, Muslim's behaviour is determined by the religious recommendation and obligation which gives him a map of cognition. *Adab* is regarded as the practical morality of Islam. Muslims internalize these practices and rituals in order to rear a perfect human being (*insan-ı kamil*). According to a *Hadith*, "the best amongst you are those who have the best manners and characters, the good behaviour are central to the performance of Muslim's personality."

Debates on Ethical Issues

When Islam emerged in the Middle East with the conquests, Islamic literature, the exegetic studies had not been formulated until the 10th century as seen with the separation between the basic sciences of Quran interpretation, *hadith*, theology and *kalam*. As the scholars mention, the elaboration of moral and spiritual literatures dates back to the tenth and the thirteenth centuries.¹² Ten centuries before, we could describe pre-ethical discussions and doctrinal conflicts, consequently determined as some values for Muslim's individual and collective every day life.¹³ Later centuries followed the first Islamic expansion, we see the overlapping issues related on human responsibility, free will and divine omnipotence that later raised the ethical debates and ethical theory of Islam as Fakhry wrote "a reasoned account of the nature and grounds of right actions and decisions and the principles underlying".

Islamic thinkers focused on distinguishing the Islamic disciplines as theology, *kalam* and *hadith* literatures, which furnish ethical theories in Islam and every discipline offers Muslims different aspects of ethical fundamentals as well as the fiqh recommends the regulation of Muslim daily life according the law, the Sufis develop vital questions that strengthen the inner dimension of Muslims. The major debate in ethics is distinguished between rationalist and scriptural and non rationalist morality theories characterized by different dialectical and methodological ways in which the disputes promote the refurbishment of Islamic ethical rules regarding theological questions about predetermination (*qadar*), obligation (*taklif*), the political duties.¹⁴ The Mu'tazilite school sees the freedom of the will as a fundamental element of Islamic morality. Islamic thinkers and philosophers had been influenced by Greek philosophers whose ethics conceptions had a numerous affects. The contact with Christian theologians and Greek philosophers permit to the Mu'tazilites to apply their methods in their ethical conceptions. Wasil ibn Ata was the first who started to promote the radical turning of the Mu'tazilite. In this period, al-Kindi refers to Greek philosopher's writings about ethic. He wrote many ethical treatises revealed Socratic understanding. An other Islamic

11 Peter Brown, "Late Antiquity and Islam: Parallels and Contrasts", pp. 23-37, in Metcalf, op. cit.

12 Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 192

13 Majid Fakhry, *Ethical Theories in Islam*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1994, p. 3

14 The debates between Ash'arites and Mu'tazilites schools influence the issues of ethical debates.

philosopher is ar-Razi, in his writings we can establish some parallelism on division of parts of the souls, following a hedonistic life with Platonic Socratic themes. The contribution of al-Farabi's on ethical discussion is also profoundly influenced the later Islamic thinkers and scholars. He interpreted the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle. He followed Aristotle's division on intellectual and practical virtues in other terms moral virtues. In his theory of justice, he claims that the distribution of common good assures the equity among the people. These common goods consists the security, wealth, dignity and other virtues.

Ibn Miskawayh set up the most essential ethical issues dealing with platonic suggestions in his *Tahdhib al-akhlaq* (The Cultivation of Morals).¹⁵ His ethical works explains how acquire the correct way of moral through the harmony of soul, correct manners. Emphasising on human rational that guides humanity to decide and chose between good and bad, led to consider him a humanist. In fact that his use of rationality in his writings, he was criticized by other Islamic thinkers like Al-Ghazali who treatises the worldly and otherworldly happinies. He lays down virtues like wisdom, courage, temperance, justice and divine virtues. He refers Qur'an and Hadith which is a central and basic element in his ethical theory. For Ghazali, human's acts and manners must be governed by divine virtues and the purification of soul. He describes good manners that Muslim imitates in their life.

Nevertheless, the study of Islamic ethics is understood in the Quran which provides Muslims with the way of life which means doing good deeds, acting generously, being charitable, having an altruistic character, restraining from his ardour. We assume that the ethical theories of Islam are the Islamic code of daily conduct which contains also the *adab* having a fundamental role in determining the ethical principles to be divided into three categories: responsibility for God, duties that a Muslim presents to those with whom he lives, and finally the manners to have in daily routines.

