

**THE IDEA OF UNIVERSALITY  
OF ETHICAL NORMS IN GHAZALI AND IMMANUEL KANT**

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M. Amin Abdullah**

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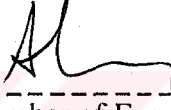
Dr. Alparslan AÇIKGENÇ

  
-----  
(Supervisor)

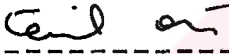
Prof. Dr. Teo GRÜNBERG

  
-----  
(Member of Examining  
Committee)


Prof. Dr. Ahmet INAM

  
-----  
(Member of Examining  
Committee)

Prof. Dr. Cemil AKDOĞAN


  
-----  
(Member of Examining  
Committee)

Prof. Dr. Mehmet AYDIN

  
-----  
(Member of Examining  
Committee)

Certified that this dissertation conforms to the formal standards of the Institute of Social Sciences.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sabri KOÇ

  
-----  
Director of the Institute of  
Social Sciences

## ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the theory of ethics, as it is formulated by Ghazali and Immanuel Kant. Their theory of ethics is critically examined to delineate its similarities, differences and consequences.

There are two major similarities between both philosophers. The **first** is their systematic refutation of speculative metaphysics. The **second** is their agreement in underlying the primacy of ethics over metaphysics. Although their route in doing philosophy is similar, they have great differences in their **methodology** for handling the problem. These differences, actually, start from their basic conception in refuting the rational speculative metaphysics, and thus makes differences, too, in their ethical conception. Kant's ethics is 'rational', while Ghazali's ethics is religious or mystical. Kant uses "**Analytical Method**", while Ghazali uses "**Hypothetical Method**".

Kant's rational ethics, in essence, is only the consequence of having such an Analytical Method in his basic framework. The term 'rational' here is not intended at all to leave no room for religious ethics. It is rather intended to emphasize the active, dynamic and autonomous role of moral agents in attaining virtues. While Ghazali's mystical ethics is merely intended to save the individual in the hereafter based on the teaching of a particular religious teaching. He does not concern to build such a rigorous methodology in ethics which is applicable to human beings in general. His concern is mainly to defend a particular religious ethics.

This different methodological approach towards ethics has its grave consequences in shaping and molding the type of the system of thought, not only in the field of ethical discourse, but also in all types of human discourses. Kant's Analytical Method opens a wider possibility to establish a rigorous body of knowledge in order to grasp and to analyze, not only the substantial problem of ethics, but also the implication of having such an ethical system, in science and social life. Ghazali's Hypothetical Method leads him to face the difficulty of constructing a rigorous body of knowledge in other spheres of knowledge, since he underestimates the role of reason in ethical discourse.

This thesis ends up with the conclusion that those different methodological approaches in ethics build a different types of system of thought and at the same time have a great consequences and implications in shaping the human ethos in general, be it in the scientific, or social and ethical spheres.

## Ö Z E T

Bu tez, Immanuel Kant ve Gazali tarafından ortaya konan ahlak teorilerini incelemektedir. Her ikisinin ahlak teorileri; aralarındaki benzerlikleri, farklılıkları ve yol açtıkları sonuçları ortaya koymak amacıyla değerlendirilmiştir.

Bu iki düşünadamı arasında iki ana benzerlik vardır. **Birincisi**, spekülâtif metafiziği her ikisinin de sistematik biçimde ele almalarıdır. **İkinci** olarak, her ikisinin de ahlakın temel ilkelerini metafizikten üstün tutmalarıdır. Felsefe çalışmaları benzerlik gösterse de; sorunları ele alışlarından kullandıkları yöntemler büyük farklılıklar göstermektedir. Bu farklılıklar aslında spekülâtif metafiziği ele alışlarında ortaya çıkmakta, bu da ahlaksal görüşlerinde farklılıklara neden olmaktadır. Kant ahlakı rasyonel iken Gazali ahlaki dini ya da mistiktir. Kant "analitik yöntem" i kullanırken, Gazali "hipoteze dayalı yöntem" i kullanmıştır.

Öz olarak Kant'ın rasyonel ahlakı, çalışmasının temel yapısında, analitik yöntemi kullanması sonucu doğmaktadır. Burada "rasyonel" terimi dini ahlakı dışlar tarzda kullanılmakta; tersine moral etmenlerin erdemin kazanılmasındaki aktif, süregelen ve doğrudan rolünün de altını çizmektedir. Oysa Gazali'nin mistik ahlakı yalnızca kişinin bireysel kurtuluşunun belirli bir dini eğitim yolu ve aracılığıyla sağlanması temeline dayanmaktadır. Gazali tüm insanlara uygulanabilecek evrensel bir yöntem oluşturma kaygısı gütmemiş; ana olarak belirli bir dinsel ahlakı savunma yoluna gitmiştir.

Ahlaka yönelik yöntemsel farklılıklar, yalnızca ahlaksal sorunlar değil; genel olarak insanlığın tüm sorunlarına yaklaşımdaki düşünce sistemi üzerinde ciddi etkiler yaratmıştır. Kant'ın analitik yöntemi, yalnızca ahlaksal soruna yaklaşım yönünden değil, oluşturulan ahlaksal sistemin uygulanabilirliği yönünden de anlaşılıp analiz edilebilmesi için bilgi birikimi oluşturulması yolunda geniş olanaklar sunmaktadır.

Gazali'nin hipoteze dayalı yöntemi ise, onun ahlaksal sorunlara bakışta mantığın rolünü önemsememesinden dolayı, ahlaksal alan dışında başka alanlarda bilgi birikimi oluşturulmasında zorluklar yaratmaktadır.

Bu tez, bu iki değişik yöntemsel yaklaşımın değişik iki düşünce sistemi yarattığı ve aynı zamanda insanın genel olarak ister bilimsel, ister sosyal ve ahlaksal alanlardaki insan davranışları üzerinde büyük etki ve sonuçları olduğu kanaatiyle sonlandırılmaktadır.



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Finally, my wife Nurhayati deserves credit for bearing so well the misfortune of having a husband who was writing a dissertation abroad leaving her with my daughter Silmi Rosda in her home town.

*To Nurhayati  
and Silmi Rosda*



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## INTRODUCTION

It is the essence of philosophical reasoning to proceed by means of demonstration, to supply objective reasons and not to depend on subjective motives, feelings and conjectures in place of argument. Nevertheless, the comprehension of rational, logical and objective character of the concepts in a philosophical system can be facilitated by the spirit and ethos active in that system. When I refer to the spirit and ethos of any philosopher or any thinker, I do not intend to depict the character of his or her inner life as a biographer might do, but rather I intend to concentrate on what should be called his or her 'world-view' or 'system of thought' which originates not from him or her as a person but from him or her as the author of one of the world's great philosophical systems.

Although this system of thought cannot easily be illustrated by the quantitative research, but it is quite evident that this system of thought or a philosophical system which is alive in a society has much more influence in the process of the character building, the molding attitude, and the shaping behaviour of the people who put into practice and guard that system of thought. It is, however, difficult to value quantitatively the actual significance of a 'system of thought'.

System of thought in a living tradition combines within itself many factors and each of them is closely interrelated. To mention some of them: system of education, children upbringing, environmental or milieu impact, religious thinking, family influence, social setting, intellectual training and so forth.<sup>1</sup> From this perspective, moral philosophy, which I would like to identify here as the **system of thought** in general, characteristically presupposes a sociology either explicitly or implicitly. At least, as Macintyre claims, a partial conceptual analysis of the relationship of an agent to his or her reasons, motives, intentions, and actions generally presuppose that those concepts are embodied or at least can be in the real social world.<sup>2</sup> Those factors mentioned above are interconnected and intertwined, so that it is difficult to ascertain which factor is the most significant in constructing that system of thought.

In spite of this difficulty, it does not mean that moral philosophy as intertwined with all those environmental elements is unapproachable, and thus cannot be examined and investigated closely and critically. There are of course factors which are effective in shaping a philosophical system. We should study each factor individually in order to ascertain which one has an important share in building such a system of thought. At this

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1. Alasdair Macintyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, University of Notre Dame Press, Second edition, Indiana, 1984, p. 220-2.

2. *Ibid.* p. 23.

present work, I will focus my attention on the 'intellectual' factor which has an important contribution in formulating that system of thought.

The 'intellectual' foundation of the philosophical system or system of thought can be traced back and critically examined through a literature which is often read, or folklore which is commonly known by the masses, or oral and written advice which are handed down by the older to the younger, or divine scriptures which are frequently recited or philosophical and religious text-books which are commonly referred to and intensively discussed.

From this specific methodological approach, we can see how far the influence of a certain philosopher or thinker is on his fellow man and on the following generations. It is quite obvious that the idea and the thought of a philosopher lives longer than his own actual age. The idea of a brilliant philosopher will be seriously studied by the following generation. Many activities are involved in the study and the discussion of this philosopher's brilliant thought. Those activities might consist publication, editing, commentary, translation, annotated bibliography, library, a teaching some important parts of his or her idea, systematic and academic studies and so forth.

If the philosopher's idea is well socialized and intensively penetrated into the central core of the life of society, furthermore, of his or her idea is widely accepted and fanatically defended by the people, then this means that the actual process of constructing the system of thought has already occurred. I believe that the process of constructing and shaping a system of thought is more complicated than what I could explain, since in the midst of this long intricate process involves the process of critical debate, evaluation and interpretation. Nevertheless, roughly speaking, this process of shaping and constructing a system of thought occurs in every society. Every society has thus a kind of systematic thought and a philosophical thought which can be traced back to its original source from literature, folklore, belief, dogma, religious thought, ethical thought, system of education and so forth which are embedded in those societies.

What I have explained above has a vital connection with the primary subject of this present study. I propose to have a critical comparative study of the two great philosopher, namely, al-Ghazali (1058-1111)<sup>3</sup> and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). I would like to examine their ethical thought which I regard as the central core of their system of thought.

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3. This Muslim philosopher is well-known by his full name Abu Hamid Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Ghazali. since I shall mention his name repeatedly in this work, I shall abbreviate his name simply as Ghazali.



No doubt that both philosophers have a great influence in molding and shaping the system of thought of the people who put into practice, maintain and defend their philosophy since their philosophical thought is well documented and widely translated, and intensively read by many people, group and society. In Muslim society, for example, Ghazali's ideas and thought are very popular since his philosophical ideas and system of thought is tightly blended with his religious mystical teachings. On the other hand, in Western society, Kant's philosophy has still wide echoes since he is regarded as the portrait and the symbol of the enlightenment since the early modern times.

Until now Ghazali's and Kant's systems of thought are widely discussed by many scholars and critics in the various journals and books.<sup>4</sup> Ghazali's books, for example, are still read more widely in the Muslim world than any other Muslim philosophers' works. Besides the fact that both philosophers have such overwhelming influences on their respective cultures and thoughts, I still need to discuss the question why both philosophers need to be examined in the context of this study. For, as it will become clear, the present study shall bring them into the same context of examination and under the same focus of attention. In that case, I need to give my justifications for my endeavour in examining comparatively and critically both philosophers' system with a special attention to their ethical outlook.

### 1. The case for Kant and Ghazali.

Besides the above considerations, I see palpable similarities and differences between Ghazali and Kant in solving their crucial initial philosophical problems. For Kant, his ethical and religious views are a better source than his epistemological theories to fulfill my intention to investigate his system of philosophical thought. His ethical and religious views are, as Kröner states, more deeply rooted in the philosophical center of his personality and therefore his world view.<sup>5</sup>

In the same way, when we study Ghazali's philosophy, ethics and religious view, we see that they appear to be important, and that they are always taken as central issues in his thought. In his quest for truth in his well-known book, *al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl* (The Deliver from Error), Ghazali emphasizes that knowledge of anything, in any way, must be evaluated in proportion to its usefulness in leading man to those moral states that make possible the attainment of ultimate happiness. Thus, ethics provides the link between

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4. For Kant, see M.J. Scott-Taggart, "Recent work on the philosophy of Kant", *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 3, Number 3, July, 1966, pp. 171-209, and for Ghazali, see Charles E. Butterworth, "The Study of Arabic Philosophy Today", *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, Vol. QVII, Number I, 1983, pp. 8-24 and Vol. XVIII, pp. 161-177.

5. Richard Kröner, *Kant's Weltanschauung*, translated by John E. Smith, The University of Chicago, Press, Chicago, 1956, p. 1.

knowledge and action and is the indispensable means for attaining man's highest end. Ghazali's declaration that his search for the truth ended by adapting religious mysticism confirms the view that ethics is a central theme in his writing<sup>6</sup>.

I have a presupposition here that both, Immanuel Kant and Ghazali are the authors of world's great philosophical systems. Any student of philosophy who studies a Western philosophy cannot put aside Kant's philosophy if he really wants to know the key concepts in the development of philosophical tradition in the West. This claim is true also in case of Ghazali, who cannot be ignored in the context of philosophical tradition in Islam. In general, we can confidently proclaim that Ghazali's philosophy represents 'the system of thought' in Muslim societies, especially in the *sunni* societies.

I must point out, however, that similarities and differences between the system of ethics put forward by our philosophers cannot be restricted to the above mentioned points. For those points have significant implications and crucial consequences for their respective subsequent thoughts. I shall not go into enumerating these points; nor shall discuss their implications and consequences in the present context. What I would like to show here is the importance of comparative study that is to be attempted in my present investigation. Of course, in the subsequent chapters all those will be discussed individually in a greater detail. Therefore, only by way of introductory I shall suffice to indicate only these palpable points in both systems of ethics within their broader context of outlook, i.e. system of thought, which account to what can be called similarities and differences. Besides the ones discussed above one such point is the mode of their thought that determines the main differences between both philosophers a detailed discussion of which shall be presented in Chapter IV.

Besides those vital consideration, there is another consideration which deserves a special attention and forces me to conduct a research on Kant's and Ghazali's system of thought. Studies in Kantian ethics<sup>7</sup> and studies in Ghazalian ethics<sup>8</sup> which are composed

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6. Ghazali, *al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl*, al-Matba'ah al-'Ilmiyyah, Misr, 1303, p. 28. This book has been translated into English by W. Montgomery Watt in his book *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali*, George Allen and Unwin LTD, Fourth Edition, London, 1970, p. 54 and by Richard Joseph McCarthy, S.J., in *Freedom and Fulfillment*, Twayne Publishers, Boston, 1980, p. 89. Henceforth, I shall mention this treatise by only its abbreviated title "*Munqidh*", and refer to the page numbers of both translations also by abbreviations "W" and "Mc" respectively.

7. To have a complete current work on Kantian ethical thought, see *Kantian Ethical Thought: A Curricular Report and annotated Bibliography Based on an NEH Summer Institute Exploring The Moral, Political and Religious views of Immanuel Kant*, Florida State University, 1984.

8. To mention some works which discuss Ghazali's Ethical Thought: Zaky Mubarak, *Al-Akhlāq 'Inda al-Ghazālī*, Dar al-Katib al-'Arabi, Misr, 1924; M. Umaruddin, *The Ethical Philosophy of al-Ghazali*, S.H. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1962, Muhamed Ahmed Sherif, *Ghazali's Theory of Virtue*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1975, and Muhammad Abul Quasem, *The Ethics of al-Ghazali: A Composite Ethics in Islam*, Caravan Books, Inc., New York, 1978.

independently on both philosophers are abundant. Nevertheless, the philosophical studies which try to emphasize the 'critical examination' and the 'critical contrast' between both system of thought, especially their ethical thought in order to see its implication and its consequences, is very rare (in fact I myself have not been able to come across a study of this kind during my research for this study). I shall, therefore, endeavor to do this kind of an investigation in the present context and attempt to examine Kant's and Ghazali's system of ethics critically with a view to compare and contrast them.

## 2. Ghazali's life and his work.

Getting acquainted with a biography of a well-known philosopher usually gives us a certain driving force to know better and more deeply his personality and his original idea. To fulfill such an importance, I shall give in the following a short biography of Kant and Ghazali. But my discussion of their life shall not enter into the details of their personalities. I shall rather discuss the aspects of their life and works so far as they are related to my study of their ethics.

### a. Ghazali's life.

He was born at Tūs in Khurāsān, near the modern Meshhed, in 450/1058. He and his brother Ahmad were left orphans at an early age. His education was begun in Tus. Then Ghazali went to Djurdjan and, after a further period in Tūs, to Naysabur, where he was a pupil of al-Djuwayni Imam al-Haramain until the latter's death in 478/1085. Several other teachers are mentioned, mostly obscure, the best known being Abu 'Ali al-Farmadhi.<sup>9</sup> From Naysabur in 478/1085 Ghazali went to the camp of Nizām al-Mulk who had attracted many scholars, and there he was received with honour and respect. At a date which he does not specify but which cannot be much later than his move to Baghdad, Ghazali passed through a phase of scepticism, and emerged to begin an energetic search for a more satisfying intellectual position and practical way of life.

In 484/1091 he was sent by Nizām al-Mulk to be professor at the *Nizamiya Madrasa*, he had founded in Baghdad. Ghazali was one of the most prominent men in Baghdad, and for four years he lectured to an audience of over three hundred students. At the same time he vigorously pursued the study of philosophy by private reading, and wrote several books.

In 488/1095, however, he suffered from a nervous illness which made it physically impossible for him to lecture. After some months he left Baghdad on the pretext of making the pilgrimage, but in reality he was abandoning his professorship and his

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9. W. Montgomery Watt, "Al-Ghazali", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. B. Lewis and others, Vol. II, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 2965, p. 1038.

whole career as a jurist and theologian. The motives for his renunciation have been much discussed until the present day.<sup>10</sup> He himself says he was afraid that he was going to Hell, and he has many criticisms of the corruption of the *'ulūma* of his time; so it may well be that he left the whole organized legal profession, in which he was also involved, because it was corrupt. Hence, the only way of leading an upright life, as he conceived it, was to leave the profession completely.

From Ghazali's abandonment of his professorship in Baghdad until his return to teaching at Naysabur in 499/1106 is period of eleven years, and it is sometimes said, even in early Muslim biographical notices, that Ghazali spent ten years of this in Syria. Careful reading of his own words in *Munqidh* makes it certain that he was only about two years in Syria. On his departure from Baghdad in Dhu 'l-Ka'd 488/November 1095 he spent some time in Damascus, then went by Jerusalem and Hebron to Madina and Mecca to take part in the Pilgrimage of 489/November-December 1096. He then went back for a short time to Damascus, but his own phrase of 'nearly two years there'<sup>11</sup> must be taken loosely. He is reported to have been seen in Baghdad in Djumada II 490/ May-June 1097, but this can only have been a brief stay in the course of his journey to his home, Tus.

In this period of retirement at Damascus and Tus, Ghazali lived as a poor sufi, often in solitude, spending his time in meditation and other spiritual exercises. It was at this period, that he composed his great work on ethics, *Ihya' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences), and he may lectured on its contents to select audiences. By the end of the period he had advanced far along the mystic path, and was convinced that it was the highest way of life for man.

It is in *Ihya'* that Ghazali clearly states the importance of the central figure of *shaykh* or 'moral guide'. The figure of moral guide or spiritual guide is tightly attached to the gist of Ghazali's mystical ethics. Due to the fact that the idea of moral guide is very 'concrete', in the sense, that it is not so abstract as the rational tribunal doctrine of mystical 'state' (*hāl*) and 'stations' (*maqām*), so it is this idea that becomes popular and easily digested by the follower of mystics, especially, in the countryside. Finally, this doctrine has much influence in constructing the type of thought which specifically belongs to the followers of the mystical doctrines.

For Ghazali himself, the 'mystical doctrine' which is strictly attached to the idea of 'moral guide' is not totally brand new. He just takes over this doctrine from his mystic-predecessor. He himself mentions in *Manqidh*<sup>12</sup> that he has read all the sufi books, such as *Qūt al-Qulūb* of Abu Talib al-Makki (d. 386/996), the works of Harith

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10. *Ibid.* p. 1039.

11. *Munqidh*, p. 31; W, p. 59; Mc, p. 93.

12. *Ibid* p. 28; W, p. 54; Mc, p. 90.

al-Muhasibi (d. 243/857), and the fragment of al-Junaid (d. 298/910), al-Shibli (d. 334/945) and Abu Yazid al-Bistami (d. 261/875). At the end, he adds that he had read the discourses of all the leading Sufis. In *Ihya'*, Ghazali rationally and philosophically systematizes the doctrines of the mystics, but he never changes the idea of 'moral guide' in his new formulation of mystical doctrine. So Ghazali's eventual adoption of the sufi way of life is in reality a consequences of his failure to find the philosophical solution of theological problems.<sup>13</sup>

From the modern Muslim outlook, this type of ethics which depends on the authority of 'moral guide' is truly questionable, for it does not educate the people to be 'autonomous' in making the decision for his own life and cannot lead to creativity of thought. Ghazali himself approves, consciously or unconsciously, the importance of this type of thought in order to reach the ultimate mystical virtues.<sup>14</sup> We will see later the implication of this type of thought in constructing the way of thought in general.

In the course of the year 499/1105-6, Fakhr al-Mulk, son of Nizām al-Mulk, and vizier of Sandjar, the Saldjukid ruler of Khurasan, pressed Ghazali to return to academic work. He yielded to the pressure, partly moved by the belief that he was destined to be the reviver of religion (*mudjaddid*) at the beginning of the new century in accordance with a well-known Tradition. In Dhu 'l-Ka'da / July-August 1106 he began to lecture at he Nizamiyya in Naysabur and not long afterwards wrote the autobiographical work *al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl* (The deliverer from Error). Before his death, however, in Djumada II 505/December 1111, he had once again abandoned teaching and retired to Tus. Here he had established, probably before he went to Naysabur, a *khankah* or hermitage, where he trained young disciples in the theory and practice of the sufi life.

#### b. Ghazali's works

For Western readers, Ghazali is not so well known as Kant is. Due to this, I need to mention some of Ghazali's works. I will not enumerate all Ghazali's works but only the works which are relevant to this present study that will be mentioned.

Aside from his early manuals on jurisprudence (*fiqh*) the first work in which Ghazali speaks about ethics is the *Maqāsid al-Falāsifah* (The Aims of the Philosophers). This book was written some time after 484/1091-2, and before 486/1094,<sup>15</sup> during the

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13. M. Saeed Sheikh, "Al-Ghazali: Mysticism", in M.M. Sharif (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, Vol. 1, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1963, p. 617.

14. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, University of Chicago Press, Second edition, Chicago, 1979, p. 137, 154 and 246. Also H.A.R. Gibb, *Muhammadanism*, Oxford, 1961, p. 150-1. This factor, namely, the sociological aspect of the implementation of fundamental doctrine of mystical virtues is totally neglected by scholars who studied Ghazali, such as Sherif, Quasem, Oliver Leaman and even George F. Hourani.

15. For the accurate date of writing this book see Muhamed Ahmed Sherif, *op. cit.* p. 4.



period of less than two years when he was studying philosophy in his spare time with the intention of understanding it.

At the end of the *Maqāsid*, Ghazali promises to refute certain philosophic sciences in the book entitled *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* (Incoherence of the Philosophers) which appears to have been written about 488/1095.<sup>16</sup> In this later book he argues against the philosophers' views in physics and metaphysics but allows logic to stand as an unobjectionable science.

The first statement of Ghazali on ethics is presented within a context which suggests that it is borrowed from the philosophers. A more personal and positive statement is found in two other works, which chronologically follow each other in the way that *Maqāsid* is followed by *Tahāfut*. They are *Miyār al-'Ilm* (Standard of Knowledge)<sup>17</sup> and *Mizān al-'Amal* (Criterion of Action).<sup>18</sup>

Ghazali's most important work on ethics is his **magnum opus**, *Ihya' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*<sup>19</sup> (The Revival of Religious Sciences), especially, Volume III and IV. *Mizān al-'Amal* and *Ihya' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* are two of Ghazali's treatise that discuss his theory of ethics in detail. The difference between the former and the latter is that the former is a kind of a brief summary of the latter.

