

The Position of Justice of the Educator and the Educated in Imami Jurisprudence: An Establishment Based on the Sirah of Imam Reza (A.S.)

seyedeh fatemeh tabatabaee¹

1. Associate Professor, Department of Theology, Faculty of Law and Theology, Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Kerman, Iran. Email: fatabatabaee@uk.ac.ir

Article info

Article type:
Research Article

Received:
15 January 2025

In Revised form:
14 April 2025

Accepted:
10 June 2025

Published:
29 November 2025

Abstract

This research was conducted using a descriptive-analytical method with the objective of examining the position of justice (‘Adāla) in the educator and the disciple from the perspective of Imami jurisprudence, with an emphasis on the Razavi conduct (Seerah). The findings indicate that in Imami jurisprudence, personal justice is not a necessary condition (shart) for holding a position in education and upbringing, and its absence does not disqualify an educator. Furthermore, the condition of justice is also inapplicable to the disciple. The reasons for not stipulating this condition include the lack of definitive scriptural evidence (dalīl wujūbī) for its obligation, Islam’s emphasis on the boundless pursuit of knowledge, and rational arguments (such as the analogy (qiyās) of the teacher to the position of parents, where justice is not a condition for them). However, the educator and the disciple, like all individuals, are addressed by the generalities of the Quranic verses and narrations that call for the establishment of justice and are obliged to observe it in both personal and social dimensions. An examination of the conduct of Imam Reza (A.S.) in scholarly debates clearly confirms the necessity for both parties in the educational relationship to observe fairness and justice. In summary, although justice in the specific jurisprudential sense is not a condition for undertaking the responsibility of education, it is emphasized by the Sharia and the conduct of the Infallibles (A.S.) as a value-based and ethical duty.



Keywords: Justice, Educator, Disciple, Razavi Conduct (Seerah), Imami Jurisprudence.

Reference: Tabatabaee, Seyedeh Fatemeh. (2025). The Position of Justice of the Educator and the Educated in Imami Jurisprudence: An Establishment Based on the Sirah of Imam Reza (A.S.). *Imam Reza (A.S.) and Contemporary Sciences*. 3(9),6-38.

Publisher: Imam Reza (A.S.) International University
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22034/ijs.2025.499969.1317>



1. Introduction

Righteous action and beneficial knowledge are the two wings of humanity's ascent towards perfection and the station of divine vicegerency. The realization of this important goal depends on the process of education and upbringing (tarbiyah). Justice, as one of the fundamental pillars influencing the quality and outcomes of this process, has been addressed in contemporary educational environments primarily in three dimensions: distributive (fair distribution of opportunities and resources), procedural (fairness of methods and procedures), and behavioral or interactional (fair treatment of learners). However, what is often emphasized in these discussions is social justice, whereas the position and necessity of individual justice in the being of the educator (mu'rib / teacher) and the educated (mutarabbi / student) as the main actors in the field of tarbiyah have not been independently and clearly examined in jurisprudential literature. Since, in Islamic law (shari'ah), the establishment of justice is a condition for human perfection, and in Imami jurisprudence, many positions and rulings (such as judgeship and testimony) are conditioned upon individual justice, clarifying whether assuming the grave responsibility of education (tarbiyah) or being subject to it also has such a condition is of great theoretical and practical importance. In addition to jurisprudential sources, the scientific and practical conduct (sirah) of Imam Reza (A.S.), especially in his debates with scholars of various religions, provides a concrete and rich exemplar for examining the manifestation of justice in the educational relationship. This research aims to fill the existing gap in this field by examining the position of individual justice in the educator and the educated from the two perspectives of Imami jurisprudence and the Razavi sirah.

2. Research Objectives

The main objective of this research is to explain the position of individual justice in the educator and the educated from the perspective of Imami jurisprudence and also in the sirah of Imam Reza (A.S.). This general objective is pursued through the following questions:

1. In Imami jurisprudence, is possessing individual justice considered a jurisprudential condition for assuming the position of educator (mu'rib) or for being subject to education (mutarabbi)?
2. Assuming the absence of a jurisprudential condition, what is the position of justice as an Islamic ethical value and duty for the educator and the educated?

3. What evidence and models does the practical sirah of Imam Reza (A.S.), especially in his scientific debates, provide regarding the necessity of observing justice and fairness by both parties in the educational relationship?

3. Methodology

This research was conducted using a descriptive-analytical method. In the descriptive step, the key concepts of the research, such as justice (individual and social), education and upbringing (ta'lim wa tarbiyah), and educational justice, were explained by referring to lexical, terminological, and scholarly sources. In the analytical step, by relying on the four sources of inferring rulings in Imami jurisprudence (the Book, the Sunnah, reason, and consensus), the issue of whether justice is a condition or not in the educator and the educated has been examined and inferred. To enrich the jurisprudential section and survey contemporary viewpoints, in addition to studying original jurisprudential sources, the opinions of several contemporary Imami jurists (Grand Ayatollahs: Jawadi Amoli, Bayat Zanjani, Duzduzani Tabrizi, Sistani, Makarem Shirazi) were collected and analyzed through *istifta'* (religious inquiry). In the second pillar of the research, the scientific and practical sirah of Imam Reza (A.S.), focusing on his debates, was studied as a concrete and practical exemplar of the theoretical foundations, and the extracted evidence was compared with the jurisprudential findings so that the final theory would have both argumentative and objective support.