The first category is mentioned obviously both in the Qur'an and in the Hadith¹⁶, which includes actions and measures that are the attributes expected from a Muslim to fulfil a responsibility for good behaviour which is good in itself such as sincerity, honesty, altruism, generosity, modesty, tolerance and its opposite is considered grave sins that must be avoided. Secondly, being kind to parents, helping others, showing kindness to all human beings ignoring racial and religious differences. Manners observed in daily life as sleeping, eating, talking, entering into the washing room, posture when sitting, which invoke every aspect of life which Muslims mostly refer to *Hadiths*, are included in the third category of *adab*. All of them codify how Muslims must act by searching for a practical realization of God's commands to attempt an inner self and self-realization as well as the commitment to the revelation and *hadiths*. These practical *adap* principles relate to the Sufis experiences in which a person finds piety and ascetic behaviour.

Gülen's Ethical Views

The discussion among different Islamic ethical theories considered rationalist and anti rationalist does not help us to define Gülen's theory of *adap* and ethic. He underlines the importance of behaviour as play crucial role to identify ethical norms. According to importance the behaviours; "Morals were once thought of as virtues. Today they are regarded as a collection

¹⁵ See M. Arkoun, Contribution à l'étude de l'humanisme arabe au IV/Xe siècle (Contribution to the Study of Arab Humanism in the 4th-10th Centuries), Paris, Vrin, 1970

¹⁶ Hadith literature consecrates some chapters on the ethical comporments.

of rules for social behaviour.”¹⁷

He attempts to define a practical reason, not in Kantian way, and practical knowledge that articulates through body and behaviour. Marcel Mauss describes that body is not only formed, shaped but it is a learning process how act.

Gülen does not mean to refurbish the debates between these two main current discourses on Islamic morality; instead, he gives a practical aspect on morality. He says:

Morality is the essence of religion and a most fundamental portion of the Divine Message. If being virtuous and having good morals are to be heroic-and they are- the greatest heroes are, first, the Prophets and, after them, those who follow them with sincerity and devotion. A true Muslim is one who practices a truly universal, therefore Muslim, morality.¹⁸

Lacking a political dimension, his sermons affect the fulfilment of Muslim’s morality through the formation of personality. Gülen’s movement opposes to violence and does not favour the protest but the aim of movement is to develop the inner life of all Muslim communities. Gülen gives moral advice to the ordinary people. For Gülen, individual self-control and self-renewal are determined through *adab*. The political criticism and responsibility come after the personal responsibility which is the first duty. He emphasizes on Muslim’s character how he or she controls, acts:

... who sees, thinks, and acts with all the faculties of such a conscience; whose sitting and standing are mercy, whose words and speech are mildness and agreement, and whose manners are politeness and refinement.¹⁹

In his sermon, the prophetic model to which Gülen attributes a decisive role and a central place is represented as a figure to absolutely imitate. The pious, ascetic and devoted religious practices are expected from the Muslim generation. Stemming ultimately from two central authorities, the Qoran and the life of the Prophet, Gülen underlines the divine aspect of morality. For Gülen, the Prophet is the example of goodness as well as the revelator of high human quality. Following Nursi,²⁰ the morality is based on *Qoranic* concept and the prophetic manner.

Demonstrating the negative dimension of human character, Gülen identifies the danger of nihilism to man and Muslim consideration that is seen as a fundamental reason of decline of Muslim morality, to grasp the demoralization of human values by materialism and nihilism.²¹ This danger of nihilism is at the core of ethical crises in the Muslim world. He criticizes the existentialism of Sartre, the deism of French philosophers, and the atheism injected into the young Muslim generation. Opposing the disjunction between the morality and religious faith, the idea entrusted from the Enlightenment, especially the French thinkers had a more critical and anti-clerical but not anti-religious position that they thought the religion is an obstacle for human emancipation and for developing a moral sense. As for perceiving the religion as the reason of disunity and clashes between people and nations, Gülen finds that those considerations are fraudulent.²² As to the fact that the misunderstanding and ignorance deriving from different religious faiths, attitudes as a reason of conflicts, however religions recommend the