Ghazali's discussion on the problem of universality of ethical norms is written in *al-Mustasfa min 'Ilm al-Uṣūl*.<sup>20</sup> He discusses at length the meaning of the normative ethics of hasan (good) and qabih (bad) also in this work.

Besides these important works, there is another one which discusses in detail the development of Ghazali's quest for the truth in his autobiography *al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl*<sup>21</sup> (The Deliverer from Error). Those above mentioned works are used as a main

16. Ghazali, *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*. Maurice Bouyges, ed. Al-Matbaah al-Katolikiyyah, Beirut, 1962, also Cf. Muhamed Ahmed Sherif, *Op. cit.* p. 5. This book has been translated into English by Sabih Ahmad Kamali as *Incoherence of Philosophers*, Pakistan Philosophical Congress, Lahore, 1963. I shall refer to the pagination of the translation as 'SA'K and the Arabic original will be referred to by the abbreviated title *Tahāfut*.

17. Ghazali, *Mi'yār al-'Ilm*. Matbaah Kurdistan al-'Ilmiyya, Misr, 1329. Henceforth I shall refer to the title '*Mi'yār*'.

18. Ghazali, *Mizān al-'Amal*. Matbaah Kurdistan al-'Ilmiyya, Misr, 1328. Henceforth it will be cited as '*Mizan*'.

19. Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*. 4 Volumes, al-Matbaah al-Uthmaniyya al-Misriyya, Misr, 1933. Henceforth I shall refer to this work simply as *Ihya'*.

20. Ghazali, *al-Mustasfa min 'Ilm al-Uṣūl*. al-Maktabah al-Amirah, Cairo, 1322 (1937). Henceforth I shall refer to it as *Mustasfa'*.

21. See footnote 6.

reference to Ghazali's moral philosophy in this present study. There are still many other Ghazali's works, some of them are intended to be a further clarification of his mystical idea or an independent work on theology. Since this present work will focus on his theory of ethics, we need not mention those works.

### 3. Kant's life and his work.

#### a. Kant's life.

Immanuel Kant was born as the fourth child of a Königsberg saddler in 1724. Some of his ancestor had come to Germany from Scotland. He was raised in an atmosphere of pietistic Christianity.<sup>22</sup> Later as tutor in the family of Count Keyserling, Kant often thought with emotion of incomparably finer training he had enjoyed in his own home, where he had never heard or seen anything wrong or immoral. Beginning in 1740, he studied philosophy, mathematics, and theology at Königsberg. From 1747 to 1755, compelled by his father's death to earn his own living, he served as tutor in various families. At the end of this period he was appointed lecturer at the university, which meant living on his lecture fees. He twice applied in vain for a professorship in philosophy at Königsberg; in 1764 he declined a chair in poetry at Königsberg. Finally, in 1770, he was appointed as the professor of logic and metaphysics at Königsberg. In 1778, he declined an appointment at Halle, which, like the previous calls from Erlangen and Jena, would have brought him considerably larger earnings. In 1796, he gave up his lectures for reasons of old age. In 1798 his health began to decline and in 1804 he died in a state of senile dementia.

Kant was unusually small, thin, flat-chested; his right shoulder was higher than his left. He was frail but fundamentally healthy. In the decade he spent working on the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he often spoke of his health. All his life he suffered from complaints of various sorts and was always worrying about his death. It was from 1781 to 1791, when he was putting his other great works into final form, that he spoke least of his health.<sup>23</sup>

#### b. Kant's work.

After his first work published at the age of twenty-two (1746), there was an interruption of eight years. From then on, one work followed another except for the period from 1770 to 1781, when he published next to nothing. Though naturally a prolific writer, he was now virtually silent. For it was in those years that what we know as the Kantian

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22. Theodore M. Greene, "The Historical Context and Religious Significance of Kant's Religion", in Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1960, p. XXVII.

23. Karl Jaspers, *Kant*, translated by Ralph Manheim, A Helen and Kurt Wolff Book, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., New York, 1962, p. 3.

philosophy developed. The work which established his fame once and for all, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Critique of Pure Reason)<sup>24</sup>, was published in 1781.

A clear dividing line is drawn between the 'critical' and 'pre-critical' works. Beginning in 1781 (Kant was then fifty-seven), the following works were completed in rapid sequence. The following work is *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik* (Prolegomena To Any Future Metaphysics)<sup>25</sup> in 1783.

Kant's work on ethics or practical philosophy is numerous. Two years after the publication of *Prolegomena*, he started writing his ethical philosophy. The first book that appeared was *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals)<sup>26</sup> in 1785. Three years later (1788), he published his *Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft* (Critique of Practical Reason), known as the "Second Critique".<sup>27</sup>

Other works which have a strong relationship to Kant's theory of ethics are *Kritik der Urtheilskraft* (Critique of Judgement)<sup>28</sup> published in 1790, then, *Religion Innerhalb der Grenzen der Blossen Vernunft* (Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone)<sup>29</sup> in 1793. Twelve years from the publication of his *Grundlegung*, he published his *Metaphysik der Sitten* (Metaphysic of Morals) in 1797.

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24. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Philipp Reclam Jun., Stuttgart, 1982. This book is translated by Norman Kemp Smith, *Critique of Pure Reason*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1965. Henceforth I shall refer to it as *KrV* for German edition and *First Critique* for English edition, with the code A (the first edition) and B (the second edition) and their respective paginations.

25. Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik* (Prolegomena To Any Future Metaphysics), translated by Lewis W. Beck, The Liberal Arts Press, New York, 1951. Henceforth, will be referred to as *Prolegomena*.

26. Immanuel Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals), translated by H.J. Paton, Harper Torchbooks, Harper and Row Publishers, New York, 1964. Henceforth I shall refer to its abbreviated title *Groundwork*.

27. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft* (Critique of Practical Reason), translated by Lewis White Beck, Macmillan Publishing Company, Twentieth Printing, New York, 1986. For German edition I use *Immanuel-Kant-Werke, Schriften zur Ethik Und Religionsphilosophie*, IV, Insel-Verlag, Wiesbaden, Germany, 1956. Henceforth I shall refer to it as *KPV* for German edition and as *Second critique* for English edition.

28. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik Der Urtheilskraft* (Critique of Judgement), translated by J.H. Berhard, Hafner Press, New York, 1951. In the following footnotes, I shall refer to this work as "*Third Critique*".

29. Immanuel Kant, *Religion Innerhalb der Grenzen der Blossen Vernunft* (Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone), translated by Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson, Harper Torchbooks, Harper and Row Publishers, New York, 1960. Henceforth I shall refer to the abbreviated title *Religion*.



## CHAPTER I

### METHODOLOGY

Any investigation must begin with presenting the problems involved in the subject of inquiry. Then, the purpose or the goal of that investigation must be disclosed. And finally, the procedure as an important item in that investigation or research should be outlined. These items will explain the how of our investigation which can be expressed as a general title 'Methodology'.

The subject of inquiry in our investigation is ethics. Our purpose is to expound the concept of ethics as it is formulated in Ghazali's and Immanuel Kant's philosophy, in order to point out the similarities, the differences and the consequences. Before starting our investigation, the procedure which will carry out the above work must be demonstrated first, since analysis of a procedure in any kind of study precedes its content.

#### A. An outline of the problem.

A serious study of Ghazali's and Kant's thought, in spite of their distinct historical background, reveals an interesting feature of palpable similarities and differences. Both philosophers have an excellent power of critical mind towards the established tradition of philosophical thought. With a great self-confidence, Ghazali uncompromisingly criticizes the whole system of Muslim philosophers, represented by Avicenna's (980-1037) dogmatic-emanative metaphysics.<sup>1</sup> Immanuel Kant, on the other hand, rigorously criticizes the dogmatic-speculative metaphysics promulgated by his predecessors such as Descartes, Leibniz, and more particularly Christian Wolff (1679-1754).<sup>2</sup> The result of both critique is the same; both Ghazali and Kant nullify the dogmatic metaphysics as the valid source of science. On this assumption, then, we cannot base our knowledge on the principle of dogmatic-speculative metaphysics.

As a matter of fact, it is not only their critical thought towards the doctrine of speculative-metaphysics that makes them closely similar, but at the same time their serious effort to substitute their own alternative original system instead of the doctrine of dogmatic metaphysics. Ghazali constructs his own theory of ethics, namely, mystical ethics,<sup>3</sup> and Kant establishes his own rigorous system of rational ethics to replace the doctrine of dogmatic-speculative metaphysics.<sup>4</sup>

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1. *Munqidh*, p. 28; W, p. 54; Mc, p. 89.

2. *KrV*. B. 660-64, pp. 665-68; *First Critique*, pp. 525-28.

3. *Mizan*, p. 3

4. Frederick Copleston S.J., *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. VI, Search Press, London, 1977, p. 342.

However I would like to add another main feature of similarity between both thinkers, which is almost 'forgotten' or at best rarely recognized by contemporary scholars. This other salient factor which puts them into a similar position is the attention both philosophers pay to 'religion'. Due to this factor, Ghazali is known as '*hujjat al-Islam*' (The proof of Islam)<sup>5</sup>, while Kant is well-known as the philosopher of 'Protestantianism'.<sup>6</sup>

In the history of philosophy, the trend of philosophical thought which criticizes metaphysics frequently arises. The main feature of modern positivism, for example, is also marked with a severe critique towards metaphysics. Eventhough, we have to note here that this modern positivism's line of thought is very different, indeed, from Kant's and Ghazali's framework. While criticizing metaphysics, the modern positivism totally abandons ethics as well.<sup>7</sup> Comparing to this trend of philosophical thought, Ghazali and Kant are very different from this positivistic outlook, because both of them have a very similar thought in having the idea that ethics takes a very central place in their broad philosophical thought. In other words, despite their different methodology, the fundamental philosophical thought which starts from criticizing metaphysics and then comes to establish their theory of ethics is very similar in Ghazali and Kant. The primacy of ethics over metaphysics is the most significant feature of Ghazali's and Kant's philosophical thought.

After pointing out in broader outlines those palpable similarities we must mention in the same way the differences between both thinkers. This is really problematic. For, although their basic idea comes from the same stand, namely, the intention to refute the doctrine of dogmatic-speculative metaphysics and finally comes to the same point of conclusion that ethics or practical reason has a primacy over the theoretical reason, their CONCEPTION of ethical thought is marked with a great difference. I claim here that this great difference deserves to be carefully studied, not for the sake of looking for those differences and similarities in themselves, but rather for the sake of seeing its implication and consequences in constructing the whole system.

Furthermore, the importance of this critical study between Ghazalian and Kantian ethics is enhanced due to my initial consideration that ethics should not be understood merely from its traditional notion which tries to preserve its normative aspects and neglects other aspects which involve in constructing an attitude and action. Ethics should not

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5. Quasem, *Op.cit.* p. 11

6. To say Kant is a philosopher of Protestantism can be misleading. Although many writers such as Paulsen and Staeps claim as such, Kant's understanding on 'religion' is to go beyond the sectarian squabbles. See Allen W. Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion*, Cornell University Press, London, 1970, p. 107-8. What I want to underline here is simply the fact that Kant pays attention on the problem of 'religion' in his whole system of philosophical thought.

7. Oswald Hanfling, *The Logical Positivism*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1981, p. 123-7 and 150-2. Also see Gustav Bergman, *The Metaphysics of Logical Positivism*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison 1967, p. 2.

be understood only in a limited meaning of its normative aspect which focuses its main attention on the problem of good and bad, or 'right' and 'wrong'.<sup>8</sup> Moral or ethical discourse, actually, is a form of practical discourse in general. Moral questions are fundamentally questions about what we ought to do. The primary intent of moral utterance is not to assert that so and so is the case, but to advise, admonish, suggest, proclaim or protest that so and so ought to be done. Moral knowledge is the knowledge about what to do or not to do ; about what attitude to take towards what has been done, is being done or is intended. In short, to express attitude, decision of principle or declaration of attention, is also the important subject-matter of ethics.<sup>9</sup>

From this wider perspective, it is my claim that ethics has a close relation to the human 'way of thought' in general. If a person's way of thought were different, his whole experience of life would be different. He would not only behave differently, but would also have different thoughts, feelings, attitudes and desire.<sup>10</sup> Due to this primary consideration, human 'ethical conduct' cannot be separated from his 'way of thought'. There is some kind of reciprocal relationship between the two. The 'way of thought' can be explained and depicted from people's ethical thought, and the 'ethical conduct' represents or reflects the way of people's thought.

When we see the problem from this perspective, I find it necessary to study Ghazali's and Kant's conception of ethics from a critical point of view. This critical approach will help us to see the main portrait of each system of thought from the angle of their ethical doctrines. Besides, by such a study, we can initiate to pave the way for a 'cultural dialogue' between the custodians and the proponents of respective traditions, namely Islamic and Western, in order to have sharing ideas and experience to solve our common difficulties which is embedded in both respective traditions.

#### 1. How is a critical comparative study of ethics possible?

At this point, I have to explicate first my methodological approach to the problem. How is it possible to have such a comparative study of ethical thoughts of two philosophers who lived in different ages and different historical, even religious backgrounds? Before going into the inner core of Kant's and Ghazali's systems of thought, let us discuss more clearly the possibility of having such a comparative study of ethical thought.

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8. Kai Nielsen, "The Problems of Ethics," *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Paul Edwards, ed. Vol. III, Macmillan Publishing Co Inc. and the Free Press, New York, 1967, p. 118 and especially p. 121.

9. *Ibid.* p. 130-1

10. Paul W. Taylor, ed., *The Problems of Moral Philosophy*, Dickenson, Publishing Company INC., Belmont, California, 1967, p. 8.

It is, indeed, difficult to validate and to do justice for any philosophical studies, if we cannot differentiate between philosophical studies and any other studies. The historical studies, for example, always focuses its main attention on the 'unique event' which cannot be repeated anymore. Seen from this point of view, it is impossible to approach the issue, let alone to make a critical contrast between Ghazali and Kant or any other thinkers, since they live in different ages, region and religion. Our study also will be fruitless if it is approached merely from a religious standpoint. The adherence of any particular religion usually will keep a distance from each other. In this case, it is also impossible to compare Ghazali who is Muslim and Kant who grows up in a Christian milieu.

Nevertheless, in this study, I merely try to explicate the fundamental ideas<sup>11</sup> of the ethical thoughts of both thinkers which transcend the historical, regional even the religious borders. In other words, fundamental ideas are the property of human beings in general irrespective of their religion, race or nationality. In saying this, I do not mean that those particular factors do not have any share in making human ideas. We realize, of course, the influence of the historical development and the religious beliefs in constructing and making the fundamental ideas. These fundamental ideas are alive in the midst of social and cultural tradition. From this particular aspect, I share Macintyre's insight that the study of fundamental ideas cannot be separated from sociology or anthropology.<sup>12</sup>

Further, either Ghazali's or Kant's fundamental ideas on ethics are still echoing in our present age. Ghazali's mystical ethics, for example, is well known in most Muslim societies, while Kant's rational ethics is still widely discussed in all over the world. Their ideas are well sustained and seriously discussed from the time they firstly emerged down to our present age. Due to those initial considerations, I believe that it is possible to have such a comparative study and critical contrast between the two philosophers who lived in a different historical background.

## 2. Ghazali's system.

In writing his critical philosophy, Ghazali begins with criticizing the rational-emanative metaphysics of his age. He challenges in his *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* (under twenty disputations) almost all doctrines of Aristotle and Plotinus and of their Muslim representatives such as Farabi and Avicenna.

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11. Mark B. Woodhouse, *A Preface to Philosophy*, Wadsworth Publishing Company, Third Edition, California, 1984, p. 3

12. Alasdair Macintyre, *Against the Self-Image of the Ages: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy*, Duckworth, London, 1971, p. 5-7, also by the same author, *After Virtue, A Study in Moral Theory*, University of Notre Dame Press, Second Edition, Indiana, 1984, p. 23.

The second phase of his philosophical discourse is to build his original mystical ethics in his work *Mizān al 'Amal* (Criterion of Action) and *Ihya' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (The revival of Religious Sciences).

This system of philosophical thought is clearly understood from Ghazali's autobiography, *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*. In this work, Ghazali himself explains that he starts with the discussion of the classes of seekers of truth. He finds the most erroneous seekers of truth are the philosophers who deal with theology and metaphysics.<sup>13</sup> Due to his deep discontent towards those ways of obtaining truth, Ghazali finally chooses the ways of mysticism.<sup>14</sup>

In the present study, I shall critically follow Ghazali's step and procedure. The first discussion in Chapter II will elaborate Ghazali's main framework in constructing his critique towards the *falasifa*'s<sup>15</sup> rational-emanative metaphysics. I regard this discussion as very decisive, for this shall reveal us what is much more emphasized by Ghazali in refusing the *falasifa*'s ideas and what is less being discussed, not to say being neglected, by him in his main body of thought. Due to this primary consideration, the discussion of the gist of Ghazali's idea in refusing the rational metaphysics is the foundation stone of all subsequent development of his other thoughts.

In scrutinizing Ghazali's theory in refusing rational metaphysics, I find the problem of causality, whether it is applied in the realm of nature or in the domain of morality, as the important clue to enter the inner domain of all succeeding topics. Both Ghazali and Kant regard 'ethical action' as instances of causality. Even Ghazali himself sets out the problem of 'causality' in his seventeenth discussion of *Tahāfut*.<sup>16</sup>

The connection between Ghazali's idea on causality and his whole theory in refusing rational metaphysics and also in constructing his mystical ethics are so neatly interwoven that it is inevitable to separate them from each other. That is why I discuss the problem of causality as related to the ethical problems immediately after discussing Ghazali's argument in abandoning the doctrine of rational metaphysics.

13. *Munqidh*, p. 16; W, p. 37; Mc, p. 76.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 28; W, p. 54; Mc, p. 89.

15. By the name '*falasifa*' here I denote the Muslim Philosophers such as Farabi and Avicenna, who are usually called by the name 'Peripatetic philosophers'. In Arabic the word *Falasifa* is the plural form of *failasuf*, while its noun is *falsafah*. Henceforth I shall use the term *falasifa*, *failasuf* and *falsafah* as it is referred in the above meaning.

16. *Tahafut*, p. 190-4; SAK, pp. 185-196.



From this basic discussion, I shall proceed to elaborate Ghazali's conception of ethics, which is mystical. Ghazali's conception of ethics will be discussed in Chapter III. Different from the earlier studies of Ghazali's ethics<sup>17</sup>, I would like to pay a bit more attention on the idea of *shaykh* or 'moral guide' which Ghazali regards as important mediator in order to obtain the mystical virtues.<sup>18</sup>

In its relation to my earlier hypothesis that ethics should not be merely limited in its normative scope, but rather has a strong relationship with the building of system of thought in general, so this discussion will be fruitful and also crucial. Furthermore, the discussion of this section will lead us to see the implication and the consequences of having such a doctrine in molding and structuring the 'way of thought' of its custodians and its proponents.

This approach to Ghazali's system leads us to encounter an interesting preliminary result of philosophical thought. Ghazali refuses 'reason' as a 'guiding principle' in human ethical conduct. (I do not intentionally use the term 'foundation' here, since the word 'foundation' has a strong connotation that it cannot be otherwise. While the term a 'guiding principle' is more flexible than the 'foundation'). Ghazali chooses 'revelation' through the strict intervention of *shaykh* or 'moral guide' as the prominent guide for the select people to achieve the mystical virtues.

Up to this point, I have a crucial philosophical question : Why should Ghazali choose *shaykh* in his mystical ethics instead of 'reason' as a partner of revelation in guiding ethical conduct of human being? It is mainly this question that I shall be concerned with next, and in the due course, we will try to find an answer for this challenging question.

### 3. Kant's system.

It is amazing that Kant's system in building an integrated philosophical thought is nearly similar to Ghazali's system. Towards the end of his pre-critical work he spends almost eleven years to design his *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* (Critique of Pure Reason).<sup>19</sup> It is, in this work, he uncompromisingly criticizes the doctrine of dogmatic-speculative

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17. See footnote 8 in the *Introduction*.

18. *Mizan*, p. 79. Also see Nabih Amin Faris, *The Book of Knowledge*, (An English translation of the *Kitab al-'Ilm* of Ghazali's *Ihya'* 'Ulum ad-Din, I), SH. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1962, pp. 126-153. Cf. footnote 14 in the *Introduction*.

19. See footnote 24 of my *Introduction*, p. 10.

metaphysics. From this inspirational work, Kant proceed to write his theory of ethics, which is rational. As Ghazali did, Kant's works on ethics come after his rigorous refutation towards the theory of rational metaphysics.

In the following study, I shall follow Kant's procedure as I follow Ghazali's procedure. Owing to a primary objective of this study is to make a comparative study and critical contrast between Kant's and Ghazali's ethics so I shall discuss the main framework of Kant's refutation of dogmatic metaphysics, together with Ghazali's idea on the same issue, in Chapter II.

In the midst of exploring Kant's main thought in refusing metaphysics, we encounter Kant's conception of **constitutive use** of mind. By the conception of constitutive use of mind, Kant easily validates the reality of knowledge and its procedure to obtain it. The validity of knowledge and the impossibility of metaphysics, both of them, are equally emphasized by Kant.<sup>20</sup>

Although the main target of Ghazali and Kant to abandon the dogmatic metaphysics is the same, namely to underline the fact that our 'reason' is limited in its capacity and its ability to grasp the whole reality of existence, Kant still can formulate the role of human 'subject' in its proper place in acquiring knowledge. It seems to me that this formulation has a great impact on Kant's formulation of ethical theory.

In addition to the idea of 'constitutive use' of mind which always lurks behind Kant's framework in refusing metaphysics, I regard the problem of 'causality' as a vital clue, too, in Kant's whole system of thought. As Ghazali did in *Tahafut*, Kant also discusses this crucial problem in his *Kritik*.<sup>21</sup> It is obvious in the due course, that Kant's discussion of the problem of causality will pave the way to seek the answer why Kant's conception of ethics is rational. There is, indeed, a close relationship between Kant's idea of 'constitutive use' of mind and his notion of 'causality', whether this causality is applied in the domain of nature or in the realm of morality.

Based on this consideration, I shall discuss this problem of causality in Chapter II, together with Ghazali's conception on this matter, in order to bring us closer to see the palpable points of similarities and differences in their treatment of the problem.

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20. Justus Hartnack, *Kant's Theory of Knowledge*, translated from Danish by M. Holmes Hartshorne, Harcourt, Brace and World, INC, New York, 1967, p. 5 and pp. 139-141.

21. *KrV*. A 189/B 232-5, p. 267-270; *First Critique* p. 217-19.

From this discussion, I will proceed the discussion of Kant's ethics, which is rational in Chapter III. The central question that will be dealt with in this chapter is to seek the answer to these questions: If Kant's ethics is rational, why does he still need to postulate God and immortality? Moreover, why does he still pay attention to 'religious ethics' by writing a special treatise on 'Religion'<sup>22</sup>. The most significant feature in the discussion of chapter III is this. If in Ghazali's conception of mystical ethics, we find the idea of *shaykh* or moral guide, in Kant's ethics we find a clear suggestion that we should seek the 'pure' element of every particular religious doctrine or religious ethics.

As I have a crucial problem in Ghazali's system, I do have the same philosophical question concerning Kant's system of ethical thought. Why does Kant search for a 'pure' element of all particular religious ethics? If Kant's ethics is 'purely' rational, why does not he suggest to abolish all religious ethics and substitute his proposed rational ethics instead?