4. Findings

The examination of Imami jurisprudence sources shows that individual justice in its jurisprudential meaning (a firm inner disposition restraining from sin) is not a necessary condition for assuming the position of educator. No independent discussion on this matter is found in prior jurisprudential texts, and the absence of justice does not disqualify a person from teaching. By stronger reason, the condition of justice is also inapplicable to the educated (*mutarabbi*), since the process of *tarbiyah* begins from early childhood, before the age of legal responsibility (*bulugh*). The contemporary jurists who were inquired also confirmed this view and did not consider jurisprudential justice a condition for a teacher; although some emphasized the necessity of good manners, patience, trustworthiness (for a religious teacher), or the correct transmission of knowledge.

The reasons for the absence of a jurisprudential condition can be summarized in several points:

1. Absence of mandatory evidence: There is no explicit evidence from the Book, the Sunnah, or consensus on the necessity of a teacher's justice.
2. Islam's emphasis on the boundlessness of seeking knowledge: Religious teachings emphasize seeking knowledge even from the farthest places and by any means possible. Conditioning it on justice could create a limitation in benefiting from the knowledge of specialists and conflict with the spirit of knowledge acquisition in Islam.
3. Rational argument (analogy to parents): In Imami jurisprudence, a teacher of goodness and religion is considered the deputy of the father. Given that justice in parents is not a condition for the validity of their guardianship and upbringing, by analogy, justice can also not be considered a condition in a teacher.

However, the findings confirm that the educator and the educated, as individuals from the community of believers, are the direct audience of the general verses and narrations calling for the establishment of justice. Therefore, observing justice in its individual dimensions (adherence to obligations and avoidance of prohibitions, moderation in morals and beliefs) and social dimensions (observing fairness and equality in interaction with others) is a value-based and ethical duty placed upon them by the shari'ah. This necessity holds absolute priority for the teacher due to their role-model influence and grave responsibility.

Examining the Razavi sirah clearly confirms Imam Reza's (A.S.) emphasis on justice in the field of education. In scientific debates, he, both in the role of educator, was committed to observing fairness and justice in reasoning and behavior, and also explicitly asked the other party (in the role of the questioning learner) to be fair and just. Imam (A.S.) said to 'Imran al-Sabi in a narration: "Ask, O 'Imran, but do not lose fairness." Furthermore, he considered the understanding of profound matters conditional upon fair-mindedness. In some instances, Imam Reza (A.S.) prioritized establishing individual justice (such as performing an obligatory prayer immediately at its preferred time) over more important social outcomes (such as the immediate conversion to Islam of an individual and potentially his followers), which indicates the lofty position of this value in his view. The Razavi sirah introduces individual justice not only as a personal virtue but as the cornerstone for realizing social justice and a factor for creating trust, cohesion, and moral health in society.

5. Conclusion

In the final summary, it can be said: From the perspective of Imami jurisprudence, individual justice in the sense of a jurisprudential condition is not a requirement for assuming the responsibility of education or being subject to it. This viewpoint is explained by referring to the absence of mandatory evidence, Islam's emphasis on the unconditional nature of seeking knowledge, and the analogy of the teacher to parents. However, from the ethical and value perspective in Islamic law, the educator and the educated, like all individuals, are obligated to observe and establish justice in all their individual and social affairs. This duty holds double importance for the educator due to their role-model function and responsibility to influence the learner. The practical sirah of Imam Reza (A.S.), especially in the arena of debates, clearly confirms and outlines the necessity of both parties in the educational relationship adhering to fairness and justice as a prerequisite for constructive interaction and the discovery of truth.

Suggestions

1. Theoretical suggestion: Conducting similar studies focusing on other positions related to education (such as educational administrators, textbook authors) and also a comparative examination of this topic with the viewpoints of other Islamic schools of thought.
2. Practical suggestion: Attention by educational policymakers and planners to this important distinction between “not being a jurisprudential condition” and “being an ethical duty” of justice for the teacher. This distinction can form the basis for designing teacher empowerment and professional ethics training programs that emphasize observing justice in distributive, procedural, and interactional dimensions, without inflexibly restricting the scope of teacher selection.
3. Suggestion for future research: Examining concrete examples of justice and injustice in today's educational environments based on the framework provided in this research and offering practical solutions for institutionalizing a culture of justice-seeking in the relationship between educator and learner.

Keywords: Justice, Educator, Educated, Razavi Conduct (Sirah), Imami Jurisprudence, Professional Ethics, Islamic Education and Upbringing (Ta'lim wa Tarbiyah).