17 Gülen, *Criteria or Lights of the Way*, Izmir, 1998, Vol.2, (12th edition), pp. 59-61

18 F. Gülen, *Towards the Lost Paradise*, London, Truostar, 1993, p. 30

19 F. Gülen, *The Statue of Our Souls*, Revival in Islamic Thought and Activism, New Jersey, The Light, 2005, p. 91

20 Nursi, *Lemalar*, 11. *Lema*, *Sözler Yayınevi*, 1998, p. 49 See Nursi’s influence on Gülen Hakan Yavuz

21 F. Gülen, *Işığın Görüldüğü Ufuk, Mefkure İnsanı*, Nil Yayınları, 2005, p. 137

22 F. Gülen, *The Statue of Our Souls...*, p. 20

same value, gaping the belief and sincerity, without self-control, Gülen defends that “the virtue with faith cannot approve of nor lead to such calamities. Indeed, the only way to avoid falling into such misfortunes is to integrate the religion with all institutions into our daily life...”²³ The formation of secular morality which has influenced the Muslim consciousness has turned into crises as a deviation from the Islamic model. Gülen intends to formulate the Muslim consciousness from the Islamic perspective and to examine the events from the Islamic point of view and reasoning without falling down into contradiction with modernity. Gülen has also influenced by occidental intellectuals as Bergson, Kant, Eddington, Pascal. He claims that many Muslim intellectuals “who blindly imitate and import what they see as Western despise” and neglect the spiritual and metaphysical dimension of Western thought.

it is difficult to accept that Western scientific thought, although primarily materialistic, has always been separate from spirituality and metaphysics. Modern Western civilization is based on the trinity of Greek thought, Roman law, and Christianity. This latter, at least theoretically, contributes a spiritual dimension. The West never completely discarded Platonist thinking, although it failed to reconcile it with positivistic and rationalistic philosophy. It also has not pretended that such thinkers as Pascal and J. Jeans never existed, or excluded Bergson’s intuitivism.²⁴

There was undoubtedly some tension between reason and faith in current morality debates, but at the same time Gülen contributes to these disputes by invoking the reconciliation of two spheres. In his understanding of Islam, inspired more by Nursi’s idea, the reason and the revelation is not in conflict. He refuses the idea that lacking of morality with religious principles permits the humankind to avoid the domination of religion which restrains the liberty of man and he asserts that the human essence, using language of Sufism, combines the soul/body, the mystical dimension/rationalist, the reason/faith refusing the materialistic vision of human substance. Humankind as describing a character owning good manner and ethical codes that built this human substance is the essential purpose of Gülen who doesn’t say that the non-believers don’t have morality, but he argues that the efficiency can be sustained with values as a religious character, because people need a metaphysic thought and transcendental obligation to act or not in daily life. Sufis writings has more influence on Gülen’s view’s on ethics and the most persuading and influential teachings about human manner and virtues are described by sufis and they are more acceptable among the Muslims.²⁵ Gülen states the importance of spirituality on human virtues and manners:

Morals are a set of noble principles that originate in high spirituality and govern human conduct. For this reason, people who neglect spirituality, and are therefore lacking in spiritual values, cannot sustain conduct in accordance with these principles.²⁶

The central argument of Gülen’s morality is the necessity of religion in the construction of morality and the utility of practices in daily life for a moral life. In Gülen’s writings that we can identify numerous connections of kinship between morality and religion as seen in Durkheim’s approach²⁷, he outlines the role of religious universal ethical principles in

23 Gülen, *ibid*, p. 21

24 Gülen, “The Horizon of Hope: Spiritual or Metaphysical Thought”, <http://en.fgülen.com/content/view/805/17/>

25 Anne Marie Schimmel, *The Mystical Dimension of Islam*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1978 The Sufis lodges offers the cultivation of virtues, the self-control, the treatment of body, manners concerning the devotional exercises.