All those crucial questions compel me to search for a changing perspective. From this stand, let me firstly evaluate the traditional way of solving the paradoxical problem of religious ethics, which is based on merely 'revelation', and the philosophic ethics, which is based only on 'reason'.

#### 4. A search for a new perspective.

Due to this important findings, our approach to Ghazali's and Kant's ethics is very different from the 'traditional approach' which pays more attention to the problem of whether the normative ethics should be based only on 'revelation' or only on 'reason'. Instead of following such a traditional approach, we are more interested in looking for the '**type of thought**' which is built upon those alleged dichotomical foundations as an answer for our question. It is our claim here that the problems of ethics in general cannot be solved by simply saying that it should be based on 'revelation' or 'reason'. We consider this traditional strict dichotomical approach as 'reductionist' approach. This 'reductionist' type of solution is very simple and hence irrelevant. When saying this, we do not mean at all that 'revelation' is not important, and 'reason' is more important or vice-versa. We are not interested in this type of 'reductionist' approach. The problems of ethics in general is not well clear-cut so the traditional approach to solve the seemingly paradoxical problem may prove to be inadequate.

What we can grasp in the actual practice is a kind of 'a joint cooperation' between both. Based on those consideration in this present study, the objective of this study is to

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22. See Kant's work in my *Introduction*, p. 9-10.



look for a palpable construction of the system of thought which is embedded in these alleged dichotomical approach towards the ethical problems. Based on the discussions in Chapter II and III, I shall proceed to see the implication and the consequences of building such a dichotomical approach in traditional understanding of ethics in Chapter IV.

### B. The method of inquiry.

Based on the above approaches towards Ghazali's and Kant's system of philosophical thought, we will find some palpable points of similarity and difference between both philosophers. In order to get closer to the gist and the inner core of their systems of thought, we have to choose the most important item of ideas set out by both philosophers by which we make a comparative study and critical contrast.

By this method of inquiry, we will find a further point of understanding that will explain the reason why they have such a different conception. And only by acquainting those palpable similarities and differences between them that we can go a bid further to critically examine the implication and the consequences of having such a type of ethical thought. Now, in order to set out my methodology more concretely, an initial discussion of similarities and differences between both philosophers is in order.

#### 1. The case for similarities.

##### a. Nullifying the dogmatic-speculative metaphysics.

We have showed above the most striking feature of similarity between Kant and Ghazali which is their refutation dogmatic-metaphysics. Ghazali, like Kant, clearly perceived that the mathematical method, although sound in the domain of exact sciences, was useless in the domain of metaphysics. Ghazali definitely anticipated Kant in underlining the notion that the science of metaphysics is impossible. Ghazali again anticipated Kant and showed that intelligence cannot find the ultimate solution of metaphysical problems.<sup>23</sup>

It is quite clear that both of them come to the nearly similar way of solving the problem. It is not a deep and complicated discourse of metaphysics or theoretical aspect of philosophy which is able to lead the human being to reach the 'virtue', but it is a practical

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23. M. Umaruddin, *The ethical Philosophy of al-Ghazali*, SH Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1962, p. 288 (see footnote).

aspect or morality that will serve that purpose. Kant comes to the point of rational ethics and inevitably admits God as a prominent guarantor for his practical postulate.<sup>24</sup> While Ghazali comes to the mystical ethics in which the vision of God in the hereafter is his ultimate concern.<sup>25</sup>

It is not disputable that Kant gives a room for faith, so that the problem of traditional metaphysics such as freedom, immortality and God has a special place and attention in Kant's general frame of thinking.<sup>26</sup> Kant touches these vital and perennial problems after passing a long way of analytical scrutinizing to solve the difficulties embedded in the previous philosophies. Finally, he comes to the conclusion that those problems of traditional metaphysics can be approached only from a moral or an ethical perspective. What is important in the history of ethics and deserves a careful study is that Kant cannot conceive of morality except in the world structured as the Divine Corporation structures it.<sup>27</sup>

Ghazali, on the other hand, structures his world-view through religious perspective, and more particularly in his mystical perspective.<sup>28</sup> This way of thinking does not come by chance to Ghazali's mind. It is only after a long period of doubt that he, finally, chooses the mystical way of thinking which is based on strict religious foundations.<sup>29</sup>

The element of similarity between Kantian and Ghazalian systems of ethical thought is clear. Both thinkers refuse dogmatic-speculative metaphysics and agree to put an emphasis on ethical and religious views.<sup>30</sup> Their similarity, however, does not end here; it passes on to their development of ethics on the basis of their refusal of metaphysics.

#### b. The primacy of practical philosophy.

From nullifying the dogmatic-speculative metaphysics Ghazali and Kant agree to reconstruct the fundamental problem of metaphysics, not from the dogmatic-speculative

24. *KrV*, B. 842, p. 823-4; *First Critique*, p. 641, and also see Allen W. Wood, *Op. cit.* p. 161-2.

25. *Ihya'*, IV, p. 465 and Cf. Muhamed Ahmed Sherif, *Op. cit.* p. 168-9.

26. *KrV*, B XXX, p. 37-8; *First Critique*, p. 29.

27. J.B. Schneewind, "The Divine Corporation and the history of ethics", in *Philosophy in History*, Richard Rorty (et. al), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985, p. 190.

28. R. Walzer & H.A.R. Gibb, "Akhlaq: Survey of Ethics in Islam", in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. H.A.R. Gibb and others, Vol. I, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1960, p. 326-7.

29. *Munqidh*, p. 5-8; Watt, p. 22-6; and McCarthy, p. 64-7.

30. Kröner, *Op. cit.* p. 3.

point of view, but from the perspective of a practical philosophy. The primacy of practical reason is quite evident in both thinkers.

Kant in his *Second Critique* says that the antinomy concerning the relation of happiness to virtue in the *sommum bonum* is resolved by the doctrine of the primacy of practical reason and the postulates of pure practical reason.<sup>31</sup> This line of thought accords Kant's own proposal expressed in the *Kritik* when he says that: "I have, therefore, denied knowledge in order to make room for faith".<sup>32</sup> This well known idea subsequently becomes a secure foundation of Kant's ethical theory.

Ghazali's idea on the primacy of practical reason is much more straight and obvious. It is evident from the title of Ghazali's book, *Mīzān al-'Amal* (The Criterion of Action), that the *Mizan* deals with 'action' ('amal). Its aim is to discover the means of discerning and bringing about the 'good action' which leads to happiness.<sup>33</sup> This book therefore is inquiry into the kinds of knowledge and action which is relevant to man's highest good. Further, Ghazali Writes:

Practical science consists of three sciences : The science of the soul in respect to its qualities and character (Ethics)... The science which deals with man ought to conduct himself with his wife, children, servants, and slaves (household management)... The science of governing the people of the city and the region (Politics).<sup>34</sup>

The significance of this statement is that here Ghazali adopts the philosophic (Avicennan) division of sciences as his own.<sup>35</sup> More important, however, is the order which he introduces: the first of the three practical sciences, i.e. ethics, is the highest of the three, and the most important practical science. Furthermore, Ghazali concludes this statement by declaring that ethics is conceived here as "the greater aim of this book (i.e. the *Mizan*)."<sup>36</sup> These statements occur in a book devoted to ethics and are not merely passing remarks in books dealing with other disciplines. Ghazali repeats the assertion that ethics is a practical science in another part of the *Mizan* emphasizing these same points again.<sup>37</sup>

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31. Lewis White Beck, "Antinomy of Pure Reason", in Philip P. Wiener (ed.), *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, Vol. I, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1973, p. 92-3, also Frederick Copleston, *Op. cit.* p. 342.

32. *KrV*, B. XXX, p. 37-8; *First Critique*, p. 29.

33. *Mizan*, p. 3.

34. *Ibid.* p. 54.

35. Michael E. Marmura, "Ghazali on Ethical Premises", *The Philosophical Forum*, I, No. 3, 1969, p. 393-4.

36. *Mizan*, p. 3

37. *Ibid.*, p. 160-1.

Nevertheless, to say that Kant's ethical philosophy has an element of similarities with Ghazali's ethical philosophy is far from claiming that they are both exactly the same as their detailed aspects, and that there are no differences between the two. Although the voluntaristic type of Kantian ethics<sup>38</sup> is similar to Ghazali's ethical voluntarism<sup>39</sup> but the way Kant approaches to that type of ethics is totally different from Ghazali's.

## 2. The case for differences.

### a. The problem of causality.

It is obvious that both thinkers agree that dogmatic speculative metaphysics cannot bring the human beings into the knowledge of ultimate being and ultimate virtue, but as I have stated above that there are crucial and complex points in their 'methodology' in refusing the metaphysics that make them totally different in solving the ethical problems.

The problem of causality, for example, is one of the problems that make Kant and Ghazali actually separated from each other. The way Kant treats and argues concerning the causation is different from Ghazali's. Kant clearly underlines that there are two kinds of causal law: Causality of nature and causality of freedom.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, Ghazali uncompromisingly attacks the conception of the causal necessity or causal law in the realm of nature, let alone the legitimacy and the validity of moral law in the realm of practical reason.<sup>41</sup>

The different conception concerning the problem of law of causation, whether it is applied in the realm of nature or in the realm of morality has a great impact on the formulation and the construction of the human way of thought in general. We will see later how Ghazali and Kant formulate the role of human 'subject' in both realms.

It will be important to discuss Ghazali's and Kant's conception respectively, since Ghazali can be considered as a prominent figure in the middle ages in which the development of human thinking and the development of human sciences were not so sophisticated and not so intricate as we find in Kant's modern age. The stage and the phase of the development of human thought has to be considered and included into our critical analysis to see its implications, especially when we agree that philosophy is a kind of a cumulative,

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38. Kröner, *Op. cit.* p. 6-12.

39. Leaman, *Op. cit.* p. 126 and also Sheikh, *Op. cit.* p. 115.

40. *KrV*, B. XXIX, p. 36-7; *First Critique*, p. 28-29 and Cf. Lewis White Beck, "Kant's Strategy", *Op. cit.* p. 235.

41. Hourani, *Op. cit.* p. 152-3.

ongoing activity in which each generation of philosophers attempts to build on the sights of their predecessors and to avoid their mistakes.<sup>42</sup>

On the basis of such consideration, the discussion concerning the problem of causality as it is constructed by both thinkers has to come to the fore, since it is a problem which finally becomes a crucial and decisive in the formulation of their ethical theory.

b. The function of reason.

The problem of causality, actually, has an intimate and close relationship with the function of reason in our daily life in acquiring the knowledge. Ghazali and Kant have a great differences in their conception concerning the function of reason. Although they agree that reason can only reach the knowledge of the possible experience, but they differ in assigning the reason to use and to reach its optimal capacity.

In his effort to refute dogmatic-metaphysics, Kant discovers various conceptions which refer to the ways in which our reason works. To take a clear example is his conception of 'space and time' as the form of intuition combined with his conception of 'categories' or Pure Concepts of understanding in his *Transcendental Analytic*<sup>43</sup>, or the conception of 'Schematism' in his *Transcendental Doctrine of Judgment*<sup>44</sup>. Kant calls the combination of those 'forms' of intuition and understanding as the "constitutive use" of mind by which he can easily formulate the possibility of understanding the idea of law, whether it is applied in the sphere of nature or in the realm of morality, and from which it opens the possibility of understanding the idea of universality and the idea of uniformity in our human mind. Ghazali, on the other hand, has no such conception in the main body of his system of thought.

In spite of that, Ghazali has four divisions of the meaning of reason ('aql). He is well aware that the word 'aql' is used in more than one sense and that a good deal of disagreement on the subject of 'reason' is due to the failure to realize the multiple connotations of the term. He discusses four principal meanings in which 'aql' is used: (1) It is the quality that distinguishes man from beast and presupposes him to reception of the theoretical sciences, *al-'ulūm an-nazariyya*; (2) it is the knowledge which teaches a child to distin-

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41. Hourani, *Op. cit.* p. 152-3.

42. Woodhouse, *Op. cit.*, p. 70.

43. *KrV*, B 103-9, p. 147-54; *First Critique*, p. 111-115.

44. *KrV*, B. 178-180, p. 215-17; *First Critique*, p. 182-183.

guish the possible from the impossible and makes him discern 'axiomatic' facts such as that two is more than one; (3) it is also the knowledge which experience yields, finally- and where we meet with that ethical turn that is characteristic of the theological examination of 'aql - (4) we call one possessed of 'aql, who realizes the consequences of actions and manages to control his emotional impulses in the light of his foresight.<sup>45</sup> It is clear that this division of reason does not penetrate the systematic analysis of how our reason actually works.

It is by nature, that the different conception concerning the function of reason in both realms will have great consequences and serious implications in the formulation of the human world view and their system of thought. Analyzing and scrutinizing this important part will be helpful, probably, to answer the question why Ghazali is accused to be a hindrance of the development of philosophical studies and scientific ethos in the Muslim world, not only to say that Ghazali's system of thought, especially, his mystical ethics leads his followers to have an exclusive mode of thought and less attentive to the social problems.<sup>46</sup>

### C. The application of the methodology.

How is the palpable similarities and differences between Kant's and Ghazali's ethical thought to be used as an interpretative method in this comparative study? We have already pointed out that the problem of dogmatic-speculative metaphysics, the problem of causality in nature and in morality and the function of reason in the attitude building are surrounding the concept of ethics which is formulated by Kant and Ghazali. The substance of these problems, as a matter of fact, constitutes the problematic of rational or philosophic ethics and religious ethics to which our theme can be narrowed down. Our study too shall take its departure from this problematic and the response of our philosophers to it. But, as I have argued, the problem of ethics in our philosophers originates from their problem of dogmatic metaphysics, and then expands to the striking disagreement concerning the problem of causation and the role of human subject, and ends with the problem of the function of reason in solving those perplexities in the ethical discussion. They will, then, be dealt with the same manner. We have thus these topics to be discussed.

1. Ethics that can be constructed out of a critique of dogmatic metaphysics.

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45. *Ihya'*, I, 75-6 and also see Leaman, *Op. cit.* 129.

46. Zaky Mubarak, *Al-Akhlāq 'inda al-Ghazālī*, Dar al-Kātib al-'Araby, Misr, 1924, p. 140, also Muhammad Yusuf Musa, *Falsafah al-Akhlāq fil Islam*, Muassasah al-Kahanajy, Misr, 1963, p. 222.



2. The problem of rational and religious ethics.

3. The implication and the consequences of Ghazali's and Kant's ethical thought.

Let me summarize in brief the procedure of this investigation. I shall begin with the discussion of Kant's and Ghazali's critique of the dogmatic-speculative metaphysics to see their possibility to construct their ethical theory. This starting point of discussion will be elaborated in Chapter II.

When their theory of ethics is constructed on the same basis of religious consciousness, then, arises a new problem which needs another solution. Why is there a difference in the detail conception of their ethical thought? Kant inclines towards rational ethics, while Ghazali tends to build his ethical theory on mystical foundation? These problems will be discussed in Chapter III.

Following these discussions, I shall express my critical examination on both systems of ethics, to see its relevancy and its plausibility in the light of the current notion of ethical thought which strictly relates the ethical problems to the problem of guiding conduct, molding behaviour and shaping attitude. Finally in chapter IV, I shall discuss the fact that this notion, of course, is a broader area of the system of thought in general, not only to say merely confined in the limited area of normative knowledge of the good and evil.

## CHAPTER II

ETHICS THAT CAN BE CONSTRUCTED OUT OF A CRITIQUE OF  
DOGMATIC METAPHYSICS

## A. Kantian critique of pure reason.

The fundamental idea laid down in the *Kritik* is Kant's epistemological position. Reality can be 'known' only so far as we can; (a) come into firsthand intuitive contact with it, and (b) rationally apprehend and interpret what such intuition yields. The first half of this work is devoted to a brilliant analysis of the nature and implications of our knowledge of the physical world. We establish contact with this world, Kant teaches, through sensuous intuition which, in turn, is possible to us only under the "forms" of space and time.<sup>1</sup> These simplest perceptual experiences, in their spatio-temporal patterns, are apprehended and interpreted in terms of certain basic rational concepts, which are called "categories".<sup>2</sup>

Upon this analysis of the knowing process Kant bases certain revolutionary conclusions which are of great importance to his theory of ethics and his philosophy of religion. Deeply impressed with our entire dependence, in cognition, upon our finite faculties of sense and reason, which probably are inadequate to give what may be called a cosmic insight into the inner nature of things, he insists upon branding the physical world which we can know as merely "phenomenal"<sup>3</sup>. This is the world which scientists study with so large a measure of success; and the essential structure and laws of this world, philosophy can discover and formulate beyond all preadventure. It is a world of order and subject to the categories of substance and causality, in short, a world which philosophy can prove, is necessarily possessed of the essential nature and which Newton and his fellow-scientists, in their empirical explanation of its specific character, must and do assume it to have this essential nature.

It is here that Kant, thus far the defender of Newtonian science, limits its scope in the interest of morality and religion. Only an unjustifiable materialistic dogmatism will have the temerity to assert that this phenomenal world of ours is the whole reality. With-

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1. *KrV*, A 42/B 60, p. 106-7; *First Critique*, p. 82.

2. *KrV*, A 70/B 95, p. 140-1 and A 80/B 106, p. 150-1; *First Critique*, p. 106-7 and 113-4.

3. *KrV*, A 248-9, p. 334-5; *ue*, p. 265-6.



out denying objective reality of this world, Kant yet insists upon the possibility, suggested to us by our reason, of an ultimate or "Noumenal" reality, so constituted that moral men cannot apprehend it through sensuous intuition or even grasp its essential structure through reason.

The "Transcendental Dialectic" of the *Critique of Pure Reason* offers, accordingly, a criticism of the complacent theorems of Wolff's transcendental doctrine of the soul (rational psychology), transcendental science of the world (rational cosmology) and transcendental knowledge of God (rational or natural theology), all of which according to Kant, lead us to respectively paralogisms, antinomies and ideals of pure reason.<sup>4</sup> It is these that I shall discuss briefly in this context.

### 1. Paralogisms of pure reason

Kant considers first the claims of rational psychology. Relying solely upon an analysis of the formal judgment "I think", Wolff, following Cartesian lines, had claimed that the soul, as the thinking "I" was a simple, numerically identical substance, ultimately distinguishable from things and capable of individual existence.<sup>5</sup> Kant replies that this conclusion is arrived at by means of a fallacious argument, for the unity of self consciousness, which conditions all perceptual experience, in no way proves the absolute noumenal unity or immortality of the self.

For Kant, the ego as a necessary condition of experience is not given in experience; it is a transcendental ego, not the empirical ego. Hence, while it is psychologically possible to think of it as a unitary substance, the application of categories such as substance and unity cannot yield knowledge in this context. For, this cognitive function lies in their application to phenomena, not to noumena.<sup>6</sup> We can argue that the transcendental ego, as a logical subject, is a necessary condition of experience, but we cannot argue to the existence of the transcendental ego as a substance. For this involves a misuse of categories such as existence, substance and unity. Scientific knowledge is bounded by the world of phenomena; but the transcendental ego does not belong to that world; it is thus a limiting concept.

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4. *KrV*, A 333-5/B 391-2, p. 412-3; *First Critique*, p. 322-3.

5. *KrV*, A 343/B 401, p. 421-2; *First Critique*, p. 329-330.

6. *KrV*, B 409, 410, 412, p. 429, 431-2; *First Critique*, p. 370-1.

Thus Kant might say with Ludwig Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus-Logico Philosophicus* that "the subject does not belong to the world but it is a limit of the world".<sup>7</sup> The conclusions of rational psychology are therefore wholly unreliable, yielding no knowledge of the final nature, origin, or destiny of the soul.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. Antinomies of pure reason

In the chapter on the Antinomies, Kant deals with the conclusions of the speculative cosmology. According to Kant, the speculative cosmology centers round the idea of the world as the totality of the causal sequence of phenomena. The speculative cosmologist seeks to extend our knowledge of the world, as a totality of phenomena, through synthetic a priori propositions. But this procedure, Kant maintains, leads to antinomies. An antinomy arises when each side of the two contradictory propositions can be proved. And if speculative cosmology inevitably leads to antinomies in this sense, the conclusion must be drawn that its whole aim is mistaken, namely the aim of building up a science of the world considered as the totality of phenomena. In other words, the fact that speculative cosmology is the product of antinomies shows that we cannot make scientific use of the transcendental idea of the world as the totality of phenomena.<sup>9</sup>

Kant's solution of these antinomies rests on his distinction between the phenomenal world, or "world of appearance," and a possible noumenal world of ultimate reality. May not **both** the thesis and the antithesis be true, he asks, the antitheses, if taken to apply solely to phenomena and the theses as applying to the noumenal world? The notion of transcendental freedom, as the law of the noumenal world, would thus in a way contradict the empirical law of causality, which is thus left to reign supreme over the world of nature; and the apparent infinity of the causal series would no longer make impossible the notion of an unconditioned Being as the underlying and sustaining ground of the causal world as a whole. In a word, Kant proposes completely to separate science and religion by restricting them to distinct realms.

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7. Max Black, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's "Tractatus"*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1966, p. 308; see *Tractatus*, 5. 631-2.

8. *KrV*, B 427-8, p. 443-4; *First Critique*, p. 380-1.

9. Copleston, *Op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 212, 216. For the theses and the antitheses in the antinomy, see *KrV*, A 466/B 494, p. 511-12; *First Critique*, p. 424.

### 3. Ideals of pure reason

Kant next proceeds to disprove the conclusions of natural theology as ideals of pure reason by exposing the fallacies of the three traditional proofs of God's existence. Kant states that in the ontological argument, the mind possesses the concept of an **ens realissimum**, a Being which contains all reality in it self. Since non-existence is the negation of reality, the **ens realissimum** or God, exists.<sup>10</sup> The cosmological argument moves in a direction opposite to that of the ontological argument, and may be analyzed into two distinct stages. The first affirms that if anything contingent exists, there must exist a necessary and unconditioned Being as its cause<sup>11</sup>; the second, that since experience can tell us nothing of the nature of such a Being, we must rely on an a priori concept to supply this information. These compel us to identify this necessary Being with the **ens realissimum**, for it alone contains all the conditions of its existence within itself.<sup>12</sup>

Kant rejects both these proofs as fallacious. The ontological argument he condemns on three separate counts, and the first stage of the cosmological on three more. The second stage of the cosmological argument, moreover, rests on the ontological, and since the latter has been proved invalid, the cosmological argument is still further weakened by its reliance upon it. We may note in passing that one of his objections to the third, or teleological proof, is that it, in turn, is based on the cosmological, which, as he has shown, rests on the ontological proof. The errors of both of the previous arguments are thus inherited by the teleological argument, which, in Kant's opinion, is already invalidated by various errors of its own.

In the physicotheological proof as based on the regularity of nature, which is thought to be a fact, we find that the processes of nature are directed toward ends; and thus they are instrumental. They are as they are because only thereby can nature's various ends be reached. Such regularity and purposefulness can only be the result of an intelligence that exists outside of nature. We conclude, therefore, that the course of nature, which is so regular and purposeful, is due to an Almighty, All-knowing, and necessarily existing Being. But even if we admit that the processes of nature proceed purposefully, this does not entitle us, Kant maintains, to argue to a creator of the world but at most to a cosmic master builder.

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10. *KrV*, A 596-7/B 624-5, p. 631-33; *First Critique*, p. 503-4.

11. *KrV*, B 632-3, p. 639; *First Critique*, p. 508-9.

12. *KrV*, A 605-6/633-4, p. 639-640; *First Critique*, p. 508-9.