26 Fethullah Gülen, *Criteria or Lights of the Way*, Izmir, 1998, Vol.2, pp. 59-61

27 In his major work, *The Elementary of The Religious Life*, Durkheim set out the social origin of religion and he argued that the religion reinforced the morality and social norms. His argument is based on that the religion is provided social control, social cohesion.

reinforcing the morality of society. There is no separation between this world and the hereafter, the body and the soul, the mind and the heart.²⁸

Ethical Self and Body

The ethical ideas that Gülen describes for this generation result from an ethical body and soul disciplined with the prevention from some illnesses and by advancing on human values like altruism, virtue, wisdom, love, tolerance, devotion and responsibility. The ethical soul can emerge by returning to revivification of these general assessments idealized by Gülen's followers in schools, media and dialogue activities and in daily life. Gülen summarizes this temptation of cultivation of body and soul in both sides: in the inner structure (hearts and souls) and the outer structure (knowledge). Besides, he supposes that the followers strive to be moral in accordance with universal religious values in their life thereby to promote their inner self, in other terms, realize the progress of human virtues in social relationships.

The gestures, the attitudes which are socially acquired, are formal imitations and indications of a moral significance. They are the parts of the common good of a society and a culture. A reflection on the gestures leads us to deal with the question of modesty and ethics “which seeks to define a gestural standard, say, the good and the bad gesture...”²⁹ The gesture is exhibited also from inside (soul-spirit) towards outside (physical)³⁰. In other words, the expressivity of the gesture creates the function to determine the fundamental element for the construction of the personal and social identity. All the body gestures and behavior are identified by such rules as decency and civility in daily life. The daily prayer, the avoidance of the prohibited food, the manner of clothing and greeting, abstention from the illicit things and respect for one's parents become principles to keep the spirit of *haya*. All of these daily practices produce the technologies of self. The implementation of his daily obligations and religious practices that contain the *adab* rules and ethical codes allows the believer to acquire these ethical manners to train soul and body.

The choice of some food or a drink depends on the moralistic finality. The elimination of excesses is carried out since the sympathizer professes his faith by exteriorizing his religious *adab* rules. The abstinence from the alcoholic drinks, reducing his sleeping, his eating and speaking that are some of the sufistic principles speak less, sleep less, eat less (*killat-i kelam, killat-i menam, killat-i taam*), having a respectful language without obscene words are required to obtain a holy life, particularly the one which occurs with a virginity. In the lives of the sympathizers, all acts generate a hedonist life. In the spaces like the schools, the houses, dormitories created by the movement, the hearts are emancipated so that no one talks about the hedonism, individualism and the fashionable life. Thus, the prohibition of alcohols and certain food falls under this logic. It is necessary to have a spirit and a holy, pure body away from the desires.

In order not to realize an activity which creates a mental confusion disturbing his spirit and his heart, the behavioural codes, *adab* rules are defined according to Islamic life regulations which evoke also the Islamic subject.³¹ This becomes a question of how to accommodate in public sphere with his *adab* rules that contribute them to acquire a good manner and to act

28 Eyüp Can, *Fethullah Gülen ile Ufuk Turu*, Ad Yayıncılık, 1996 and Gülen, *The Statue...*, p. 20

29 Jean-Claude Schmitt, “La morale des gestes”, in *Parure, Pudeur, Etiquette*, Revue Communication, Paris, Editions de Seuil, no. 47, p. 31

30 *ibid*, p. 32

31 Nilufer Göle, « l'émergence du sujet islamique », in *Penser le Sujet, Autour d'Alain Touraine*, F. Dubet and M. Wieviorka, (dir.), Paris, Fayard, 1995, p. 221

with the pre-disposed comportments. The sympathizer does not seek pleasure and the satisfaction of the mundane needs which contradict with his finality. These types of body and gestural obligations are registered in the formation of the Islamic subject which refers to the characteristics as mentioned above in Gülen's terms. The self-discipline is carried out among the followers in order to mobilize people and the pietism reinforces the ethical soul and body which is accompanied by asceticism and altruism which nourish Sufism.

The question of *haya*³² (modesty) and esthetics represented by male sympathizers let us grasp the articulated Gülen's formulation on *adab* and morality. One can, as follows, describe the manner of being modest follow-up with the sympathizers: "the envoy of God was more modest than a girl in his cabin. When it saw a hateful thing, for him, we knew it according to his face"³³

Gülen recommends his followers to be always humble (*tevazu*) with people. In his writings, he refers to his eminent master *Muhammed Lutfi Efendi* "everybody else is good but I am bad; everybody else is wheat, but I am chaff"³⁴, to be modest and having self-criticism are significant terms in the Gülen's formulation of *adab*.³⁵ Humility is seen as a portal of good conduct characterized by the Muslim identity.

Prophet says concerning the humility: God has told me that you must be humble, and that no one must boast to another; shall I inform you of one whom Hellfire will not touch? Hellfire will not touch one who is near to God and amiable with people, and mild and easy to get along with; God exalts one who is humble.

Among the followers, to maintain their qualities preserve their modesty and keep himself away from any kind of celebrity, they consider the celebrity and ostentation like "the fane as hypocrisy and a venomous honey"³⁶. In Gülen's definition modesty is

"seeing oneself as devoid of all virtues essentially originating in oneself, treating others humbly and respectfully, seeing oneself as the worst of humanity (unless being honored by a special Divine treatment), and being alert to any stirring of the ego and immediately suppressing it."³⁷

He recommends his followers to escape the attractive power of the ostentation in public which constrains believers to disorient their essential objective.

Modesty is required in different situations as the sympathizer purifies his words from the obscenities, has shame to mention the defects of the others. Ghazali points out that "impoliteness is to release indecent remarks without being concerned too much about their effects and their consequences"³⁸, while following a *hadith* of the prophet. The sympathizer purifies his language not to utter vain remarks, keeps his sight not to look at the source of carnal pleasure and his hearing not to seek what is hidden. In this case, modesty embraces a whole life. With others, the sympathizer strictly controls his attitude while speaking with measurement and acting with precaution. Sometimes being timid is a good solution for preserving the modesty

32 Decency is central in Islam. However the prophet known as: "Each religion has its own morals, and the morals of Islam it is decency" (Malik) and "decency and the Faith go hand in hand. If one is removed, the other is also" (Al-Hakim)

33 Mohammad Al Ghazali, *l'ethique du musulman*, Paris, Al Qalam, Paris, p. 218

34 Gülen, *Key Concepts in the Practice of Sufism*, V. 1, *tawadu*, Fairfax, The Fountain, 1999

35 Gülen, *Prizma*, vol.1, İzmir, Nil, 1996, p. 14

36 Said Nursi, *Mesnevi Nuriye*, Istanbul, Sözlür Yayınevi, p. 71 Nursi describes the desire of celebrity and ostentation in contradiction to sincerity.

37 F. Gülen, *Key Concepts ...*, Tawaddu.

38 Ghazali, op.cit., p. 220

and his good manner. He keeps his silence when he seizes that he is caught by the *impudic* situation. The followers' lives are marked by humility which is the strongest communication and expression; prefer tears rather than laughter and keep silent when they hear an obscene and excessive language.

Self-control is applied to oneself even in the details of the life of the follower. Self controlling guides the attitudes of the sympathizers and rules the places and the practices of every sympathizer. The self-control, discipline of the body and managing places include the decency of the sympathizer. He tries to be a modest man by avoiding behavior to excess, because "the *impudic* man is indeed an *impudic* body ... the *impudic* body is an *excess body*, makes projections, going beyond, and excrescence."³⁹ He keeps measurement according to virtuous principles' which he acquired in spaces like schools, foundations supported by the movement. The sympathizer represents an ascetic body or as does Bourdieu say, "what is learned by the body is not something that one has, as a knowledge that one can hold in front of oneself, but something which one is".⁴⁰ Self-control goes with self-criticism (*muhasaba*) through which the sympathizer analyzes and observes his or her deeds, thoughts. He tries to obtain good manner which requires an intellectual effort to acquire moral values to distinguish the borders between good and bad, beneficial and harmful. These moralistic values with self-interrogation help the followers to manage these borders and become a condition. As Gülen indicates that "this condition enables a believer to make amends for past mistakes and be absolved in the sight of God, for it provides a constant realization of the self-renewal in one's inner world".⁴¹

Secondly, Gülen movement establishes the new possibilities of connection between body and soul through the knowledge with Islamic interpretation in schools founded by the people who spread Gülen's notions. *Adab* is interrelated with knowledge which leads to understanding God's guidance and describes his commands.