With respect to the properties that such a world builder must possess, we are only entitled to conclude that he must be wise and mighty, not that he is All-wise and Almighty.<sup>13</sup> The leap from being wise and mighty to being All-wise and Almighty - i.e., to Being perfect,<sup>14</sup> or, to Being *ens realissimum* - the physicotheological proof cannot justify. The leap presupposes the cosmological and therefore also the ontological proofs. And since the ontological proofs depends upon a logical error, it follows that none of the three proofs of the existence of God is valid. It is impossible by means of reason to prove God's existence, but it is also, according to Kant, impossible to refute it.

It has become clear, then, that for Kant, before starting to formulate his conception of ethics, he has to pass the difficult task of analyzing critically the nature of human knowledge. He has two crucial steps in doing so. The first, is expressed in his *Transcendental Aesthetic* and the second is expounded in the *Transcendental Analytic*. These two steps lead him to enter into the realm of *Transcendental Dialectic* where he finds the problem of the Paralogism, the Antinomies and the Ideals of Pure Reason, as I have just outlined.

The aim of Kant's *Kritik* is, therefore, to refuse the doctrine of dogmatic-speculative metaphysics. Beside that fundamental aim, there is another important basic understanding which is laid down in the midst of his difficult work to refute the dogmatic metaphysics. He strongly emphasizes the idea of a 'constitutive use' of mind as I have hinted in Chapter I.<sup>15</sup> Although Kant staunchly refuses the rational-speculative metaphysics, he has a clear fundamental idea concerning the mechanism or the fundamental process carried out by our mind in its effort to obtain the 'knowledge' in general.

To defend the possibility of human knowledge in the phenomenal world, which is globally composed from a mutual cooperation between the forms of 'intuition' and the forms of 'understanding', is something inevitable in Kant's architectonic scheme. I believe that this point of understanding is very decisive to see its further implication in Kant's own methodology in the *first* and the *second Critique* as well. This important aspect will also give us a clue to have a better understanding of the point of differences between the type of thought that Ghazali and Kant initially advocate.

All I want to underline here, in its primary connection with the study of Ghazali's conception of ethics, is that Kant cannot enter into the problem of ethics without passing through the gate of metaphysics. It is difficult to understand Kant's conception of ethics

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13. *KrV*, a 628/B 656, p. 659-60; *First Critique*, p. 523.

14. *KrV*, A 623/B 651, p. 655-56; *First Critique*, p. 519-20.

15. See Chapter I, p. 25.

without having a basis of knowledge of his idea of metaphysics.<sup>16</sup> His critique of a speculative-metaphysics is the foundation stone to construct his theory of practical philosophy, viz., ethics.

These steps-more or less-are also taken by Ghazali, although not so sophisticated as done by Kant. When we carefully study his autobiography, *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*, we can find a similar line of approach in the problem of metaphysics in its relationship to ethics. If I claim that there are similarities, I do not claim that they are both similar in their every details. I think we do justice to say that they are similar in regarding the necessity of refusing the speculative metaphysics, in order to pave the way for constructing their theory of practical philosophy. Although, they have palpable similarities in this point, they have a great difference in their 'methodology' in refusing metaphysics. Due to this difference in methodology, the result of their conception of ethics is totally different from each other.

In the immediate discussion, firstly, I will explain the basic formulation of Ghazali's idea. Since Ghazali is not so well known as Kant is, I shall expose his idea in opposing a rational metaphysics in a bit detail. Then, I will enter into the important topic where Ghazali and Kant have a clear different 'route' to reach the similar aim.

### **B.Ghazali's critique of Islamic Aristotelianism.**

Ghazali's critique of metaphysics actually involves his critique of Islamic Aristotelianism which develops a rational theology based on Aristotle's metaphysics. As this theology is rational, one of the basic assumptions is that human reason is capable of solving most of the theological problems. It is actually this assumption that Ghazali is trying to refute; and this refutation, as it were, involves proving rationally their falsehood. If this can be shown then we cannot trust the human mind in this endeavour; and in turn we must reject rational metaphysics and appeal to the Revelation for such knowledge.

Islamic Aristotelianism is well formulated by Farabi and Avicenna. For the sake of illustration of their basic idea we shall explain in brief their basic idea of emanative-metaphysics which lead them to have the idea of eternity of the world.

1. Avicenna's conception of 'necessity' and its relation to his rational emanative-metaphysics.

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16. Lewis White Beck, *A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1960, pp. 23-38, especially p. 12.



Farabi and Avicenna construct the main framework of the philosophical analysis of God and the world which ran into so much theological opposition. They start out by claiming that God is the only uncaused thing in the universe.<sup>17</sup> Everything other than God in the universe is brought about by some cause external to itself. One of the ways in which they distinguish between things that exist is to talk about entities which have existence as part of their essence and those which do not. Something which can only exist if it is brought into existence by something else is clearly contingent and dependent upon something else.<sup>18</sup> Avicenna adds: "The necessary being is that which, if assumed not to exist, leads to a contradiction".<sup>19</sup> This distinction between necessity and contingency is designed to contrast God, the creator of everything in the world, with what He has created.

But we should be careful about accepting this suggestion. For Avicenna immediately complicates his initial distinction between contingency and necessity to talk about two types of necessity. The first type, which we have already examined, is where "a contradiction is involved if it is assumed to be non-existent". If we assume, for the sake of the argument, that God does not exist, then we are involved in a contradiction, since existence is so much a part of definition or meaning of God that denying his existence is rather like questioning whether a rectangle has four sides. Nothing is a rectangle if it does not have four sides: similarly, nothing is God if it does not exist. Avicenna's second type of necessity is more complicated. Something "is necessary, provided a certain entity other than it is given ... while considered in its essence it is possible, considered in actual relation to that other being, it is necessary, and without the relation to that other being, it is impossible."<sup>20</sup> Avicenna is talking here about a type of being which relies upon something else to bring it into existence, but given that cause, it exists necessarily. This is an unusual distinction to make. The standard approach would be to distinguish possible beings which can, but do not, exist; and possible beings which can, and do, exist; and necessary being is that which cannot not exist by contrast with both types of possible beings. Avicenna is not

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17. If we carefully examine the *falasifa's* argument from Kantian perspective, it is clear that this type of argument is a kind of antinomy in which the thesis and the antithesis cannot be proved satisfactorily. Cf. *KrV*, A 516-527/B 544-555, p. 558-569; *First Critique*, p. 454-461.

18. Farabi, *Philosophische Abhandlungen*, ed. F. Dieterici, Brill, Leiden, 1890, p. 67, but infact by Avicenna.

19. Ibn Sina, *Kitab al-Najāt*, ed. M. Kurdi, Saadah Press, Cairo, 1938, p. 224; Cf. Leaman, *Op. cit.* p. 28.

20. *Loq. cit.*

interested in the standard approach at all. He argues that a possible being is only possible if it **must** exist, while accepting of course its contingency upon the causal power of something else. He claims that those things which are necessary through the influence of something else are exactly what he means by the things which are possible in themselves. This complicated logical division of the meaning of necessity has a close relationship with Avicenna's theory of emanation.

The connection between the doctrine of necessity and the model of the creation of the world takes a particular form in Avicenna, one which originally stems from Plotinus.<sup>21</sup> The notion of creation as emanation is not always described in the same way by Avicenna, but it is possible on the whole to give an account of its essential features. The first emanation from the existence of the First Principle (**al-mabda' al-awwal**), the Necessary Being (**al-wājib al wujūd**) ,i.e. God, is the **First Intelligence (al-'aql al-awwal)** which is numerically one. Its existence is possible in itself and necessary through the First Principle; further, it knows its own essence as well as the essence of the First Principle. From its two-fold existence and two-fold knowledge springs a multiplicity of knowledge and existence. The First Intelligence in fact, has three kinds of knowledge: of the First principle, of its own essence in so far as it is necessary, and of its possible being. Thus, from the three kinds of knowledge possessed by the First Intelligence emanates three beings, but only one from each kind. As it knows its principle there proceeds from it a **Second Intelligence** ; as it knows its essence there proceeds from it the first soul of the highest sphere (which is the ninth heaven); and as it knows itself as possible in itself there proceeds from it the body of that sphere. In a similar fashion from the Second Intelligence emanates the **Third Intelligence**, the soul of the stellar sphere and the body of that sphere. From the Third Intelligence emanates the **Fourth**, the soul of the sphere of Saturn and the body of that sphere. So, starting from the First Principle the emanations proceed until the last or the **Tenth Intelligence** appears and with last sphere of the moon and its soul. The Tenth Intelligence, also called the **Active Intellect (al-'aql al-fa''al)**, acts in our world. As the Active Intellect is the producer of matter, so it is the dispenser of form, **dator formarum, (wāhib al-suwar)**. It gives to each matter its proper form and it also gives each body a soul (which in fact is its form) when that body is ready to receive it. Thus, Active Intellect is also the source of the existence of the human souls. This is a brief description of the emanationistic world-view so enthusiastically elaborated by the **falasifa**, by Avicenna, for example, in his major works on philosophy, viz. *Kitāb al-Shifā'* and *Kitāb al-Najāf* and by Farabi in his *al-Madīnah al-Fādilah*.<sup>22</sup>

21. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrine*, The Blenknep Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1964, p. 203-4.

22. Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-Shifā'*: "Metaphysics", Section IX, Chapter 6 and *Kitāb al-Najāf*, p. 448, also Cf. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Op. cit.* p. 202-214. For Farabi, see Abu Nasr al-Farabi *Mabadi' Ara' Ahl-Madināh al-Fādilah*, (Al-Farabi on the Perfect State), translated by Richard Walzer, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1985, pp. 57-101 and 101-163.

## 2. Ghazali's response.

In *Munqidh*, Ghazali clearly states that it is those metaphysical doctrines of the **falasifa** which are erroneous. He thus argues:

It is in *the metaphysical sciences* that most of the philosophers' errors are found. Owing to the fact that they could not carry out apodeictic demonstration according to the conditions they had postulated in logic, they differed a great deal about metaphysical questions. Aristotle's doctrine on these matters, as transmitted by al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, approximates the teachings of the Islamic philosophers.<sup>23</sup>

Ghazali's detail explanation of this problem is written in *Tahafut*. The problem which Ghazali considers the most important is that of the eternity (**qidam**) of the world to which he allots the greatest space, almost a quarter of the *Tahafut*. The orthodox could not possibly concede the **falasifa's** claim of the eternity of the world, since they hold that there is nothing eternal but God; all else is created (**hādith**). To make everything co-eternal with God is to violate the strict principle of monotheism, for that infringes the absoluteness and infinity of God. The **falasifa** like Farabi and Avicenna, as Muslims, did not deny that God is an eternal creator of the universe, but as true Aristotelians believed that God's activity consists merely in bringing forth in the state of actuality the virtual possibilities inherent in the prime matter which was alleged to be co-eternal with Him. This was in conformity with the Aristotelian notion of change not as a passage from non-being into being, which would make it unintelligible, but as a process by which what is merely 'potential being' passes over, through 'form' into 'actual being'. So God as an eternal creator constantly combines matter with new forms; He did not create the universe out of sheer nothingness at a definite time in the past. As a corollary they believed in the eternity of time.

Ghazali, on the other hand, in accordance with the obvious teachings of the **Qur'an**, firmly holds the position that the world was created by God out of absolute nothingness,<sup>24</sup> at a certain moment in the past which is at a finite interval from the present. He created not only forms but also matter and time along with them which had a definite beginning and hence is finite. Ghazali's quarrel with the **falasifa** is because many of their particular arguments are logically false and the various positions that they take in their system as a whole are inconsistent with one another, but, above all, because some of their basic assumptions are unfounded. These assumptions, Ghazali proves most powerfully, can neither be demonstrated logically, nor are they self-evident through 'intuition'. Such,

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23. *Munqidh*, p. 16; W., p. 37; Mc, p. 76.

24. A.J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1955, II, 117; XXX, 27 and XXXV, 1.



for example, is the assumption that every event has a cause or that causes produce their effects necessarily.<sup>25</sup> The *falasifa* have accepted these assumptions merely in the dogmatic tradition of Aristotelian philosophy.

Those few observations with regard to Ghazali's method in *Tahafut* are necessary before we enter into the rigorous argument which he gives in the refutation of the *falasi-fa*'s various positions.

a. The eternity of the world.

Ghazali declines to subscribe to any one of the assumptions as stated by the *falasifa* and shows that belief in the origination of the world from the eternal will of God at a specific moment of time as chosen by Him involves no violation of the fundamental principles of logic. The assumptions of the *falasifa* that every effect has a cause and that a cause is force external to its effect, do not have a logical coerciveness about them. It is quite legitimate to believe that God's will does have a cause or at least that this cause does not lie outside His will but in itself. Similarly, it is not logically necessary that effect should follow a cause immediately, for it is not logically contradictory to hold the notion of 'delayed effect'. It is possible to think that God's will is eternal and yet an object of that will has occurred at some period in time. Here a distinction should be made between the eternity of God's will and the eternity of the object of His will. God, for example, can eternally will that Socrates and Plato should be born at such and such a time and that the one should be born before the other. Hence it is not logically illegitimate to affirm the orthodox belief that God eternally willed that the world should come into being at such and such a definite moment in time.<sup>26</sup>

Ghazali's real standpoint, however, is that God just arbitrarily chooses one particular moment rather than another for world's coming into being. We need to ask no more

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25. Many observers critically discuss Ghazali's thought on the problem of causality. Michael E. Marmura in his article "The Logical role of the argument from time in the *Tahafut*'s second proof for the world's pre-eternity", *The Muslim World*, XLIX, 1959, p. 314, concludes that 'the central metaphysical issue is the nature of God's causality that is the fundamental issue in conflict between the philosophers and the Ash'arites'. The same author concludes in his article "Ghazali and Demonstrative Science", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, III, 1965, p. 193, that 'We find difficulties, not only in ascertaining Ghazali's exact position on human knowledge, but also difficulties that seem inherent to his position, however it is interpreted'. Majid Fakhry, on the other hand, in his book *Islamic Occasionalism*, George Allen & Unwin LTD, London, 1958, p. 67, says: 'For if we let the notion of a necessary causal sequence drop and refer all operation of caprice of the creator, then, knowledge would lose all its stringency and the configurations of things would be shorn of any recognizable nature'. The same discontent is also clearly expressed by Fazlur Rahman in his *Islam and Modernity*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1984, p. 3, 27 and 152. Due to this complexity, I shall discuss this problem separately in the following subchapter.

26. *Tahafut*, p. 57, 81; SAK, pp. 25, 54.

about this choice, for God's will is completely undetermined. His will does not depend upon distinctions in the outside world, for it is itself the producer of all the distinctions therein. God chooses a particular moment for the creation of the universe. There is no way to explain God's choice in either of the cases.<sup>27</sup>

b. Theory of emanation.

The entire argument of the *falasifa* with regard to the eternity of the world is, thus, full of contradictions and unproved assumptions, but the most manifest of their inconsistencies and the sheer baselessness of their assumptions become signally conspicuous when they come to explain the origination of the world from the being of God in terms of the Plotinian Theory of Emanation. Plotinus considers the world to be a necessary outflow from the being of God, like that of light from the sun.

Ghazali's criticism of the emanationistic argument consists in showing, on the one hand, that it fails to account for the multiplicity and composition in the universe and, on the other, that it does not at all succeed in safeguarding the absolute unity of God. If the glibly repeated formula that "from one only one proceeds", should be observed strictly logically, then all the beings in the world would be units, each of which would be an effect of some other unit above it, as it would be the cause of some other unit below it in a linear fashion. But in fact this is not the case. Every object, according to the *falasifa* themselves, is composed at least of form and matter. How does a composite thing such as a body then come into existence? Does it have only one cause? If the answer is in the affirmative, then the assertion that only one proceeds from one becomes null and void. If, on the other hand, a composite thing has a composite cause, then the same question will be repeated in the case of this cause so on and so forth till one arrives at a point where the compound necessarily meets the simple. This contact between the compound effect and the unitary cause wherever it occurs would therefore falsify that principle. Strictly speaking, all the existents in the universe are characterized by composition and only the First Principle, i.e. God, alone can be said to possess true simplicity or unity, for in Him alone there is the complete identity of essence and existence. This would lead us necessarily to the conclusion that either the principle of "only one from one" fails to account for the composition and multiplicity which as apparent in the universe or that even God does not possess genuine unity.<sup>28</sup> All of the *falasifa*'s premises related to their theory of ema-

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27. *Ibid.* p. 60-2; SAK, pp. 29-31.

28. For further detail of the argument see, *Tahafut*, p. 104-9; SAK, pp. 83-86.

nation are criticized by Ghazali without any exception. In our modern period such a similar refutation is carried out by F.R. Tennant.<sup>29</sup>

In short, using the 'reason' in the domain of metaphysics is inadequate and erroneous. We can follow easily from Ghazali's argument that reason alone is incapable of solving those perennial problems of philosophy. Due to this initial consideration, Ghazali finally depends only on 'revelation' to obtain the knowledge of metaphysics.

We do not doubt the validity and the accuracy of Ghazali's argument in underlying the limits and the inadequacy of human reason to solve the theological and philosophical problems. But understanding Ghazali's blueprint, especially in its comparison with Kant's thought, we cannot easily grasp Ghazali's real contribution towards the establishing of a basic theory concerning the problem of how we can actually formulate the mechanism and the minimum use of human mind to obtain the knowledge in general, not to say merely focused on the possibility of having knowledge of metaphysics based on revelation.

The most striking feature of Ghazali's conception in refusing the rational metaphysics is his accentuation on the incapability of human reason to accurately grasp and to satisfactorily solve the metaphysical and theological problems. Another stress is attached to the reality of a 'willing' God, namely, God as a 'willing' agent. Ghazali rarely, if not never, talks about the possibility of 'willing' human subjects to build the body of knowledge in order to understand the natural, human and social phenomena. We will see later the reason why he does so, especially when we come to discuss his mystical ethics.

In Kant's case, while he vehemently refusing the doctrine of rational-speculative metaphysics, his idea of a 'constitutive use' of our mind still lurks behind by which he is able of easily formulate the real role and the clear function of human subject in understanding the phenomenal world. Ghazali, on the other hand, in his severe refutation of rational-emanative metaphysics, does not inherit a constructive body of conception concerning the real use of our mind in its appropriate and proper place to grasp the phenomenal world. It is obvious, that this different point of understanding will have a great impact in constructing their methodological approach to the ethical thought.

### C. Causality as related to the ethical problems.

As I have stated above, there is a palpable similarity between Ghazali and Kant in their 'main route' to ethics. They begin with a critique of metaphysics, then try to arrive at

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29. F.R. Tennant, *Philosophical Theology*, Vol. II, Cambridge University Press, Second Edition, London, 1968, p. 125.

a theory of ethics. Since in the next chapter, I shall elucidate the major outline of Ghazali's and Kant's theory of ethics, in this context I would like to evaluate the foundation of Ghazali's and Kant's theory of ethics.

Although Ghazali and Kant come to the same point that dogmatic metaphysics - whether it is speculative or emanative - has to be refused, since it cannot guide human beings to reach adequately the knowledge of God and immortality, yet the methodology used by Kant and Ghazali is completely different. The aim of both thinkers might be the same, but the 'route' that brings them to reach that aim is totally different. Kant uses what I shall call the "**Analytical Method**" while Ghazali uses what I shall term below the "**Hypothetical Method**".<sup>30</sup> Due to this difference in the methodological approach, one can notice easily that Ghazali and Kant have a great difference in formulating their conception of the idea of causality. It will be clear from the following discussion, that the problem of causality has a close relationship with the problem of ethics in both thinkers.<sup>31</sup> I would like to take this problem as the first issue to examine the crucial differences between both thinkers. This is actually my alleged hypothesis that still needs a further, careful examination stated in my Introduction that the difference of intellectual conception concerning the problem of causality would lead to the accumulation of differences of the system of thought between the two thinkers and cultures.

I presuppose that the discourse of the problem of causality is the "foundation stone" of Ghazali's and Kant's theory of ethics, since based on this foundation Ghazali and Kant will construct their ethical theory. If we trace back carefully the essence of the problem of causality, we will find that its essence is emphasized in the "idea of law". What I mean by the idea of law is the principle of determinacy or of lawful production. Mario Bunge states on this specific issue:

The principle of determinacy just states that reality is not a chaotic aggregate of isolated, unconditioned, arbitrary events that pop up here and there without connection with anything else; it states that events are produced and conditioned in definite ways, though *not necessarily in a causal manner*; and it asserts that things, their properties and the changes of properties exhibit intrinsic pattern that are invariant in some respect.<sup>32</sup>

In this notion of the principle of determinacy wherein involves the idea of law, both thinkers have great differences. Ghazali, owing to his initial suspicion to the *falasifa*

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30. I shall discuss this different methodology in detail in Chapter IV.

31. For Ghazali's case Cf. Leaman, *Op. cit.* 131-4.

32. Mario Bunge, *Causality*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1959, p. 351. My italic.

since *falasifa* themselves go too far in their conception of 'necessity' which metaphysically involves the idea of eternity of the world, enthusiastically denies their idea of causality without any exception.<sup>33</sup>

On this point Kant has a different conception. His analysis of the nature of human knowledge, particularly, in his discussion of Transcendental Analytic, to some extent, he can safely take the benefit of the "idea of law" strictly enclosed in the idea of causality. His notion of the idea of necessity and the idea of universality embedded in a priori knowledge of human understanding does not bring him into the admission of the eternity of the world. In another term, his acknowledgment concerning the idea of law embedded in the causality does not sacrifice his notion of God and the free-will or the freedom of human beings. Without bringing any internal contradiction, Kant's emphasis on the idea of causality can be broadened into his division of the idea of law into two kinds: the idea of law in nature and the idea of law in human morality. Based on this notion, his ethical thought will be constructed.

Ghazali, on the other hand, is confronted with the great difficulty on this problem. When Ghazali refuses the idea of 'necessity' without any exception, he falls unconsciously into the extreme opposite direction. The notion of law which is involved in the idea of 'necessity' is automatically refused too. We can fully understand the severe critique launched by Ghazali on this point, namely his critique to the emanative-metaphysics wherein the idea of causality is involved. But critically we have to note, too, that this refutation seems to have a bitter side effect. Consciously or unconsciously, this total refutation brings us into the difficulty of grasping "the idea of law" lurks behind this alleged term of 'necessity'. It cannot be denied that Ghazali's refutation of the idea of causality will have a great effect on his construction of ethical thought. Due to those considerations, it is worthwhile to examine how Ghazali and Kant understand the idea of causality since it has a strong relationship with Kant's rational ethics and Ghazali's religious ethics.

#### 1. Ghazali's attitude to the philosophical accounts of causality.

Causation, as a philosophical problem, must be handled in two different senses; for it has two clearly distinct areas or scopes of application, at least in so far as our philosophers are concerned in this context: The first area where it is commonly held to be in operation is the physical world, or nature. We shall distinguish this kind of causation as "natural causality", which can also be entitled "metaphysical causation", since theories attempting to elucidate it are usually of this nature. The second area where causation

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33. See footnote 25 of this Chapter, p. 35



is supposed to be operative is human behaviour. In order to distinguish this from the former, I shall refer to it as "**moral causality**" or with other similar terminology since it is mainly related in this scope to the moral conduct.

I shall not try to demonstrate and justify my distinction of causality into two different scopes, because this is actually the procedure of our philosophers in question; and as we shall see in due course, their justification for this distinction, which is a common ground of their ethics, and as such it must be pinpointed as another clear similarity between them. What we are concerned with here is that we must examine their theory of causality with a view to this distinction. In that case, we begin examining Ghazali's theory first in the area of nature, then in the scope of human moral conduct.