Education and *Adab*

Defined as an education movement,⁴² since 1980, the movement has entered educational activities by creating schools all over the world with the help of the *adab* rules. In general terms, the ethical codes empower the students to form an ethos of good manner. This primarily results in the creation of a modern self-characterized idealistic human attached to the movement formulation. Although these schools do not give religious courses, the essential orientation is based on the teaching of ethics⁴³. Gülen stresses on education inspired an "ethical vision rooted in Islam but not limited in its expression to sympathizers of the *umma* (community)".⁴⁴ The Gülen's inspired schools' education style aims to respond the question of how to generate an ethical human with common values. Teaching is considered a holy duty⁴⁵ to achieve the finality to demonstrate the right way of ethical dimension of life with

39 Jean-Jacques Courtine, Georges Vigarello, "La physionomie de l'homme impudique, Bienséance et "impudeur": les physiognomonies au XVe et XVIIe siècle", in Communications, p. 84

40 Bourdieu, *Le Sens Pratique*, Paris, Minuit, 1980, p. 123

41 Gülen, *Key Concepts...*, op. cit, chapter: *Muhasaba*

42 John L. Esposito, M. Hakan Yavuz, *Turkish Islam and The Secular State, The Gülen Movement*, New York, Syracuse University Pres, 2003, p. 35 and Bayram Balcı, *Missionnaires de l'Islam en Asie Centrale, Les écoles turques de Fethullah Gülen*, Paris, Maisonnneuve Larose, 2003

43 Bekim Agai, « The Gülen Movement's Islamic Ethic of Education », in Esposito and Yavuz, op.cit, p. 49

44 Thomas Michel, "Fethullah Gülen as Educator", in Esposito and Yavuz (eds), p. 82

45 Agai, op. cit, p. 58

daily conduct as many scholars indicate the methods applied in schools.⁴⁶

As arguing Nasr, the role of education is not only to transmit the knowledge, but it attends to achievement of human character.

Islamic education is concerned not only with the instruction and training of the mind and the transmission of knowledge (*ta`lim*) but also with the education of the whole being of men and women (*tarbiyah*). The teacher is therefore not only a *mu`alim*, a ‘transmitter of knowledge’ but also a *murabbi*, a ‘trainer of souls and personalities’. The Islamic educational system never divorced the training of the mind from that of the soul.⁴⁷

The methodology of teachers to transmit the good manners is interesting: “Being a good example through one’s deeds”⁴⁸ is a method of pedagogy and communication that we can see in Gülen’s inspired schools. According to Özdalga and Balcı, a good Muslim representative without constraint and obligation becomes a model and example of teachers amongst pupils (*misal-temsil*). Transforming the students’ character needs teachers who represent the qualities they want to inculcate into the students. We intend to develop an ethos of school that “entails the self-sacrifice, abnegation and the personal conviction to transform life”⁴⁹ by which the students achieve their inner life that does not exclude the spiritual dimension of every pupil. It is also the character of Gülen’s schools that the material and spiritual realms are reconciled for bringing out the ideal human character.⁵⁰

In Gülen’s schools, teachers are inspired to give and impart wisdom as well as some qualities such as devotion, simplicity, trust, loyalty, fidelity to his friends, humility, modesty, contentedness, which are the result of the role of exemplarity of teachers. They are interested not only in the opportunity of education that gives a status in life, but also in the aim of these schools forming a modern self-character? when it comes to good manners dealing with civic moral values. Gülen asserts that the students need a solid character focusing primarily on ethics and virtue. Education and knowledge (*ilm*) are the bases of the action which is *adab*-oriented. Education and learning are not sufficient to provide a moral and truly human if only they carry out the morality through by their high values.

“Just because you are learned does not mean that you are truly human. Learned people are freed from carrying the burden of superfluous information and attain greatness to the extent that they serve humanity and set a good example for others through their high morals and virtues. Otherwise, they are no more than people who have wasted their lives. Those with high morals and virtues, even if they lack learning and are as dense as iron, sometimes may prove to be useful and valuable, and even as good as gold.”⁵¹

The Major Jihad: Struggle Against Ego (*Nafs*)

Gülen divides Jihad in two: the internal and the external. “The internal one can be described as the effort to attain one’s essence; the external one as the process of enabling someone

46 Özdalga, Elisabeth, “Worldly ascetism in islamic casting Fethullah Gülen’s inspired piety and activism”, in.Critique:Journal for critical studies of the Middle East, n. 17, septembre 2000 and Balcı, op.cit, p. 221

47 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam*, New York, ABC International Group, 2001, p. 56

48 Özdalga, “Following in the Footsteps of Fethullah Gülen”, in Esposito and Yavuz (eds), p. 86

49 Esposito and Yavuz, op.cit, p. 34

50 Fethullah Gülen, “At the Threshold of a New Millennium”, in *Essays, Perspectives, Opinions*, The Fountain, 2002, p. 30

51 Gülen, *Criteria or Lights of the Way*, op. cit., p. 60

else to attain his or her essence. The first is greater jihad; the second is the lesser jihad.”⁵² Following this definition, the essential enemy is ego’s destructive and negative emotions. The first characteristic of a believer’s action, for Gülen, has to do with the notion of the greater jihad, the struggle against one’s carnal desires and worldliness. Literally, it means doing all one’s abilities and skills to materialize an objective and resist all difficulties. Following Gülen’s distinction, the sympathizers of movement seek to struggle with their inner world and ego. Every effort and attempt is oriented towards God’s contentment destruction of *nafs* with alienation of his or her *nafs*. In followers’ discourse, this objective is summarized as action. In Gülen’s thought, the jihad contains believers’ good manner and such *adab* rules as to act and control their anger, treat their intelligence, dominate their negative emotions, passions and drives which prevent the Muslims from attaining the achievement of ethical and spiritual perfection.⁵³

To make the religion part of life, Gülen and his followers insist on acting minutely and show the easy way that does not contain constraint but they prefer to show good examples as doing good deeds to the others. This primarily non violent and voluntary approach is the fundamental method of the Gülen movement’s action which is based on the construction of the self.

Ascetic Self and Body: Being with “Other”

Being with the others and uniting one’s wishes with the others’ desires and capability of integration with the whole existence in the universe is principal action as he states:

“The real world of the person of action and thought and their real happiness in it are colored with the tones of universality and engraved within the frame of eternity.”⁵⁴

Inspired by the Sufistic terminology, the followers elaborate a language to strengthen their good conduct. One is an ascetic body, consciously or unconsciously, that affects one’s acts such as eating, drinking, going to bed and getting up, talking and keeping silent, remaining in solitude or with people. Fashioned and displayed, the ascetic *adab* rules govern everyday life of the believers. The pleasure in this world is considered ephemeral and the followers do not pursue the hedonism because they believe that they are sent to this world to enhance his devotion and seek God’s contentment. He has the idea that he will not stay for a long time here in this world for the reason that the essential duty is in the terrestrial world, therefore, it is necessary to move away from cheerfulness, joy, and temporary happiness to live the eternal life. The hedonism kills the idealism of the sympathizers. Against the hedonism, the sympathizers follow the value of altruism which Gülen regards as the criteria of life according to the ideal man which requires the effort of follower as developing the detachment from the pleasure and seductive needs, except that the intellectual and aesthetic dimension is allowed and accepted.⁵⁵ Gülen’s followers do not abstain from the social life, the pleasure and entertainment like going to the cinema or theatre, listening to the music. But as I mentioned above, they like to live meaningfully an aesthetic Muslim life. Paradoxically, these ascetic body and soul which participate actively in daily life are considered better than the ascetic who is absent from worldly life. The sympathizer is in search of *esthétiser* his life according to his religious obligations which make him detach from the voluptuous desires.