#### a. Causality in nature.

Ghazali's desire to vindicate the truth of the religious position led him to make highly critical and acute analysis, which bears a strikingly close similarity to that of Hume's<sup>34</sup>, brings out clearly the most remarkable originality of his thought. The problem that engaged him at the outset of his inquiry with regard to the seventeenth disputation in the *Tahafut* is the problem of the alleged necessity of the causal connection as maintained and insisted on by the *falasifa*. In our view, he asserts, "the connection between what are believed to be cause and effect is not necessary. " The reason that he offers for the justification of his position is that the relation between cause and effect is not logical entailment. The affirmation of the one does not imply the affirmation of the other, nor does the denial of the one imply the denial of the other. The relation between quenching of thirst and drinking, satiety and eating, burning and fire or light and sunrise, etc., is not necessary relation, for in no case does the one term logically implies the other. There is nothing logically contradictory in assuming that fire may not burn, and drinking may not quench thirst, and so on.

The alleged necessity of the causal connection is not logically warranted because through no amount of logical reasoning can we deduce the effect from the cause. At best it is based on observation or experience. We observe that objects succeed one another or that similar objects are constantly conjoined. Now, this proves succession, not causation, or conjunction, not connection. The fire which is an inanimate object has no power to produce the effect of burning; "observation shows only that one is with the other and not that it is **by** it, "i.e. the effect happens **with** the cause and not through it (*indahu la bihi*).<sup>35</sup>

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34. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book I, Part iii, J.M. Dent . Sons LTD, New York, 1961.

35. *Tahafut*, p. 196; SAK, p. 186.



The notion of necessity is valid only in the case of logical relation such as identity, implication, disjunction, etc. In the sphere of mere natural relation necessity has no scope. In the order of nature, unlike the order of thought, we deal merely with the contingent and alogical entities which remain unrelated to each other except in the minds of the perceiver. The relation between fire and burning is not a necessary relation, for it does not belong to the realm of necessity but to that of possibility such as may happen or may not happen depending on the will of God.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, just as Kant conceives necessity to be a pure concept of the understanding, Ghazali also think that this is only a mental notion, without calling it "an apriori concept".

Thus, if there is any semblance of necessity in the order of natural relations such as that of cause and effect, it is merely because the two terms which in nature remain extrinsic to each other, through constant repetition become conjoined in our consciousness. Causal necessity is just the habit of our mind: it is merely a psychological necessity and not a logical necessity. The psychological necessity differs from logical necessity in that its denial like the latter does not involve a logical impossibility. Hence the miracles, such as the fire not burning the body of Abraham when he was thrown into it, are not impossible to think. Ghazali insists that the denial of miracles can be justified only when it should be proved that they are logically impossible.

The only will is the absolutely free-will of God which works unconstrained by any extraneous law or incumbency except the self-imposed law of contradiction. Thus, the things to which God's power extends include mysterious and wonderful facts such as "elude the discernment of human sensibility." Indeed, God's power extends to all kinds of logical possibilities such as turning of a rod into a serpent, or the revivification of the dead.<sup>37</sup> To deny them is both illogical and irreligious. Nature, however, seems to be endowed with a causal nexus, only because as a rule God does not choose to interrupt the continuity of events by a miracle; it is possible, however, that He might intervene at any moment that He deems fit. Such a standpoint may make one sceptical of the phenomena of nature, but it may equally lead one to an acute mystical sense of the presence of God to all things.

#### b. Causality in morality.

There is a close resemblance between Ghazali's basic idea in his denial of 'causality' in nature and in morality. In both realms, God's sovereignty and His absolute authority

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36. *Ibid.* p. 198-9; SAK, pp. 188-9.

37. Qur'an XIII, 5; XVI, 38; XVII, 49-51, 98, 99.

is much more emphasized by Ghazali than the notion of the 'possibility' of human being to grasp God's work through 'causality' and human 'initiative' to acquire the ultimate virtues. But this counterposes human will in relation to God's will in the sphere of human conduct. It is this problem that I shall discuss.

According to Ghazali, the end of man as an individual is the attainment of happiness, and happiness is to be found overwhelmingly in the next life. The primary means to the end are of two kinds: external acts of obedience to the rules of conduct, revealed in scripture and internal cultivation of the virtues of soul. External acts are helpful both because obedience is rewarded directly for its own sake and because these acts contribute towards the acquisition of virtue. But the inner state of the heart is more important than any external acts in the eyes of God and more conducive to Reward. The virtues form a scale with levels, and at the highest point of the mystical virtues a few people can enjoy in this life a foretaste of the happiness of the hereafter.<sup>38</sup> None of the relations just described is causal. Acts do not cause virtues. Acts do not cause rewards in the next life. And even virtues do not cause rewards, as they do in Avicenna's eschatology. In all cases the rewards or the moral progress are bestowed by God through His grace. Here once again, God is the only cause and He is under no necessity, as we have seen above.

Ghazali discusses this question in terms of choice between two large sources, which between them cover all alternatives: independent reason and revelation. By independent reason we mean precisely any reasoning that proceeds without any help from revelation. This is what we call simply *aql* or 'reason'. It is contrasted with *naql* or 'tradition' which covers revelation in its direct and derivative forms, also with *shar'*, scriptural texts and traditions viewed as sources for *ahkām*. The main drive of Ghazali's ethical theory of knowledge can be stated in two short sentences: Ethical knowledge is not derivable from independent reason; it is derivable entirely from revelation. The denial that ethical rules can be known by independent reason is made repeatedly by Ghazali.<sup>39</sup>

Ghazali denies the necessity of the law of causality in nature and in human action, which is actually, in some degree, can be relatively grasped by our human reason. Ghazali's denial seems to be based on his exaggerated worry about the consequences of the act of accepting this law of causality. According to him, the acceptance of the law of causality in nature or in morality will entail the denial of God's omnipotence. Historically, this exaggerated worry is caused by the *falasifa's* notion which actually leads us to have the thought that contradicts to the religious and Qur'anic principles.

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38. Sherif, *Op. cit.*, p. 86-91 and 103-4.

39. George F. Hourani, *Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics*, Cambridge University Press Cambridge, 1985, p. 151.

Does discovering and formulating the law of causality by our human mind imply the denying of God's omnipotence? From a philosophical point of view, this alleged idea has to be under a serious scrutiny, which will be dealt with in greater detail. For this purpose, let us see how Kant argues on the problem of causality in its connection with the nature and morality.

## 2. Kant's approach to the causality.

We have examined Ghazali's conception of causality in both realms as natural and moral causality. That Kant also maintains this distinction shall become clear in the following pages. Since we find the same distinction in Kant's treatment of causality I shall examine it in the same way I examined Ghazali's theory of causality. Hence causality in nature and in morality shall determine our treatment of Kant's approach to causality.

### a. Causality in nature

#### 1. The root of Kant's notion of the principle of causality.

In the Second Analogy of experience, Kant attempts to prove the principle of causality, and it is therefore in this analogy that he thinks that he has refuted Hume. What has to be proved Kant formulates as follows: "All changes take place in conformity with the law of connection of cause and effect".<sup>40</sup> Or as it is expressed in the first edition: "Everything which happens (begins to happen) presupposes something which it follows in accordance with a rule."<sup>41</sup>

Suppose that I look at a house. I begin by looking at the chimney and the roof, and thereafter let my gaze slip down to the house's lowest story. The visual impressions come in definite sequence. Had I begun by looking at the first floor and thereafter letting my gaze travel upward, the visual impressions would have come in the reverse sequence. The order of my sense impressions depends upon the order in which I choose to look at the house. The order is not objectively but subjectively determined. Expressed in another way, the sequence of visual impression does not indicate that something has happened to the house; it does not point to the occurrence or an event. From the fact that I first have the visual impressions A and afterwards the impression B, I cannot conclude that an event took place, namely the event A-B.

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40. *KrV*, A 188-9/B 232, p. 267-8. *First Critique*, p. 217-8.

41. *KrV*, A 189/B 232, p. 267; *First Critique*, p. 217-8.

Suppose next that I look at a ship that is sailing down a river. First I see the ship at A and next at B. That I have the visual impressions in the sequence A-B is not something that I choose in the same way in which I can choose to have the visual impressions of the house in a certain sequence. The sequence A-B in the case of the house is subjective, but in the case of the ship sailing down the river, it is objective. There I cannot have B before I have had A. The temporal order between A and B is objective, which is to say necessary. This objective and necessary sequence is the criterion of an event. The house I look at is not an event or an occurrence; it is not something that happens. The ship sailing down the river, on the other hand, is an event; it is something that takes place. The sequence of impressions with respect to the house is subjective and reversible. The sequence of sense impressions with respect to the ship sailing on the river is objective, necessary, and irreversible. It is regular and happens according to a rule. And such regularity, such a rule, is a necessary condition for being able to distinguish a subjective sequence from an objective sequence, for being able to distinguish that which is not an event from that which is.

Without such a rule, which objectively (necessarily) determines the sequence of sense impressions, there would be no possibility of using concepts such as 'event' and 'occurrence'; and without this possibility, it would not be possible to make any objective judgment at all or to have any experience (for, as Kant thought that he had shown in the transcendental deduction, the concept 'object' or 'the objective' is a necessary condition of experience.<sup>42</sup>

It is important to emphasize that what Kant thinks to have proved here is the principle of causality and not some empirical causal law. What is the cause of what can only be decided by empirical observation. What is a priori certain is only that events take place according to a definite rule, but what that rule is in this or that situation must be determined a posteriori. If I see something happens or see that something has happened, I can know a priori that there is a cause (that there is, as Kant says, an event that has been followed according to a definite rule by the event that I have observed). But only experience can decide what this cause is.<sup>43</sup>

## 2. The role of subjective-factor in constructing the causal law.

Kant, I believe, persists in the genetic interpretation of 'transcendental synthetic' largely because it depicts causal order as stamped upon the phenomenal world by the hu-

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42. *KrV*, A 201/B 246, p. 279-80; *First critique*, p. 226-7.

43. *KrV*, A 766/B 794, p. 779-80; *First Critique*, p. 610.

man mind. One can feel him gloating over this picture when he describes the understanding as "the lawgiver" of nature"<sup>44</sup>, or compares his new mode of thought with that of Copernicus,<sup>45</sup> or condescends to Hume:

Since he could not explain... (etc. etc.) and since it never occurred to him that the understanding might itself, perhaps, through these concepts, be the author of the experience in which its objects are found... (etc. etc.).<sup>46</sup>

Kant's belief that each causal law involves necessity, seems to be nourished by his belief that the known world's order is imposed upon it by the understanding. Kant holds a view which will be familiar to readers of Popper<sup>47</sup>: rather than observing the world passively waiting for it to suggest causal laws to us, we take the offensive by formulating hypotheses which jump ahead of the data, and testing them. In a passage to this effect, Kant's main thesis is that our particular observations must be underpinned by "principles of reason", and crucially by the principle that there is a comprehensive causal order of some sort. But when he speaks of experimenting in accordance with a "previously thought-out plan", he must have in mind the testing of specific hypotheses: while the principle that there is causal order in the world does not dictate an experimental "plan", specific hypothesis may do just that. He thus argues that:

Reason has insight only into that which it produces after a plan of its own, and... it must not allow itself to be kept, as it were, in nature's leading-strings, (but must itself constrain) *nature to give answer to questions of reason's own determining*. Accidental observations, made in obedience to no previously thought-out plan, can never be made to yield a necessary law, which alone reason is concerned to discover. Reason holding in one hand its principles, according to which alone concordant appearance can be admitted as equivalent to laws, and in the other hand the experiment which it has devised in conformity with these principles, must approach nature in order to be taught by it. *It must not however, do so in the character of a pupil who listens to everything that the teacher chooses to say, but of an appointed judge who compels the witness to answer questions which he has himself formulated*<sup>48</sup>

This view about how hypothesis relates to experiment can be made to sound like the thesis that 'causal order is imposed by the understanding': for example, each might be

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44. *KrV*, A 126, p. 903-4; *First Critique*, p. 147.

45. *KrV*, B XV-XVIII, p. 27-30; *First Critique*, p. 21-3.

46. *KrV*, A 93/B 127, p. 169-70; *First Critique*, p. 127.

47. Karl R. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, Second Printing, Basic Books, INC., New York, 1961, Ch. I, especially p. 27, 32, and 47.

48. *KrV*, B XIII, p. 25-6; *First Critique*, p. 20. my italic.



expressed in the words "we bring laws to the world rather than drawing laws from it". Furthermore, each runs counter to Hume who certainly did underplay the active, hypothesis-forming aspects of scientific endeavor. The Popperian thesis concerns the making of bold conjectures and their testing by deliberate experiment; such familiar procedures are a world away from the mysterious synthesizing act postulated by the imposition doctrine.

I do not want to go into the details of the discussion concerning the different term between objective, subjective or inter-subjective as it is laid down by Karl R. Popper, since it is beyond the scope of my investigation. However, it is clear that Kant emphasizes the subject-factor in understanding and acquiring the causal law. What he means is nothing else than the fact that human beings must be active and creative to search those causal laws which are hidden behind the phenomenal world.

b. Causality in morality.

Universality is the essential characteristic of law as such. In Kantian sense, a law, in the strict sense of 'law', must hold for all cases and admit of no exceptions. A law of nature, for example, must hold of all events in time without exception. If the principle that every event must have a cause is a law of nature, then there can be no exception to it. So it is also with what Kant calls 'the law of freedom' - that is, the law in accordance with which a rational agent would act if reason had full control over his inclinations. This law of freedom, or moral law, cannot have exception without ceasing to be a law. There can not be one moral law for me and another for you. The law must be the same for all.<sup>49</sup>

In Kant's technical language, universality is the **form** of law. Whatever a law may be about - that is, what ever may be its matter- it must have the form of universality; for unless it is unversal, it is not a law at all. Laws of freedom and laws of nature, in spite of fundamental differences, share in the common form of universality.

In the discussion of freedom Kant's work is that of a pioneer. The Greeks never really came to grasp the subject and did little to carry it beyond limited questions of legal responsibility. In medieval philosophy there was a real advance, but the problem was considered in theological terms: how was human freedom to be reconciled with divine omnipotence and omniscience? Kant separated the problem of freedom from its legal and theological setting and asked simply how freedom can be compatible with the causal law which prevails throught nature, and apparently also throught human nature.

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49. *Groundwork*, p. 60-70.



Assuming that freedom, if it characterises a thing must characterize a will, Kant begins with a new definition of 'will'. Hitherto we have known 'will' as 'the power of a rational being to act in accordance with its conception of laws, i.e. in accordance with principles'<sup>50</sup>. We are now told that 'the will is a kind of causality belonging to living beings so far as they are rational'.<sup>51</sup> Will is regarded as the power of a rational being to produce effects in the phenomenal world, and primarily in the physical world. The power to act would commonly be regarded as a power to produce such effects.<sup>52</sup>

Our will, however, may also produce changes in our own mental world, the world of inner sense - as when we decide, for example, to think about a particular topic. If the will is a power to act- or to set oneself to act in accordance with one's conception of laws, willing must be a conscious, and indeed in some degree a self-conscious activity. To think of rational beings as endowed with a will is to think of them as possessing 'consciousness of their causality in regard to action'.<sup>53</sup>

The word 'causality' is commonly used by Kant in two sensens.(1) It may mean 'a power to produce effects'; and (2) it may mean 'causal action'. When he says that the will is a kind of causality, he means that it is a power to produce effects. When he speaks of an efficient cause as being 'determined to causality' by something else, <sup>54</sup> he means that it is determined to causal action - that it is itself caused to act causally. Willing may be described as causal action, but 'the will' is merely the power to act causally - that is, to produce effects.

If we conceive the will to be free, we must mean in the first place that the will is a power to produce effects without being determined - or caused - to do so by anything other than itself. Freedom is a quality belonging to a special kind of causality. Perhaps it would be simpler to say that it characterizes a special kind of causal action. It is opposed to 'natural necessity' or 'the necessity of nature', a quality characterizing all causal action in nature.<sup>55</sup>

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50. *Ibid.* p. 79-80.

51. *Ibid.* p. 114.

52. *KPV*, A. 198-200, p. 238-9; *Second Critique*, p. 115.

53. *Groundwork*, pp. 116-7.

54. *Ibid.* p. 114.

55. *Loq cit.* The word 'action' is here used widely and not restricted to distinctively human action.

What is meant by this 'necessity' which characterizes causal action in nature? Let us take a crude example. If a billiard ball strikes against a billiard ball which is at rest, it will cause the second ball to move. But the first ball does not spontaneously cause the second ball to move: it causes the second ball to move only because it was itself driven against the second ball by a billiard cue. It does produce an effect, namely, the movement of the second ball; but its causal action in so doing was itself caused by something other than itself-namely, by a blow from a cue. In Kant's more technical language its causal action was necessary - we might almost have said necessitated- and not free.

If to act is to produce effects, then all action is causal action. Hence we can omit the qualification 'causal' and say that all action in nature is necessary. In nature there is no spontaneity and no freedom. The necessity of nature is causal: it is a necessity in accordance with every event must be caused by a preceding event. If the will of a rational agent is conceived as free, this must mean that we regard his causal actions, or more precisely his volitions, as not determined causes external or alien to himself. Under external causes we must here include, not merely physical forces, but also the *sensa* given us from without, the images suggested by these *sensa*, the emotions aroused by *sensa* and images, and the desires stimulated by emotions. It must never be forgotten that on Kant's view the whole succession of events in inner sense, and in particular the succession of *sensa*, images, emotions, and desires, is as much governed by natural necessity as in the movement of stocks and stones.<sup>56</sup>

This does not mean that Kant recognises no differences between man and animals any more than it means he recognises no differences between animals and things. If we look at the question purely from a psychological point of view, animals differ from things in being moved by ideas as well as by physical forces, and men differ from animals in being moved by reason as well as by ideas of sense and imagination.

Kant based upon this distinction between natural and moral causality, goes on to qualify the freedom which is opposed to necessity as a negative concept, an Idea of reason mainly derived from reflection upon necessity itself. We may call it the 'transcendental Idea' of freedom, a purely theoretical concept not based on any moral considerations and in itself empty.<sup>57</sup> Yet if we totally reject this negative concept, it will be impossible to justify a positive concept of freedom. Kant claims to have proved in the *Kritik* not that

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56. *Ibid.* p. 98-100; also in *KrV*, A 549-50/B 578-9, p. 587-9; *First Critique*, p. 473-4.

57. H.J. Paton, *The Categorical Imperative*, Harper Torchbook, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1967, p. 99-100.

there corresponds to this negative concept any actual, or event possible, object, but only that the concept is neither selfcontradictory nor necessarily excluded by the nature of our experience.<sup>58</sup>

Kant has to go beyond the negative sense of freedom to a positive one if he is to show that freedom is equivalent to autonomy. He attempts to do this by means of the concept of causality, having defined will as free causality, that is, as a power of free causal action. The concept of causality, he asserts, implies the concept of law; and this must hold whether causality-here used presumably in the sense of causal action - is determined by causal necessity or is free.<sup>59</sup>

How are we to distinguish the laws of nature from what we may now call the laws of freedom? In nature the causal action of an efficient cause is itself caused by something else: it is not spontaneous. This means, according to Kant, that the law governing causal action in nature is not self-imposed but is imposed by something else. This is what he calls "heteronomy". Hence if we are to distinguish the laws of freedom from the laws of nature, we can do so only by supposing that the laws of freedom are selfimposed. The spontaneous causal action of a free will must take place in accordance with self-imposed law. But this is just what we mean by "autonomy"; and a free will must be conceived as acting under the principle of autonomy - that is, as capable of acting on maxims which can at the same time be willed as universal law.

#### D. Ghazali and Kant: A reunion.

The different conceptions concerning the notion of causality held by Ghazali and Kant is so deep and wide. Firstly, after being in a close agreement in their refusal of the dogmatic-speculative metaphysics, they differ in their conception of the idea of causality in nature. Ghazali, who adheres the Ash'arite theology, cannot accept the existence of the 'necessary causal connection' as it is supposed to be there by the Mu'tazilite theology and the *falasifa*. Instead of holding the idea of necessary causal connection, Ghazali holds the 'occasionalist thought'.<sup>60</sup>

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58. *KrV*, A 557-8/B 585-6, p. 594-6; *First Critique*, p. 478-9.

59. *Groundwork*, p. 114, cf. *KPV*, A. 160-1, p. 213; *Second Critique*, p. 92.

60. In an endeavor to safeguard what is regarded as the Qur'anic concept of divine omnipotence, the dominant school of Islamic theology (*Kalam*), founded by al-Ash'ari (d. 935) adopted the occasionalist doctrine that causal efficacy resides exclusively with divine will. See Michael E. Marmura, "Causation in Islamic Thought", *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, Philip P. Wiener (ed.), Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, Vol. I, 1973, p. 286-289. Also L.E. Goodman, "Did Ghazali deny Causality", *Studia Islamica*, XLVIII, 1978, p. 87-88.

The occasionalist thought has a strong relationship with the Atomism of **Kalam** (Islamic theology). The Atomism of **Kalam** divides all sensible reality into atoms or units (technically, "part that cannot be divided: *Juz la yatajazza'*"), which unlike the atom of Democritus and Epicurus possesses neither length nor dimension. The atoms of **Kalam** are units without length or breadth but which are combined to form bodies possessing dimensions.

The Ash'arites, and Ghazali, of course, divided time, space and motion into atomic units as well. As a result, the continuous nexus between cause and effect is denied by them. If there is no "substantial continuity" between things, as well as between moments of time and points of space, how can there be causality? The whole cosmic matrix was segmented and atomized. To fill this "gap" the Ash'arites appealed to the Divine will. For them, it is the Divine will which relates two moments of existence together and gives homogeneity to the world about us. <sup>61</sup>

If Ash'arites were true, then the function of the human reason is very minor in its effort to understand the phenomena of nature, human beings and the social life. If there is no such 'causality' that can be understood by our reason, it will be useless to use the human mind in optimal way. There is no sufficient motivation in Ghazali's thought to suggest or to push the human reason to work hard to understand those phenomena. This conception will be clear in its consequences if we go a step further by comparing Ghazali's and Kant's thought.

Kant approves the idea of necessary causal law without sacrificing his idea on God's sovereignty. I shall discuss this problem in more detail in Chapter III. Kant can do that, due to his brilliant strategy, namely, by separating the realm of phenomena and the noumena. In the realm of phenomena (appearances), in which the human knowledge can be established, Kant can treat the problem of causality without any difficulty. Kant never touches the realm of noumena (things in themselves) as a subject of his Transcendental Aesthetic or his Transcendental Analytic, since this realm is out of the sphere of our human experience. It is difficult for Ghazali to do that, since he does not separate those realms.

From his serious intellectual scrutiny, Kant can find the idea of causality in nature, which has to be discovered by our human endeavor, by our active work, by our serious research. We always see—at least up to this moment of time, for example, that the apple falls down on the earth. This natural phenomena will be left to be merely a natural

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61. Seyyed Hosein Nasr, "Islamic conception of Intellectual Life", *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, *Ibid.* p. 640. Also L.E. Goodman, *Ibid.* p. 109.

phenomena as it is, if we do not think seriously to undertake a serious research in order to formulate that raw material of natural phenomena into a certain law of nature. The law of grativation is discovered after we ourselves, after the human beings themselves draw a law from a natural phenomena.

Curiously enough this kind of intellectual understanding is also 'absent' in Mu'tazila's doctrine. The Mu'tazila theology - the most rational type of Islamic theology - is too much involved in the metaphysical and theological problems. They cannot, as Ghazali cannot too, broaden their perspective as to include the analysis of how our human mind actually works. Only Averroes, as far as I know, has a similar position to Kant's idea. Averroes clearly underlines his thought that the necessary causal connection in nature is not merely a habit as Ghazali proposes, but it is absolutely depended on us as to how we formulate it. The emphasis on the subjective-factor in Averroes' idea in acquiring the law of nature is similar to Kant who suggests that we are the human beings, namely, that we ourselves are the ones who have to decide and the ones who have to discover and formulate those laws of nature.<sup>62</sup> In doing so, nothing will transgress the omnipotence and the sovereignty of God as Ghazali is always worried about.