According to Özdalga, who describes the community by the term “secular asceticism”, the

52 Gülen, Essays, op.cit. p. 51-52

53 Gülen, ibid. , p. 53

54 Gülen, The Statue..., op.cit, p. 60

55 Fethullah Gülen, *İkinci Yağmurları*, İstanbul, Gazeteciler ve Yazarlar Vakfı yayınları, 2006, p. 187

Gülen movement rests on the pietism with which the self-control is realized.⁵⁶ By the participation in the mundane activities, the sympathizer does not go further with the religion as Weber suggests in Protestant Ethics and the Capitalism of Spirit: “asceticism had become a method of control rational... to withdraw the man from the power of the instincts, to release it from his dependence with regard to the world and... to subject his actions to a permanent control and a conscientious examination of their ethical range”.⁵⁷ The formulation of “ascetic inner world” offers us to explain how a religious oriented practice is transformed into an ascetic rational good manner as responsibility and self-sacrifice. *Hizmet* for Gülen, implies that a person excessively devotes his life to humanity, is interested in the others needs and prefers their happiness rather than his own needs. He assume that the altruism the essential moral principle that the educators must to have for the humanity.

Conclusion

The self control and self discipline exercised through the individuals’ knowledge are inculcated by different methods. The internalization of the norms is laid down by the *adab* and its function is a monitor itself in an effort to conform to these norms. Thus, the believer controls not only his body and soul which are obtained as character and good manner by the ethical formulation, but also a Muslim modern pious self is created. *Adab* rules offer a disciplined body conforming to the religious restrictions and obligations by which we establish an ethical self as Foucault calls this treatment as “aesthetics of the self”⁵⁸ which is required for the development of self and subject. As Foucault formulates, *l’esthétique de l’existence* is associated with *éthique*.⁵⁹

We underline a subject tamed that recognizes *adab* rules as an object of morality problematized by some particular ground, divine commands in our example. The Muslim individuals transform themselves into ethical subjects via some sets of techniques as ascetics in sufistic terminologies, meditation and consciousness raising through *adab* manners. Finally, Gülen proposes his followers and believers to pursue an ethos of self control, self discipline, and a lifestyle according the good manners described in *Adab* manuscripts. The aim is to create a practical way of self-making which consists of the purification of body to create a moral self. This ethical subject recognizes the development of new Islamic believers who stress on establishing a form of civilized manners by willing submission to the *adab* rules.

Seeking religious fulfilment has resulted secular behaviour in daily life to manage the relationship with the whole society.⁶⁰ In humanistic terms, it is an effort to overcome the divisions and differences among others. This effort requires putting into order the followers’ lives, channelling their thoughts and feelings and having a respectful language which is oriented by the leitmotifs as dialogue, tolerance, recognition and pluralism.

The social function of daily conduct and *adab* rules is to preserve morality. Besides, it defines and influences the transmission of ethical values. The trace between good/bad, normal/abnormal is determined by the threshold of *adab* which has the goal to transport the inside towards

56 Elizabeth Özdalga, « Worldly ascetism... », p. 19

57 Max Weber, *Ethique Protestante et l’esprit du Capitalisme*, Paris, Plon, p. 136

58 M. Foucault, *Histoire de la Sexualité*, 3 volumes, Paris, Gallimard, 1984

59 “Et si je me suis intéressé à l’Antiquité, c’est que, pour toute une série de raisons, l’idée d’une morale comme obéissance à un code de règles est en train, maintenant, de disparaître, a déjà disparu. Et à cette absence de morale répond, doit répondre une recherche qui est celle d’une esthétique de l’existence.” M. Foucault, *Dites et Ecrits*, Vol. 4, texte n. 357

60 Özdalga, “Secularizing trends...”, op. cit.

the outside, on public sphere. The tastes and the gestures produce the control of public space. The appearance of Gülen's followers with their gestures, their ethics also generates the participation of the grammar of this public sphere.