Kant's conception gives much 'motivation' to the human reason to do its proper work, to conduct a serious research, since all of the laws of nature can be formulated by our human reason. We never know the relationship of A to B, and B to C if our own intellect cannot formulate it in its proper formulation.

The principle of law invented by the human reason is clearly underlined in Kantian conception. Only by means of that principle, only by means of that law, we can understand - whatever this understanding means - the phenomena of nature, of human being and of social and ethical life. In contrast with the medieval period, the early modern period seems to put more emphasis in the activity and the creativity of human mind. Using Kant's own word: "Our standpoint is not like the character of a pupil who listens to everything that the teacher chooses to say, but of an appointed judge who compels the witness to answer questions which he has himself formulated".<sup>63</sup>

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62. Ibn Rusyd, *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, Daar al-Ma'arif, Misr, 1981, p. 786-787. Cf. Oliver Leaman, *Op. Cit.* p. 85-86.

63. *KrV*, B XIII, p. 25-6; *First Critique*, p. 20.



Using that strategy, does Kant accept the mechanical or materialist way of looking at the world? Does Kant refuse the existence and the omnipotence of God as Ghazali is always worried about? This is the subject of our discussion in Chapter III.

Secondly, both in Ghazali's and in Kant's thought, the discussion of the nature of causality in nature and in morality, i.e. in human actions is always intertwined. They treat the problem of causality in nature as the foundation stone of their treatment on the problem of causality in human beings. None of them discuss the problem of causality in human action without having a fundamental perception on the problem of causality in nature<sup>64</sup>. In both thinkers the causality in nature and in human morality is closely interrelated. We cannot fully grasp the essence of Ghazali's and Kant's thought in human morality without a sufficient understanding their conception on the nature of causality in nature.

Again here, Kant can accept the idea of causality in human morality as it is formulated above, while Ghazali totally refuses it as he refuses the idea of causality in nature. I shall not underline the aspect of a 'rational standard' on which Kant seems to be the object of a severe critique by our contemporary social-philosophers.<sup>65</sup> The most interesting factor in Kantian ethics, as opposed to the Ghazalian ethics, is the existence of the idea of law which strictly underlines their conception of ethics. The only difference between both thinkers is that Ghazali underlines the idea of law, namely, the religious law, but never allows the intervention of 'rational law' in his conception of ethics. I shall discuss this point in more details in the following Chapter. Ghazali suspects the ability of human reason to decide or to do 'goodness' without helping the scripture. That is why it is hard for him to see and to admit the element of 'universality' in the human ethics, since the universality of ethical norms can only be appreciated from the intellectual perspective. In any case, according to Ghazali, the intellectual perspective, whether this intellectual un-

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64. I do not mean the causality in human actions as Richard Tylor is worry about. The causality in the human actions in Kantian thought and in Ghazali alike still opens the possibility of 'spontaneous action' which contradicts the 'mechanical explanation of our human actions. See Richard Tylor, *Action and Purpose*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New Jersey, 1966, p. 259-264.

65. Alasdair Macintyre, *After Virtue*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, 1984, p. 49-61.



derstanding is true or not, will undermine the religious teachings. Due to his denial of the capacity of human 'reason' to know what is good, Ghazali turns to choose a mystical ethics which is based on psychology.

Kant, on the other hand, has a unique standpoint. He can elaborate his conception of rational ethics without neglecting the share of a religious principle. His secular rational ethics can postulate the existence of God and the immortality of human soul and Freedom. He can accommodate the idea of universality of ethical norms without sacrificing the vital religious ethics.

The rational and the religious ethics to which I shall discuss in the following Chapter is the natural outcome of Ghazali's and Kant's conception of causation in nature and in morality.



## CHAPTER III

### THE PROBLEM OF RATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS ETHICS

The natural consequences of Kant's conception of causality inevitably leads him to construct the type of ethics which is rational, while Ghazali's conception of causality leads him to formulate a religious or mystical ethics. To describe Kantian ethics as 'rational' is far from saying that he is against the traditional problem of metaphysics as the general positivist philosophers are.<sup>1</sup> The most forgotten factor in Kantian ethics, despite its rationality i.e. its dependency on the faculty of reason to choose and decide the type of ethical choice to guide one's life is his ability to leave a room for a faith, namely the room for the existence of God, immortality and freedom. He claims that rational ethics is baseless if it cannot postulate the immortality of the soul and the existence of God. This postulate helps the reason to solve its own difficulty confronted in the first and the second dialectic of pure practical reason.

Kant's conception of rational ethics has a double strategy: on the one hand, it is able to motivate the human reason to study the phenomena of nature, the human being and the social life without any shadow of sceptical and psychological hindrance and, on the other, it can honestly admit the definite limits of rational beings, so that he opens the gate only to postulate the existence of God and immortality.

Ghazali, on the other hand, with his specific type of conception of causality, finds more difficulty to have a good strategy in assigning the hidden ability of human reason. At least, he cannot motivate our mind to study, or it is more convenient to say that he has less suggestion to motivate our mind to study the nature, and the phenomena of individual and social life, since he cannot admit the 'idea of law' which is supposed to be there and can only be invented and grasped by our humanly extra effort and serious endeavor.

This difficulty increases, when we focus on his conception of ethics which is mystical. In this type of ethics, no role of reason is optimally needed. If it is needed it is only peripheral. Instead of depending on 'reason', Ghazali and his successors emphasize the role of a '*shaykh*' or '*murshid*' or 'moral guide'.<sup>2</sup> We do not object the role of *shaykh* as such and Kant himself suggests that the most important element in the teaching of virtue is the example of the teacher 'himself',<sup>3</sup> nevertheless there is, indeed, a different func-

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1. See footnote 7, Chapter I, p. 18.

2. *Mizan*, p. 79; Ahmad Mahmud Subhi, *Al-Falsafah al-akhlaqiyyah fi al-Fikri al-Islami*, Darul Ma'arif, Cairo, 1969, pp. 246-251; also Cf Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, University of Chicago Press, Second Edition, Chicago, 1979, pp. 137, 153.

3. *KPV*, A 288-9, p. 299-302; *Second Critique*, pp. 165-8.

tion of a teacher in Ghazalian and Kantian sense. In the normal situation, the role of *shaykh* in Ghazalian type of ethics might be useful but in the conflicted dilemma and a trying situation the moral agent will not have a sufficient guidance to manage the new situation anymore, since he is not well-trained in using the 'reason' properly. The weakness in Ghazalian system of thought is **not**, of course, due to the revelation which backs up his system of thought, but because of his conception of the way how our human mind actually works.

I claim that, in essence, there is no difference between Ghazali and Kant in their conception of God and immortality. Kant's background is the Bible, while Ghazali's is the Qur'an. Even in the most crucial point, namely in the problem of the eternity of the world, Kant has a similar idea to Ghazali in underlining the idea that the time, along with the world, was created by God.<sup>4</sup> The only difference between them is in the way they formulate and assign the role and function of reason in understanding the phenomena of nature and the phenomena of human morality. Based on these considerations, let us see in details the problem of rational and religious ethics in Ghazalian and Kantian perspectives.

#### A. Ethics as a Rational Science

One of the most significant problems in ethics is the problem of justifying ethical values. In the early history of Islam, the *Mutakallimun*, i.e. dialectical theologians, faced this problem, and the Mu'tazila, for instance, tried to provide a rational basis for ethical values. The Ash'arites, however, challenged the Mu'tazila with the objection that if ethical values are rational, i.e. can be deduced by human reason, then we will inevitably be led to the relativity of values. Hence there cannot be absolute ethics.

The Ash'arites argued, moreover, that if ethics and moral norms are to be regarded as absolute, and not relative, then the Divine Prohibition or Command, behind which is the Absolute Will of God, must be taken as the foundation of ethical values. As an Ash'arite, Ghazali accepts this position, which is also the main factor that leads him to construct a religious ethics. We must, therefore, have his background in view when we compare his theory of ethics with that of Kant.

On the issue of absolute-relative ethics, Kant agrees with the Ash'arites, as with the Mu'tazilites. But on the question of how ethics can be absolute he differs from the Ash'arites, and agrees with the Mu'tazilites; for he justifies the absolute character of moral

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4. Immanuel Kant, *Vorlesungen über die philosophische Religionslehre*, (Lectures on Philosophical Theology), ed. Politz, 1830, quoted by Allen W. Wood in *Kant's Moral Religion*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1970, p. 139.

values by reason. That is why we regard his ethics as 'rational'. Ghazali, on the other hand, agrees with the Ash'arites and falls in opposition to Kant on this issue, because he justifies the absolute character of moral values by 'Divine Command'. This is why I have called his ethics "religious", because such an ethical system can spring solely from religion. It is from these perspectives that I shall investigate both Kant's and Ghazali's ethics. Besides, I intend to see its relevancy with my initial framework of thought that ethics should not be grasped only from a limited scope of 'normative' one. Ethics involves a broader scope so that it constructs the main body of human way of thought in general.

### 1. Kant and the problem of Rational Ethics

In many ways, Kant comes to the notion that ethics and morality, in essence, are rational. The idea of a priority and universality of ethical norms<sup>5</sup>, the law-governed behaviour<sup>6</sup>, are among criteria of rationality that Kant wants to emphasize. In this respect, he brings a Copernician Revolution in ethics when he says that 'freedom' is **ratio essendi** of morality. There is a perfect parallelism between the mode of argument and the conclusions in the theoretical and practical phases of Kant's philosophy. In both, reason appears as the lawgiver and as bound by the laws which it gives. Kant clearly compares these two legislative functions:

The legislation of human reason (philosophy) has two objects, nature and freedom, and therefore contains not only the law of nature, but also the moral law, presenting them at first in two distinct systems, but ultimately in one single philosophical system. The philosophy of nature deals with all *that is*, the philosophy of morals with all *that ought to be*.<sup>7</sup>

According to Kant, the task of philosophy is to distinguish the a priori from the empirical elements in our knowledge, and to consider our justification for accepting the a priori element. As regards ethics in particular, the task of philosopher is to seek out, and if possible to justify, the supreme principle of morality.

The question as to the supreme principle of morality or the nature of duty as such belongs to ethics which we may call 'pure' or 'rational' ethics. The application of the supreme principle of morality to the problems of action presented by human nature may be

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5. *Groundwork*, p. 98.

6. *Ibid*, p. 80.

7. *KrV*, A 840/B 868, p. 845-6; *First Critique*, p. 658-9. My italic.

called 'applied' ethics. The *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* and the *Critique of Practical Reason* belong to pure ethics. Kant's later work *The Metaphysic of Morals* belongs, in great part at least, to applied ethics.<sup>8</sup>

a. How Rational Ethics is possible

"Practical propositions" are those propositions the knowledge of which plays a part in determining the "will" to make a specific choice among possible actions. They are called by Kant as 'principles'<sup>9</sup> if they are general, i.e. if they express a general determination of the will; and they are called 'rules' if they are subsumable under them or derived from them in their application to specific circumstances.<sup>10</sup> A principle called a "maxim"<sup>11</sup> if the motive which is involved in obedience to it is a motive only for the person who actually embraces this maxim as expressing his own policy in life. A principle is an "Universal law", however, if the motive which it formulates and to which it gives expression is recognized as proper to the will of every rational being.<sup>12</sup>

Every principle to some extent constrains the person who acknowledges it. Even if my principle is a mere maxim that holds only for myself, such as the maxim of not allowing any wrong done by me to go unavenged, it constrains me, at least sometimes to bring my momentary impulse (e.g. fear) into line with this general purpose or determination of the will. Even such a principle, therefore, can give rise to rules which determine what I, with this motive, ought to do and would do if I (a) had this policy and (b) were completely rational in the choice of actions with respect to this policy. Such rules are called "imperatives"<sup>13</sup> for a being who, like man, does not always willingly and spontaneously do what is prescribed by reason as necessary for the carrying-out of the purpose. It is only by reasoning that we know what we ought to do in order to carry out the policy expressed in the maxim, but no one is so rational that he does what he ought to do without more or less frequent conflict with his inclinations.

If a principle is really a maxim, so that the motive for action in accordance with it, is some subjective condition, the corresponding imperative, which tells us what a rea-

8. Paton, *Op. cit.* p. 23.

9. *Groundwork*, p. 60, 80.

10. *Ibid.* p. 57

11. *Ibid.* p. 94, also *KrV*, A 666/B 694, p. 693-4; *First Critique*, p. 547.

12. *Groundwork*, p. 69-70.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 81, 99.

sonable man would do in order to satisfy this desire if he had, is a "hypothetical imperative"<sup>14</sup> It commands or rather counsels, a man only if he has the desire in question. The dynamic factor in obedience to such an imperative is desire or impulse.

A law, on the other hand, such as 'lying is wrong', is not addressed just to a man who wishes for honor or some other specific goal. The imperative which expresses this law to a man who does not obey it by nature is "categorical imperative".<sup>15</sup> It does not tell us to avoid lying if we would obtain a good reputation; it tells us not to lie, period. It seems to be addressed to rational beings generally not just to those men having specific desires that can be satisfied through obedience to it.

All principles based on any "object of desire" apply only to those who actually have the desire. All such principles are mere maxims, not laws. They cannot be laws even for those beings who do have the desire in question, such as the desire felt by all men for their own happiness. A law must have objective necessity, recognized by reason, but the presence or absence of a specific desire can be known only empirically. Furthermore, a law gives rise to imperatives which are definite and specific, yet universal in application, but the diversity of desires is so great that even if they are all subsumed under the general desire for happiness, they do not issue forth in anything more than general counsels, proverbs, and good advice which is sensitive to the variety of men and circumstances.<sup>16</sup>

Up to this point, I have tried to draw the attention to the difference between "hypothetical" and "categorical" imperative, since this is the most crucial point in Kant's theory of ethical rationality. Every principle or rule which presupposes, for its application, some specific desire falls under the general principle of self-love or the desire for one's own happiness; for a state of happiness is one in which there is continuous satisfaction of all desires. Those philosophers who make the desire for happiness the proper motive for morality cannot derive from it any universal precepts, for each man's conception of happiness differs from that of others, and any one man's conception varies from time to time according to the state of his specific desire. No rule derived from the desire for happiness is more than a hypothetical imperative, and it therefore lacks the a priori necessity characteristic of law.

It follows from this that if a rational being regards his maxim as universal law, as

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14. *Ibid*, p. 82, 108.

15. *Ibid*, p. 70, 82.

16. Lewis White Beck, *A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1966, p. 72.



he does when he says that some action that he does is the kind of action that all men (or other rational beings) should do, it cannot be by virtue of the material of the maxim, which refers to the object or the purpose of his will. This is true even if the maxim should in a person of benevolent or sympathetic disposition, be desire for the general welfare or happiness of others. If the material or goal of desire is supposed in a principle, whatever it may be, there is no universality in the principle, and the corresponding imperative is not categorical.

If so, what makes the 'categorical imperative' universal, a priori and rational? For Kant, besides the 'material' of the maxim, however, there is also its 'form'.<sup>17</sup> which is an 'ought'; just as the form of every theoretical proposition is 'is'. As 'form', it is independent of any specific desire which constitutes the content of specific desire. If we abstract from an imperative all contents by virtue of which it is addressed to a person motivated by a specific subjective desire, we are left with only the 'form', the skeletal 'ought'. What is derivable from this, unlike what is derivable from any specific content, is addressed to all rational beings who act, and the rules derived from it are fitted to be universal in application. That is, the form of a maxim and not its content determines whether it is a law or a mere maxim.

Kant marshals these successive arguments to come to his main thesis that ethics and morality is universal, and hence, rational, for the 'form' of a maxim can be deduced only by reason. Furthermore, he holds that if a principle is a law, its form must be such that it applies to all rational beings, and the corresponding imperative must be directed to all rational beings who do not by nature, observe the law automatically. Thus only a law can generate a categorical imperative. The categorical imperative tells a partially rational being to act on a maxim that wholly rational being would act upon without being commanded to do so. If a rational being can decide upon his actions under a maxim, simply because the maxim is a law valid for all rational beings, this being can obey a categorical imperative and pure reason can be practical.

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17. Kant's term 'form' here is similar to the notion of 'forms' of valid inference stand to inference that are valid. It will be helpful to recall what Kant says in his *Prolegomena To Any Future Metaphysics*, p. 29. The form of an inference is not itself an inference, but forms of valid inference are what are shared by actual inferences which are valid. A form of valid inference is merely a feature common to a number of inferences. It is also a condition of their being valid. The form of an inference does not depend on whether the judgments in it are true or false. Nor does it depend on the concepts connected in the judgments in it. Whether the form of an inference is valid does not depend on who draws the inference. Hence what forms of inference are valid can be determined a priori. Consult also D.P. Dryer, *Kant's Solution for Verification in Metaphysics*, George & Unwin LTD, London, 1966, p. 187 and Julius Kovesi, *Moral Notion*, Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD, London, 1971, p. 8.

Assuming that a person, can obey a 'categorical imperative', Kant shows that the 'will' of this person must be 'free' in the strict transcendental sense. That is, it cannot be entirely determined by the person's conception of his sensuous impulse, for this would make his actions only an effect of natural phenomena. Only reason can present the conception of a universal law as motive, and of a being that acts upon this motive we say that his will is free. Conversely, if we assume that the will is free from the mechanism of nature, the will must be determined by the 'form' and not by the content of the maxim or law. It must be determined by some conception of some law, for otherwise it would not be 'will' but mere caprice. And if it were determined by the content. i.e. what the law held before the person as a way of satisfying one of his desires, the will would not be free from the mechanism of empirical nature.

Hence the concept of freedom and that of a universal practical law reciprocally imply each other. That means, that we are not directly aware of freedom, but we are directly aware of the binding quality of a universal law, for we have it presented to us in our consciousness of the moral law. The moral law as Kant puts is this: A purely rational being acts only on maxims which he would will to be maxims for all rational beings, i.e., only on maxims that could be willed to be principles universally binding on all such beings. This is expressed in the categorical imperative as: **"So act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as the principle for giving universal law"**.<sup>18</sup>

Only pure reason could be the source of such a law and imperative. Reason discovering sensuous motives and the laws of nature by which they might be managed or satisfied would not be able to formulate any laws having the universality and necessity that we find in the moral obligation we experience. This law is not derived from any observation of empirical facts; it is not a theoretical law of what "is". It is a practical law that pure reason itself prescribes as the ground of its own actions. Thus pure practical reason, as the source of its own law, is autonomous or self-legislating in a way in which an empirically conditioned practical reason could not be.

The principles of empirically effected will are based upon the contingent fact that certain desires are felt upon our knowledge of the way in which they may be satisfied in the course of nature. They are not, therefore, products of autonomous lawgiving reason, and they are not, consequently, absolutely binding or obligatory. All moral systems except the one based upon 'pure reason' as providing the motives are heteronomous and are unable to account for the absolute, unconditional, universal and necessary constraint that we experience in moral obligation. Either we must explain away these characteristics of moral obligation by showing them to be illusory products of a psychological mechanism, or

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18. *Groundwork*, p. 88.

we must accept the thesis that 'pure reason' can be practical, i.e. can give a law the knowledge of which can and should be sufficient motive for action.

The above discussion shows not only that Kantian ethics is rational but also 'how it is rational'; in other words, we have also explained in what sense his ethics is rational.

#### b. The Highest Good as the foundation of Rational Ethics.

Kant's doctrine of good (of which the concept of the highest good is the central part) is that which binds together the various parts of his *second Critique*. The discussion of the good in its various aspects as the object of pure practical reason provides the unifying theme for Kant's works on ethics as a whole. Comparatively speaking, concept of duty and the categorical imperative assume minor roles in the discussion although they are fundamental components of the total theory of the good as it is presented.

The moral law, embodied in the finite rational agent's formally legislative maxim, defines not one but two kinds of ends for the moral agent: one unconditioned and unqualified, the second, limited and conditioned by the first. The unqualified 'good' derives from man's moral rationality, his capability of free, autonomous volition, as we have seen in the above discussion. The conditioned good is constituted by those natural ends of men which are systematically and universally included in the material of a formally legislative maxim. Kant sometimes draws a distinction between the "moral good" (*moralisches Gut*) and the "natural good" (*physisches Gut*) which is aimed at clarifying the character of these two components of the object of pure practical reason. An examination of these two concepts as the foundation of Kant's rational ethics will enable us see how the two components of the highest good are to be conceived of and related to each other.

Since Kant draws the distinction between the Moral Good and the Natural Good as the object of pure practical reason, we will discuss both of them in the following discussion. Firstly, we shall proceed with the Moral Good or Virtue, then pass on to the Natural or Physical Good.

#### i. The Moral Good or Virtue

In treating the unqualified good merely as the goodness of the maxim of a given act, we noted that its unqualified or unconditioned goodness followed from the fact that a formally legislative maxim, adopted on account of its form, is the formal condition of all good ends. The moral good, however, is not simply a formal condition, but an **end** which is good without qualification. The moral good is something which one **strives** for. If the moral good, regarded as a necessary component of the end of any particular act, were tak-

en merely to be the having of a formally legislative maxim for that act, then the moral good would have the peculiar quality that one could not even seek it without following it as an analytic proposition that one had completely attained it. For to seek an object of pure practical reason is just to act according to a maxim with a legislative form, motivated by that form. But if one does this, then one has thereby attained the moral good, if the moral good is regarded only as the maxim of the action in question. The moral good, so regarded, cannot be something one strives for, or that one makes progress in attaining. In order, therefore to be in the proper sense an **end** of moral action, the moral good must not refer only to the having of a formally legislative maxim in the case of the particular act in question. Rather, it must refer to something which **can** be striven for and adopted as an end of action to be promoted and brought about.

Hence, the moral good cannot be a mere formal condition of ends, but must consist in an end which is unconditionally and unqualifiedly good, an end whose promotion follows directly from the formal condition of all good ends. This end is virtue, man's moral strength of will, which consists in the perfection of the disposition to make duty (or the legislative form of his maxim) a sufficient motive of action. Each morally good act is good only if it does promote this end by exemplifying this striving in its formally legislative maxim, by contributing to the "labor of moral reconstruction" and fulfilling every man's duty to increase his own moral perfection.<sup>19</sup>

Goodness of character, moral virtue, since it is not a mere formal condition for the adoption of ends but is itself a material end, involves sensibility as well as reason.<sup>20</sup> As an end, it involves the finite rational being in his moral totality. It is for this reason that Kant calls man's moral progress "a gradual reform of his sensibility". The acquisition of a virtuous character by virtuous action is a continuous "self overcoming". Such a character is acquired, according to Kant, by the constant but moderate discipline of one's inclinations, so that by "continuous labor and growth" the firm resolve to do one's duty becomes a habit.<sup>21</sup>

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19. *Religion*, p. 47 and also Immanuel Kant, *The Doctrine of Virtue*, translated by Mary J. Gregor, University of Pennsylvania, Press, Philadelphia, 1964, p. 113.

20. This part of Kantian thought is being much misunderstood and debatable. There are two kinds of interpretations i.e. a traditional interpretation and a new one. The first belongs to Hegel, Schopenhauer, Mill, Caird, Bradley, Ross and Ewing who emphasize the Rigorism and Formalism of Kantian ethics, while the second belongs to H.J. Paton and A.R.C. Duncann who clarify the initial position of Kantian doctrine of form and matter in ethical thought. For a further information, see T.C. Williams, *The Concept of the Categorical Imperative*, At the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1968, pp. 38-9, 65, 80.

21. *Religion*, p. 42; *Doctrine of Virtue*, p. 159.

If the moral good is the unqualified object of pure practical reason, and applicable to all finite rational beings as ends in themselves, it would seem evident that our duty to pursue this good should include not only our own moral good but the moral good of all men. Kant gives evidence at a number of places in his works that he does believe that men can and should help others in their moral development, and he also indicates that he has given considerable thought to how this can best be done. In both the *second Critique* and the *Metaphysic of Morals*, Kant includes a "Methodology" whose purpose is avowedly to specify the way in which we can secure to the laws of pure practical reason access to the human mind and an influence on its maxims. That is to say, it is the way we can make objectively practical reason also subjectively practical.<sup>22</sup>

In both accounts of such a "Methodology", Kant deals with the teaching of pupils, and how it may achieve the above end. The subject of moral education was one which profoundly concerned Kant, and he held that such education was a necessary precondition for man's moral improvement, even the sole ground of hope for human moral progress.<sup>23</sup>

The most detailed and practical treatment of the topic of moral education is to be found in Kant's treatise Education (**Padagogik**). In the introduction to this work Kant argues that man, as man, is solely a product of education (**Erziehung**) and the attainment of an individual's moral destiny is impossible without the help of others. Practical education forms an important part of the educator's task in Kant's view, and Kant offers many observations concerning the best way of developing the moral character of pupils.<sup>24</sup>

Not only the institution of education, but also that of organized religion, in Kant's view, is a systematic means for the mutual moral improvement of men. The rational justification of the necessity for an ecclesiastical organization, in Kant's view, is that such an organization may represent the idea of a People of God (**ein Volk Gottes**) in a 'Moral Community', whose laws are expressly designed to promote the morality of actions. The mutual improvement of men's moral characters through education and religious community play such an important role in Kant's over-all of the moral destiny of man.<sup>25</sup>

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22. KPV, A 269-88, pp. 287-99; *Second Critique*, pp. 155-165.

23. Immanuel Kant, *Eine Vorlesung Kants über Ethik* (Lectures on Ethics), trans. Louis Infield, Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1963, p. 252. Also see George R. Lucas, Jr., "Agency After Virtue", *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3, Issue No. 111 (September 1988), p. 297-8, wherein he defends the dimensions of historicity of Kantian ethics against MacIntyre's severe critique on Kant. See *op. cit.* J.B. Schneewind emphasizes the fact that Kant's treatment of the moral world is an historical task rather than as a metaphysical or religious assurance. See, "The Divine Corporation and the History of Ethics", in *Philosophy in History*, ed. Richard Rorty and others Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985, p. 190.

24. Allen W. Wood, *Op. cit.* p. 78

25. *Religion*, p. 90.



## ii. The Natural or Physical Good.

Kant's moral reasoning both presupposes and systematically includes men's natural or physical ends in the object of pure practical reason. For he argues that reason limits and conditions our pursuit of our own natural ends, and commands the pursuit of the natural ends of others subject to the same condition of universal rational volition. It is from these limited and conditioned natural ends that Kant derives the second conditioned component of the Highest Good, which he calls 'natural good'.

Every finite being is a being of needs, a being which by its very nature has inclination and sensuous desires. These desires provide a finite rational being with natural ends, ends that can be presumed to be prior to any determination of his will by reason. These ends are unified by reason as prudence into an idea of happiness. In forming this idea, reason limits and conditions man's natural ends by one another, so that the pursuit of one such end does not interfere with the pursuit of other ends. Reason balances and weighs the pursuit of natural ends, forming an idea of a stable whole. Such an idea does not come about from mere impulse, but is based on reason. The judgment that the pursuit of some end is conducive to my own happiness, or natural good, is thus not merely a judgment of feeling, but is in Kant's view a judgment of reason.

An example may make this clearer. A man has access to large amounts of money in his work, and is tempted to embezzle. Now he might, in response to this temptation, simply slip a roll of large bills into his pocket on the spur of the moment and leave the office. But he is more rational than this. Before he rashly gives into such a momentary impulse, he will consider whether his embezzlement would in the long run serve his own happiness, or rather damage his personal desires as a whole. That is, even if he does not consider the morality of his action, he will contemplate his action rationally from the point of view of prudence. He will consider whether and how he can escape detection in his theft. He will realize that if he is to escape with the money he will have to leave the city in which he lives and give up his job and stability of the life he has led thus far. If our tempted embezzler is prudent, he will weigh all these considerations carefully. He will limit his momentary impulse to steal by his desire to maintain a stable life, to enjoy the respect of his family and friends and the security of the position he has established in his community. Or, on the other hand, he may decide that his job, his family, his stable life, are not so valuable to him and that it is worth the chance he is taking to steal and leave the country. But in either case, it will be a careful and prudent weighing of his desires and circumstances which decides the matter for him. His decision will be a rational one.



Reason as prudence, therefore, defines a natural good for man prior to any moral consideration. Insofar as someone weighs the consequences of an act for his own personal happiness or unhappiness, he is not concerned with the morality of his act. Hence although the natural good has a **bonitas pragmatica** determined by reason as prudence it does not have **bonitas moralis**; <sup>26</sup> it is not Good (**Gut**) in the strict sense defined in Chapter II of the *Analytic of the Second Critique*. It is not an object of pure practical reason, of morality, but only an object of practical reason as prudence. The natural good simply as such is not a Good (**Gut**) but well-being (**Wohl**).<sup>27</sup>

Human happiness, well-being, or the natural good in given instances, however, may be either included in the object of pure practical reason, or excluded from it. A man who takes pleasure in his work, or one who enjoys just the fruits of his labor, is clearly deserving the happiness he enjoys, and that happiness is included in the end of his moral action. The happiness of such a deserving person is a good for morality, something which morality commands us to pursue. On the other hand, the happiness of a ruthless embezzler who, ignoring his obligations to his family and community, steals a large sum of money and lives comfortably in another country is not a moral good at all. For by his conduct, such a man has rendered himself unworthy of happiness, and has removed the necessary condition which must accompany his happiness if it is to have moral worth. His happiness, far from being a moral good, is in fact a moral evil in Kant's view, an object of moral aversion to, every impartial spectator, and even to the man himself, should he consider his situation in the light of what his conscience tells him.

Man's moral inclinations may thus be limited by reason not only in its office as prudence, but also by moral reason. And it is through this latter limitation and condition that natural ends in general are included in the object of pure practical reason. Men's natural ends do not then, become objects of pure practical reason and components of the highest good simply by being given as objects of sensible inclination, nor do they become such by being limited and qualified by each other through the discipline of reason as prudence. Rather, they are included in the object of pure practical reason insofar as they are limited and conditioned by moral reason and thus by a virtuous disposition, the worthiness to be happy. The moral worth of happiness, then, is a real but conditioned worth. Happiness apart from this condition remains to be a sure form of all well-being, a natural good, and has **bonitas pragmatica**, but it is not an object of pure practical reason, an object of moral striving. Kant expresses the conditioned moral value of happiness when he accompanies his inclusion of happiness in the highest good with the following admonition:

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26. *Lectures on Ethics*, p. 15

27. KPV, A 90-3, p. 167-9; *Second Critique*, p. 61.

Happiness, although something always pleasant to him who possesses it, is not of itself absolutely good in every respect, but always presupposes conduct in accordance with the moral law as its condition.<sup>28</sup>

In a similar manner, as careful attention to Kant's texts will show, when he identifies the two components of the highest good as "virtue" and "happiness", he is always careful to point out that the second component is a good for morality only insofar as it is conditioned by the first. Kant tells us that:

Morality and happiness are two elements of the Supreme Good, .... they differ in kind, and ... whilst they must be kept distinct, they stand in a necessary relation to one another. The moral law ... tells me that if I conduct myself so as to be worthy of happiness, I may hope for it.<sup>29</sup>

### iii. The relation between Moral and Natural Good.

Throughout this discussion of Kant's conception of the highest good, considerable emphasis has been given to this conditional relation between the moral and natural goods, between the legislative form of a maxim and the natural ends which are directed to its material, between virtue as worthiness to be happy and human happiness. We have seen that a formally legislative maxim, and consequently a virtuous disposition, is an unconditioned good, necessarily and unqualifiedly an object of pure practical reason; and that the contentment of a finite rational being with his state, the satisfaction of his natural inclinations and needs, is also a good for morality, but only conditionally, and can be an object of pure practical reason only insofar as it is qualified and conditioned by the moral worthiness of the finite being to partake in it.

It is clear that for Kant the moral and natural goods, virtue and happiness, are two distinct goods, that they differ in kind. Kant puts this point another way when he denies that the relation between the moral and natural good, between virtue and happiness, is analytic. From the fact that a person is virtuous it does not analytically follow that he is happy; nor does happiness analytically imply moral goodness of character. Kant criticizes the ancient Stoics and Epicureans for attempting "to overcome essential differences in principle, which can never be united, by seeking to translate them into a conflict of words".<sup>30</sup>

Now if either of these positions were correct, it would follow that the maxim of pursuing virtue and the maxim of pursuing one's own happiness would be identical. The

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28. *KPV*, A 200, p. 239; *Second Critique*, p. 115.

29. *Lectures on Ethics*, p. 77.

30 *KPV*, A 201-2, p. 240-1; *Second Critique*, p. 116.

fact that I act from either of these maxims would analytically imply that I act from the other. For the Stoic, the principle of morality does not merely provide the pursuit of one's own happiness, as in Kant's ethics. Rather, since happiness is defined by him to be just the consciousness of virtue, the Stoic makes happiness also an unconditioned good, a good whose existence is identical with the consciousness of virtue, and hence makes the supreme principle of morality identical with the principle of pursuing one's own happiness. In a like manner, the Epicurean identifies these two principles, by defining virtue simply as the kind of action necessary to achieve happiness. Now Kant has shown in the analytic of the *Second Critique* that the principle of morality and the principle of one's own happiness are not identical but contrary to one another.<sup>31</sup> Hence it follows that virtue and happiness cannot be identical, nor can the existence of one follow analytically from the existence of the other as the ancient schools claimed.

The two kinds of good are distinct in yet another sense. The moral and natural good are separate objects of human desire. They are thus desirable in different ways, they answer to different interests of human nature. A human being, both finite and rational, has both natural ends as regards his physical state and moral ends as regards the perfection of his moral disposition and person. Both ends are included in the object of pure practical reason, founded on the finite rational being as an existing end in himself. The two goods, since they answer to different interests, cannot replace one another with respect to the kinds of needs or demands they satisfy. The demand of human nature for each of these goods is distinct from its demand for the other, so that no common measure or equivalence between the value of the two goods is possible.

The heterogeneity of the good poses a problem which for Kant in the definition of the highest good, a problem which did not arise for the ancient philosophers. The Highest Good is the idea of a **single** final end for human moral striving. Since for the Ancients there was fundamentally only one object of human desire (be it called virtue or happiness) the sole task for them in defining the Highest Good is that of **naming** this one end.<sup>32</sup> For Kant, however, there are two distinct kinds of good, the moral and the natural. Given not one good, but two, how one is to form the idea of a single highest object for moral striving?

Let us try to get a clearer view of the problem facing Kant at this point. It is often the case in our everyday decisions that we have to weigh different considerations, balance

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31. *Ibid.* A 55-6, p. 141; *Second Critique*, p. 31.

32. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1097 a 15-1098 b 8.

differing goals which lead us in different directions. For example, a man may want his family to be happy, but also want to advance in his career. Here he has two distinct goals that must be reconciled. But in this case it is quite possible for us to see these ends of his as homogeneous in character, possessed of a single measure according to which the pursuit of one may be harmonized with the pursuit of the other. The man may make a given decision between the demands of his family and those of his career on the basis of **prudence**, weighing his personal concern for and pride in his family's happiness and welfare against his professional ambition, limiting each desire by the other in order to reach the greatest whole in the satisfaction of his own personal desire for happiness. Or he may weigh his moral duty to his family against the duty he owes to his profession, to his co-workers, and to those he serves in his work. Here he "limits one duty by another" as Kant describes in the case of "wide" duties.<sup>33</sup> Here, too, he is concerned with forming the greatest whole of goods which are homogeneous in character. In both cases, the interest he has in each of the two goals can be reduced to some common standard which allows him to compensate the lack of one good (one kind of happiness or one duty) with a greater amount of the other. But Kant cannot adopt this sort of solution in the case of the relation between the moral and natural goods. There is no way that the lack of one good can be compensated for by the attainment of the other, no common measure of their distinct kinds of goodness. The two kinds of good, as Kant says, cannot be "mixed" together.<sup>34</sup>

Kant's problem is that of forming a synthetic unity of two specifically different goods, of systematically unifying two distinct kinds of goodness into a single final end. "Two terms necessarily combined in one concept," says Kant, "must be related as ground and consequences."<sup>35</sup>

According to Kant, the concept of the highest good is not brought to realization merely when the highest good is not brought to realization merely when the virtuous is also happy, but is only fulfilled when the virtuous can be said to be happy **because** they are virtuous. The highest good, to be realized as a single good, a **systematic unity** of two goods, requires a **systematic** connection between virtue and happiness, a connection which "is predicated upon virtue's producing happiness as something different from the consciousness of virtue, as a cause produces an effect."<sup>36</sup>

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33. *Doctrine of Virtue*, p. 49.

34. Immanuel Kant, *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht abgefasst*, (Anthropology from a Pragmatic point of view), translated by Mary J. Gregor, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1974, p. 277.

35. *KPV*, A 200, p. 239; *Second Critique*, p. 115, and also Cf. John R. Silber, "The Highest Good in Kant's ethics", *Ethics*, 73, 1963, p. 185.

36. *KPV*, *Loc. cit.*; *Second Critique*, *Loc. cit.*, and John R. Silber, *Loc. cit.*

The question of the practical possibility of the highest good we face in the second antinomy is not, then, whether happiness might happen in particular cases to accompany virtue; rather, the question is whether there might be a systematic relation between virtue and happiness, where the former is in some way the ground or cause of the latter. This systematic causal connection appears prominent, says Kant, when we consider the highest good as "a practical good, i.e., one that is possible through action."<sup>37</sup> When we seek justice in the world, we seek to establish a causal relation between desert and reward. We do not seek simply to make the good man happy and the evil man unhappy, but to reward the one for his goodness, and to punish the other for his wickedness. In pursuing the conditional relation between the natural and moral goods, we attempt to realize the highest good as a unity of two goods, a unity established by a systematic connection of cause and effect.

The possibility of the highest good rests, then, on whether a systematic causal connection between virtue and happiness can be conceived to exist, or to be possible of attainment. Kant does say that a highest good or Kingdom of Ends "would actually come into existence through maxim which the categorical imperative prescribes as a rule for all rational beings, if these maxims were universally followed."<sup>38</sup>

An exact causal relation between virtue and happiness in the world therefore requires more than human purposiveness, human volition, and effort. It can only come about, says Kant, if the kingdom of nature and its purposive order works in harmony" with the moral efforts of men,<sup>39</sup> in order that each may enjoy happiness insofar as he is worthy of it. Hence the practical possibility of the highest good depends on whether there is in nature anything sufficient to compensate for the imperfection of human volition and the limitation on human powers, to bring about an exact causal connection between virtue and happiness.

## 2. Ghazali and the problem of Rational Ethics

It is hardly surprising, given Ghazali's strong anti-Mu'tazilite position, that he denied the independence of reason as a sufficient guide to ethical knowledge. One of the interesting aspects of his hostility to the philosophical and Mu'tazilite theories of ethics is

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37. *KPV*, A 203, p. 241; *Second Critique*, p. 117.

38. *Groundwork*, p. 106.

39. *Loc. cit.*



his attack on their theory of natural connection which lies behind their theories of teleology.<sup>40</sup> According to Ghazali, the entire mechanism of ends and means, of virtuous acts leading to rewards in this and next life is not based upon notions of causality. For Ghazali, if these mechanism are based on merely law of causality, it fails to mention God's overwhelming power and influence over all these happenings.

We saw in Chapter II how Ghazali attacked the philosophical position on natural causation whether this causation is applied in nature or in morality. Yet it is worth recalling that a problem with identifying Ghazali's disapproval of philosophical ethics with his attitude to philosophical account of causality is that of constant relations between phenomena. His objections were to account of these relations which made mention of God's influence over them nugatory.

Based on this primary theological consideration, Ghazali refuses the notion of 'causality' in the ethical conduct. He cannot see and validate the causal relation between punishment and reward. This relation cannot be understood rationally. It depends totally on God's bounty. From this basic notion, Ghazali declares that 'good' and 'evil' knowable only through the revelation (and not through natural reason), and denied that divine commandments in the Qur'an had any purpose (they were rather to be obeyed solely because they were divine commandments). These fundamental ideas have a great contribution in Ghazali's construction of mystical ethics which depends merely on God's blessing, not on human's own effort to obtain God's blessing.

Before going into the detail discussion on this crucial problem, let us have a look at Ghazali's fundamental arguments in refusing the 'rational ethics' exemplified in his refutation of the universal law of ethical norms.

#### a. Is ethics possible as a Rational Science?

Since the problem of rational ethics in the Ghazalian context is more related to the problem of universality of ethical norms, I would like now to concentrate on this issue and try to elucidate Ghazali's reply to it.

The claim that there are such universal rules of ethical conduct is challenged by Ghazali in a number of ways. He is not content to combat intellectually the error of ethical absolutism. He also shows a great interest in explaining its causes<sup>41</sup> intellectually and

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40. George F. Hourani, *Reason and Tradition* ....., *Op. Cit.* p. 152.

41. It may be wondered here how Ghazali as an occasionalist can speak of 'causes' other than God as he does here and frequently elsewhere in his writings.



emotionally, and suggests a number of them. He addresses himself to this question in three passages in *Mi'yār*, *Iqtisād* and *Mustasfa*. In *Mi'yār* Ghazali gives a long list of examples of ethical rules "commonly believed" (mash-hurat) to be universal.

Ghazali in the first place makes use of Platonic and Aristotelian schemes of the virtues, with Islamic adaptations of his own.<sup>42</sup> He, too, shares the *falasifa* a common point of some generality, in holding a teleological theory of ethics. To argue against the notion of the objectivity of ethics, then, Ghazali presents a detailed defence of how specifically religious references can be incorporated into the meanings of ethical terms. He does this by interpreting the key ethical concepts of good and evil (*hasan* and *su'* or *qabih*) teleologically, i.e. in terms of what is appropriate to a certain end and what prevents the attainment of that end.<sup>43</sup> These ends are entirely relative to the agent, in which case an adulterer will think that adultery is good and anything which prevents him from an adulterous life-style as bad.

Yet, in spite of all these points, it is certain that Ghazali opposed to their teleological ethics.<sup>44</sup> In some ways this is surprising, given the fact that it is for exactly the same reasons, namely, the implication of limitations on God's power that Ghazali argues against creation and objective ethics. The very notion of God being compelled to behave in a certain way is repugnant to Ghazali. Ghazali objected to the idea of God being confronted with notions of human good and evil which had the status of an extrinsic and independent law. And, in spite of his silence in answering them, it will be instructive to see why he opposed them. The opposition turns around two points; their different metaphysics of causality, and the prominence of the after-life in Islamic theology.

Further, because causal connections are absent or hidden, we do not even know by any process of independent teleological reasoning **which** acts improve character, **which** acts bring rewards and **which** dispositions of character bring rewards. All we know about these facts is known from the scripture. Based on this fundamental idea, Ghazali explicitly refuses the conception of ethics held by the Mu'tazila and also by the *falasifa*.<sup>45</sup>

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42. Sherif, *Op. cit.* p. 38-39.

43. Leaman, *Op. cit.* p. 131.

44. Hourani, *Op. cit.* p. 152.

45. For the detail explication of the Mu'tazilite's ethics, see George F. Hourani, *Islamic Rationalism*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1971, p. 29-33. Fazlur Rahman in *Islam and Modernity*, *Op. cit.* p. 27, formulates the gist of Ash'arism which is defended by Ghazali as follows: "... As such it rejected causality and the efficacy of human will in the interest of divine omnipotence (man was therefore only metaphorically an actor, the real actor being God alone), declared good and evil to be knowable only through the revelation (and not through natural reason) and denied that divine commandments in the Qur'an had any purpose (they were to be obeyed solely because they were divine commandments)".

The absence of the idea of causality in Ghazali's mind has a great impact in his conception of the idea of universality in ethical norms. Ghazali refuses such an idea. Ghazali's refutations of rational universal rules occur in various places in his works. Following G.F. Hourani shall attempt a systematic exposition of his arguments according to their forms, bringing together under each one what he says in different places. According to Ghazali, the claim of rational universal rules fails several tests that it should meet if it is to be accepted.

1. All proposed rational rules fail in universality. "Killing is evil" is not universal, for the Mu'tazila themselves immediately qualify the judgment with exceptions: killing is not evil when it is punishment for crime.<sup>46</sup> "Lying is evil" is not universal, because it is permitted and even required to lie to save a prophet's life.<sup>47</sup> "Spreading peace is good" is not universal; it is untrue in circumstances of dire necessity.<sup>48</sup> These and similar propositions are only generally true: they are thus not fit to be major premises in demonstrative practical syllogism, but are only suitable for conjectural use in legal arguments.<sup>49</sup>

3. The supposed universal ethical truths fail to pass the subjective test of indubitable certainty which is required for all intuited first principles of the intellect. Here Ghazali argues that "if you were to come into existence fully rational but without experience and images, you would be able to doubt such premises as 'killing a man is evil', or at least to hesitate about them, but you could not doubt the principle that *negation and affirmation cannot be true of the same state of a thing or two is greater than one*".<sup>50</sup> This example is not perhaps very appropriate, since it might well be urged that a person described here would not be able to make any judgment at all about such a moral rule, since he would be totally abstracted from any community which provides the appropriate context for ethical life. Such a person would not be in a good position to comment on the moral rule's universality and necessity, since he might not even be able to grasp what a moral rule meant. But the general tenor of the argument is valid, namely, that there is an important distinction between necessary truths of logic and mathematics and the sort of 'truths' which constitute ethics.

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46. *Mustasfa*, I, p. 56-7.

47. *Ibid.* p. 57; also *Mi'yar*, p. 112, 114.

48. *Mi'yar*, p. 113.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 122, 114.

50. *Ibid.* 114

3. Any proposition that is intuited immediately or necessarily (**bi d-darura**) must command unanimous agreement. But the suggested rational truths of ethics fail to do so, for important Islamic schools disagree with them. The Mu'tazila retort that the disagreement is on the theory of ethical knowledge, such as the question here at issue, but not on first order normative propositions, which are what they consider rational. But this is untrue, says Ghazali, there are also disagreements in normative knowledge, for example on the wrongness of causing pain animals: this is claimed by the Mu'tazila as known by reason, but God in scripture has revealed approval for it, in animal sacrifices.<sup>51</sup>

4. If **wājib** is understood in the 'correct' Ghazalian sense of 'necessary to produce benefits, it is impossible for reason to demonstrate this kind of **wujūb** for any of the Mu'tazilite rules. Ghazali expounds his refutation lucidly in *Mustasfa*, proceeding by a definition and series of dilemmas.

Gratitude to a benefactor is not necessary by reason, contrary to the Mu'tazila. The proof of this is that 'necessary' (al-wajib) has no meaning but what God the Exalted has made necessary (awjabahu) and commanded with threat of punishment for omission; so if there is no revelation what is the meaning of 'necessity'<sup>52</sup>

Ghazali's refutation is unconvincing to a detached observer, for it assumes his own definition of **wājib**, as stated and his own theodicy in which Reward for human merits cannot be inferred from the divine nature. But on their own definition of **wajib** in the sense of 'obligatory' the Mu'tazila would not have to prove that reason sees the benefit of acts to agents, but only their **obligatoriness**, a concept that Ghazali does not seem to grasp at any stage and we must admit after the struggles of the modern ethical philosophy that it is a puzzling concept. But even if the Mu'tazila were required to prove a rational knowledge of the otherworldly **benefits** of fulfilling obligations, they could do so on their own theodicy by inferring Rewards for human merits from the justice of God in His acts, a justice that sprang from His nature and was to be understood in the same sense as human justice.

In the same vein Ghazali argues in *Mi'yar* as follows:

These are exemplified by our judging it good to spread peace, feed others, bestow largesse on kinsfolk, adhere to truthfulness in speech, observe justice in legal suits and judgements; and by our judging it bad that one should harm humans, kill animals, disseminate slander - that husbands should acquiesce in the licentiousness of their wives, that benevolence should be repaid with ingratitude and oppression.<sup>53</sup>

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51. *Ibid.* 112 and *Mustasfa*, p. 57.

52. *Iqtisad*, pp. 189-90 and *Mustasfa*, p. 39.

53. *Mi'yar*, p. 118.

Then he goes on to refute the rational universality of ethical norms with similar ones as we already cited. He thus denies those rational judgements by rather unsatisfactorily arguments through selecting a putative universal rule and then pointing to cases where it can be applied. Ghazali lists five cases:

(1) Tenderness of heart, a quality of innate disposition. This explains the belief that slaughtering animals is evil for reason. Only scripture has changed most people from this belief by recommending animal sacrifice.<sup>54</sup>

(2) Pride. This explains most husband's jealousy of their wives' intimacy with other men, although the husbands believe their disapproval is an immediate rational judgement. But husbands in some societies and adulterers regard such conduct as good. So neither of these contradictory judgements can be a rational intuition, since they fail the test of unanimity.<sup>55</sup>

(3) Love of conciliation. This explains belief in the absolute goodness of spreading peace. But others incline towards conflict and regard it as better than peace. Without any feelings one way or the other, 'their minds in their natural state would make no judgements about these things in terms of goodness and badness'.<sup>56</sup>

(4) Religious instruction, from childhood on. Beliefs gained from repeated instruction become so ingrained that they come to appear rational, e.g. the beliefs that kneeling and prostration in prayer, of animal sacrifice, are good. Intellect alone would make no judgement.<sup>57</sup> By his choice of examples here Ghazali shows that he is quite indifferent to any need for rational justification of such beliefs; he is confident in the sufficiency of their scriptural justification.

(5) The induction of numerous particulars; for, when a thing is found in many of its circumstances conjoined with another thing, it is thought that it is conjoined with another thing, it is thought that it is conjoined with it absolutely.' For example, spreading peace is good in most situations, so that one forgets that it is bad in cases of dire necessity. Likewise truthfulness is nearly always good, so one forgets that it is evil to disclose truthfully the location of a prophet hiding from enemies seeking to slay him. There are conditions for the goodness of truthfulness; the error of absolutism arises from ignoring them.<sup>58</sup>

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54. *Ibid*; also *Iqtisad*, p. 182-4.

55. *Mi'yar*, p. 113 and *Iqtisad*, p. 164.

56. *Mi'yar*; p. 113.

57. *Ibid*. Cf. *Iqtisad*, p. 167.

58. *Mi'yar*, p. 113-114 and Cf. *Iqtisad*, p. 167.

All these causes of error may be resumed under two heads. One is incomplete induction, leading us to universalize what is only generally the case. The other is emotion, disturbing our rational judgements. These two are not exclusive of each other but interact.

From those plain considerations, it is obvious that according to Ghazali ethics is extremely impossible to be a rational science. There is no sufficient basis to construct ethics which relies upon the rational foundation. There is no idea of law and there is no rational purposiveness in our human nature. The only basis on which ethics can be constructed is God's revelation, namely 'theistic subjectivism', that is to say an outlook which is defined as ethically good 'whatever is approved by God' and as the 'rightness of acts' their being commanded by God.<sup>59</sup>

Ghazali's form of theological reductionism does at least have the virtue of clearly specifying how to determine which sorts of moral rules are incumbent upon us, and these are those which "God exalted has made necessary and commanded with the threat of punishment for omission - for if there is no revelation, what is the meaning of 'necessity'?"<sup>60</sup>

Consequently it has been the existence or non-existence of an element of rationality or rational purposiveness in religious precept which became the crucial issue for those to whom God's pedagogical arbitrariness seemed incompatible with their concept of the divine or with their sense of human dignity. This brings us to the problem of what the function of reason is in our ethical judgements and conducts. For this purpose, let us see the function of reason in ethics from Ghazali's perspective.

#### b. The function of reason in Ethics

No doubt that for Ghazali man is the summit of creation and reason the noblest quality of the many with which God has honored him.<sup>61</sup> Ghazali declares Reason, as "the means to attain felicity in this world and the next" and reflects that "even Turks, Kurds and the coarse Bedouin, whose existence is barely superior to that of animals, will by a natural instinct honor the old because their reason, sharpened by experience, has given them an incontestable superiority."<sup>62</sup>

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59. George F. Hourani, "Ethics in Medieval Islam: A Conspectus", in *Essays on Islamic Philosophy and Science*, ed. George F. Hourani, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1975, p. 130.

60. *Ihya'*, I, p. 100.

61. *Ihya'*, IV, p. 96.

62. *Ihya'*, I, p. 73 and also see Faris, *Op. cit.* p. 221.



Linking his anthropology to ethics by a different path, Ghazali insists on man's duty to be grateful to his Lord for having received reason (or intelligence, 'aql) as well as good character and knowledge. And he observes that it is part of the nobility of reason that he who does not possess it enjoys it as much as he who does and that, in fact, there is general inclination to consider oneself better endowed with it than one's fellows - all the more cause, Ghazali concludes, to render thanks to God for as much of it as one fancies oneself to have been granted by Him.<sup>63</sup>

Ghazali is well aware that the word 'aql is used in more than one sense and that a good deal of disagreement on the subject of 'reason' is due to the failure to realize the multiple connotations of the term. He discusses four principle meanings in which 'aql is used. (1) It is the quality that distinguishes man from beast and predisposes him to the reception of the theoretical science, **al-'ulum an-nazariya**; (2) it is the knowledge which teaches a child to distinguish the possible from the impossible and makes him discern 'axiomatic' facts such as that two is more than one; (3) it is also the knowledge which experience yields; finally - and here we meet with that ethical turn that is characteristic of the theological examination of 'aql - (4) we call him possessed of 'aql who realizes the consequences of actions and manages to control his emotional impulses in the light of his foresight.<sup>64</sup>

From an epistemological viewpoint, Ghazali is content to contrast 'aql as a source of knowledge with tradition, or **naql**; in this contrast, 'aql will be coordinated with aprioristic, **naql** with 'accidental', historically determined, factual or positive knowledge. This elementary typology of knowledge has been developed into a classification of the sciences or, to be more exact, of the religiously relevant sciences, that is, to stay within the terminology and the value-world of the ethically oriented theologian, the 'useful-sciences'.<sup>65</sup>

Here the **'aqliyyāt**, according to the Mu'tazilite tradition, signifying the rational (and natural) knowledge with the reason ('aql) can acquire by itself. Also it denotes that which is accessible to the reason and especially, on the ethical level, the natural values of law and morals. Ghazali uses this phrase freely and opposes it to **al-'ulum al-Shar'iyā wa ad-dīniya**, namely legal and religious knowledge as based on revelation, or **sam'iyat**, subjects that cannot be proved by apodictic arguments but derive from the Qur'anic or traditional data. **Ilahiyyāt**, theology proper, maintains a somewhat ambiguous position in that it is **sam'i** as being based on scripture but **'aqli** as being amenable to rational argument; prophetology as well as eschatology are merely **sam'i, ex auditu**, that is, they could not have been developed at all correctly without God's assistance through revelation.<sup>66</sup>

63. *Ihya'* IV, p. 112.

64. *Ihya'*, I, p. 75-6, Faris, *Op. cit.* p. 226-228.

65. *Iqtisad*, p. 4 and Cf. G.E. von Grunebaum, *Islam: Essays on the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition*, Menasha, Wis., London, 1961.

66. L. Gardet, "Akliyyat", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, edited by H.A.R. Gibb (et. al), Vol. I. E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1960, p. 342-343.



Ghazali's own classification of the source of knowledge as 'aql and naql - which is actually not so definitely and clearly mentioned as such in the Qur'an itself-pushes Ghazali to support and to defend the superiority of naql and sam'iyat. He only puts a secondary role of 'aql in acquiring sam'iyat in acquiring the science of hereafter, via revelation.

As a natural consequence, Ghazali totally denies the ability of human reason to grasp and to decide what is good for himself and for his fellowman. Reason alone cannot function as a guiding principle in human action.

His act of combating and nullifying the function of reason in choosing the suitable ethical conduct does not mean that Ghazali leaves the ethical problem without any alternative solution. He does depend on Revelation, but he still needs a mediator to teach the teaching of revelation. Curiously enough, Ghazali substitutes the 'active' and 'critical' function of human reason' to be 'inactive' and 'uncritical' one by proposing a new method of cultivating the ethical conduct through the strict guidance of 'shaykh' or 'moral guide'. Due to its importance, Ghazali dedicates a specific subchapter in the *Ihya' 'ulum al-Din* emphasizing the role of shaykh in guiding human conduct.

The role of shaykh becomes very prominent in Ghazali's system of thought since human reason cannot function properly as a guide in choosing the sort of ethical choice. There is a clear feature in Ghazali's system of thought that 'aql will go astray if not continuously being guided by shaykh. Ghazali narrates the kinds of pupil's duty toward his shaykh and vice-versa. There are ten duties of pupils and eight duties of the shaykh towards his pupil.<sup>67</sup>

Most of the discussion in *Ihya'* concentrates on the importance of counsel and advice to purify the souls, to reduce to a minimum ties with the affairs of the world, not to scorn knowledge nor exalt the shaykh but to entrust to him the conduct of his affairs and submit to his advice just as the simple patient would submit to clever physician. Ghazali writes in one of those guide-lines:

... whatever the teacher should recommend to the pupil the latter should follow, putting aside his own opinion since his teacher's (shaykh) faults are more useful to him than his own right judgement because experience would reveal details which might be strange but are nevertheless very useful.<sup>68</sup>

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67. *Mican*, p. 79; also see Faris, *Op. cit.* pp. 126-153. Cf. Ahmad Mahmud Subhi, *Op. Cit.* p. 246-251.

68. Faris, *Op. cit.* p. 131. It seems this is what G.E. von Grunebaum suggests that Ghazali insists on the educational value of obedience to irrational command. See G. E. von Grunebaum, "Concept and function of reason in Islamic ethics", *Oriens*, Vol. 15, 1962, p. 6.

Due to that presupposition and emphasis, Ghazali cannot grasp the mechanism and the real structure of how actually our human reason does work. Ghazali's alternative in choosing **shaykh** as human guide is more problematic and needs a special examination. It is more questionable when Ghazali advises us to behave as 'passive receptor' in front of a sympathetic physician and we should follow 'whatever the teacher should recommend to the pupil. This advice is in extremely opposite direction with Kant's idea mentioned above when we discussed the role of subjective-factor in deciding the law of nature.

From this concise passage, it is obvious that Ghazali nullifies, or at least minimizes the actual function of reason in our worldly life and cannot appreciate the divergence of human opinions, since this divergence is only seen from its negative aspect, namely to lead the human being into error and disaster. We can see this lack only when we can make critical contrast and critical examination between medieval and modern thought, exemplified in Ghazali and Kant.

### B. Ethics founded on Revelation

It has been commonly held by the scholars and the laity alike that there is a wide gulf between 'ethics' or 'normative ethics' which is based on 'revelation' and that which is grounded on 'reason'. Ghazali's classification of sciences, as we have seen above, clearly differentiates between '**ulūm shar'iyā**' or 'traditional sciences' ('**ulūm naqliya**) and the 'rational or secular sciences' ('**ulūm aqliya** or **ghayr shar'iyā**). This classification is also true, for Ghazali, in the domain of ethics.

This classical division is still believed to be accurate and plausible by the traditional '**ulama**'. This is perhaps why Fazlur Rahman criticizes this classical division by saying that the adoption of this misleading division leads us to have a gradually stiffening and stifling attitude towards rational sciences.<sup>69</sup>

It seems to me that there is a 'missing link' in the above classification of ethics. If we assert that some of our ethical conducts, namely human conduct and behaviour in general, are religiously valid, even for those specific religious practices ('**ibada**), do we think that in the midst of taking consideration to obey, in the act of choosing and in the implementation of this type of action, we do not need 'reason'? It is beyond the doubt that in all of our ethical conducts, we inevitably use 'reason', whether these conducts are grounded on revelation or not. If we do think that in doing that 'religious' act we do not need 'reason', this is gravely misleading.

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69. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity*, *Op. cit.*, p. 33.

The more strictly we emphasize this traditional classification, in the end we are obliged to face more actions and conducts which are excluded from the scope of religious commandments. The acute problem is not, actually, confined in this domain. If Ghazali assumes that reason is 'relative', in the sense that it is not so absolute as the revelation gives guidance for human beings, still we are also confronted with the problem of diversity of revelation. In this present pluralistic society, even in the time of the prophet Muhammad, we encounter many types of revelation. The question will be this: which revelation is more 'absolute' than the other? Being a Muslim, he would say that the Qur'anic Revelation will be absolute. A Christian, on the other hand, would say that Christian Revelation will be absolute. And this claim is true for all the rest of the religions.

In stating this problem, I do not put myself in a total scepticism, for it is also problematic for reason 'alone' to choose the suitable guidance to acquire the ultimate virtue. By this manner of putting a question, I merely want to grasp the gist and the inner core of the problem, without necessarily leaving aside the merit of particular 'revelation' as a 'guidance' for the practical life of human beings.

Confronted with this difficulty, I will search for the alternative answer for the tenability or untenability of that 'traditional classification' in ethics. If it is untenable, what is the alternative to change that old paradigm? In looking for the answer, let us see how Kant and Ghazali formulate this problem. Having this fundamental problem in mind, the following discussion will leave aside the 'classical' typological classification by introducing some items of my thesis which I regard appropriate to break the hardened shell of the old paradigm in the ethical discourse.

1. Kant and revelatory or religious ethics.
  - a. The postulate of immortality and God's existence.

Kant's thought concerning a revelatory or religious ethics cannot be fully grasped without having a sufficient background on his postulate of immortality and God's existence. We will discuss in brief Kant's fundamental conception of those postulates in connection with his effort to avoid the dialectical fallacy in the antinomy of practical reason as a prelude to Kant's treatment of religious ethics.

Kant's conception of the highest good in which he can formulate rationally the relationship between virtues and happiness leads him to face two antinomies of practical reason. The first antinomy of practical reason threatens the possibility of the highest good. Our knowledge of the moral nature of men as we find them in the world of sense, leads us to have a conclusion that the moral perfection of holiness of will is unattainable. Because the attainment of holiness of will is a necessary condition for the attainment of the highest

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good for any single rational being, this conclusion also forces us to admit that the highest good as a whole is impossible. This line of thought leads us to a dialectical fallacy.

It is dialectical because it infers from a fact about men as they exist in the world of appearance to the unattainability of holiness of will for them as they exist in themselves. All that can be said with justification is that men cannot attain holiness in the world of sense; the first antinomy arises when a further unjustifiable claim is made that holiness of will is in general unattainable by them. Now if this is Kant's way of resolving the first antinomy, we might expect the postulate of immortality to consist of the assertion that in some supersensible existence (a "future life") radical evil is somehow extirpable and holiness of will is attainable.

But Kant rejects this relatively simple and straight forward way of formulating the first postulate; his reasons for this rejection seem to be largely moral ones. Kant is rather wary of any view which posits a miraculous kind of transformation in man's moral nature, and he leaves no room for "fantastic theosophical dreams which completely contradict our knowledge of ourselves."<sup>70</sup> The postulate of a future life in which holiness is suddenly and inexplicably made possible for man seems to Kant a morally dangerous postulate, much akin to the beliefs of the superstitious believer who praises and placates the Deity in the hope "that God can make him a better man without his having to do any more than ask for it".<sup>71</sup>

A postulate of this kind would seem to make it rational for a man simply to wait until this future life to discover how holiness of will might be possible for him, and not to waste his time with the difficult and always incompletable labors of moral progress toward holiness in this life. A properly formulated postulate must uphold the rationality of moral progress in this life as the proper road to the attainment of the final end of this progress. Kant says:

but since it is required as practically necessary, it can be found only in an endless progress to that complete fitness; on principles of pure practical reason, it is necessary to assume such a practical progress at the real object of the will.<sup>72</sup>

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70. *KPV*, A 221-2, p., 253; *Second Critique*, p. 127.

71. *Religion*, p. 47.

72. *KPV*, A 220-2, p. 252-3; *Second Critique*, p. 126-7.

However, it is plain that in order to formulate a postulate which adequately avoids the error of the first antinomy, it will not be sufficient for Kant merely to postulate that an eternal progression is possible. He must also indicate how this progression, or the supersensible disposition which corresponds to it, can count for the attainment of holiness. It is apparent that in addition to an endless progress from bad to better, some form of divine cooperation is required if man is to fulfill his moral destination and attain holiness.<sup>73</sup>

The "endless progress" is not, then, regarded as an endless temporal series, but as something quite outside time. The temporal progression of man within this life is thought of as "within" this eternal progression and a future life is thought of as a continuation of our temporal progress "although... under other conditions."<sup>74</sup>

We should recall that the entire theoretical basis for the concept of immortality in the critical philosophy is to be found in the transcendental idea of a simple and indestructible substance, the abstract metaphysical conception which is treated in the first paralogism and in the second antinomy of the *First Critique*. This idea is given an immanent use as an object of moral belief, but this adds no speculative content to it beyond what a little metaphysical inquiry can tell us about.<sup>75</sup>

It is obvious for Kant that what is important about the postulate of immortality is not any graphic or appealing description of a future life, but the role played by this concept in allowing us to conceive the possibility of fulfillment of our immanent moral striving in a transcendental existence. Moral belief in immortality is not a doting on the beyond but a faith required by our rational pursuit of the final end of our immanent moral strivings.

Now, we turn to the second antinomy of practical reason. In the course of his life, every man meets moral and social evils and natural catastrophes which cannot but provide a foundation for serious doubt that any force for good exists in the world beyond the feeble intentions and efforts of the moral individual himself and others like him. Neither in nature nor in the actions of men does he perceive any kind of purposive cooperation sufficient to maintain his hope that his ultimate moral purpose may be attainable in the long run. Doubt and uncertainty about the attainability of this final purpose must assail him, and he is strongly tempted to abandon his moral concerns as empty illusions. In the face

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73. *Lectures on Ethics*, p. 84; *Religion*, p. 40.

74. *Religion*, p. 62.

75. *KrV*, A 413/B 440, p. 455-6; *First Critique*, p. 388-9  
*KrV*, A 819/B 847, p. 827-8; *First Critique*, p. 644.  
*KrV*, A 337n/B 395n, p. 415; *First Critique*, p. 325.



of failure and suffering, unable to find a shred of positive evidence that his moral purpose is a practical possibility, the moral man is in grave danger of failing into moral despair. Kant characterizes the dialectical perplexity of such a man in a remarkable passage in the Third Critique:

Deceit, violence, and envy will always surround him, although he himself be honest, peaceable; and kindly; and the righteous men with whom he meets will, notwithstanding all their worthiness of happiness, be yet subjected by nature, which regards not this, to all the evils of want, disease and untimely death, just like the beasts of the earth. So it will be until one wide grave engulfs them together (honest or not, it makes no difference) and throws them back - who were able to believe themselves the final purpose of creation - into the abyss of the purposeless chaos of matter from which they were drawn. The purpose, then, which this well-intentioned person had and ought to have before him in his pursuit of moral laws, he must certainly give up as impossible.<sup>76</sup>

When the moral man has fallen into despair, and has abandoned his final moral end as an impossibility, he must view himself as either a 'visionary' or a 'scoundrel'. If he continues to pursue the ideal of a morally good world, he must see himself as a 'visionary' and his effort as directed toward an empty and impossible goal.

The second antinomy of practical reason thus corresponds concretely to the attitude of moral despair, where the moral agent is driven by his experiences of suffering, failure, and frustration in his pursuit of moral ends to abandon as hopeless the project of establishing a morally good world. Such a despair must always be premature, in the sense that it is always beyond the power of a finite being to know absolutely that the world is destitute of moral goodness, that it provides no ground for the realization of his final end. His despair is always therefore a presumptuous judgment about the world. His hope for a good world is not positively refuted by suffering and failure, but only rendered groundless. The uncertainty of the world and the finitude of his knowledge rather leave man suspended between hope and despair.

To solve the problem of moral despair, Kant introduces the dimension of God in moral faith. Moral faith is the outlook of the rational man who has chosen not to succumb into moral despair, and thus has chosen hope rather than despair. Concretely, then, moral faith consists in a view of the situation of moral action which gives a rational and conceptual expression to confidence and hope that the processes of the world are ordered purposefully and cooperate with our moral volition. This outlook must also guide the attitude of the moral man in situations of suffering and apparent moral failure, and function as a response to moral despair. In Kant's view, the source and the condition of the possibility of

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<sup>76</sup> Kant, *Third Critique*, p. 303.



such an outlook for any finite rational being is a belief in God. The moral man for Kant views the world as the product of a morally perfect creator and ruler,

a self-subsistent reason, equipped with all the sufficiency of a supreme cause, which establishes, maintains, and contemplates the universal order of things, according to the most perfect design - an order which is the world of sense is in large part concealed from us.<sup>77</sup>

Belief in a God, then, gives concrete expression to the moral man's faith that the world of his action is a moral world, a world which cooperates with his moral volition, and into which the effect of his moral striving do not fall stillborn and empty.

For Kant moral faith in God is, in its most profound and personal signification, the moral man's trust in God. In the *Third Critique*, Kant introduces the term "trust" into his definition of "faith" in general. "Faith", absolutely so called, is "trust in the attainment of a design, the promotion of which is a duty, but the possibility of the fulfillment of which is not to be comprehended by us."<sup>78</sup>

The term "trust" appears in a number of Kant's characterizations of faith. What is most important about Kant's use of this term, however, is that "trust" denote, in at least some of these uses, a personal relationship between man and God. Kant refers most explicitly to this in the *Lectures on Ethics*, in a section entitled: "Trust in God under the concept of Faith". Faith, then, "denotes trust in God that he will supply our deficiency in things beyond our power, provided we have all within our power."<sup>79</sup>

If we view moral faith in God as a kind of trust in God, several things become clearer to us about the moral outlook and attitude Kant is presenting. First, we may see that God in whom we believe is not presented to us first as an object of speculative knowledge, and only afterward as a being to whom we stand in a personal relationship. For Kant our belief that there is a God is precisely the belief that there is a being in whom we can place our trust, a being who governs the world justly and beneficently, with the power and wisdom to order the world as is best. The belief in God is fundamentally a trust in him, and the God in whom we believe is essentially that being in whom we can place our absolute trust.

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77. *KrV*, A 814/B 842, p. 823-4; *First Critique*, p. 641.

78. *Third Critique*, p. 324.

79. *Lectures on Ethics*, p. 95, 80 and also *Third Critique*, p. 324.

b. Revelatory or religious ethics.

With the above postulates in mind, at least, one may say that Kant is very familiar with the problem of religion and religious ethics. Nevertheless, we are eager to know what Kant thinks about the ethical system that can be derived from Revelation. Kant has a controversial idea in this specific problem, since he himself in several places warns that morality has no need of divine will or command to insure the validity of moral imperative.<sup>80</sup> If this statement is taken to be true, we are faced with a tension in Kantian ethics. This tension I believe can be even out into a paradoxical statement: On the one hand, he is reported to say that morality does not presuppose religion, on the other, he also says that morality leads to religion.<sup>81</sup>

Confronted with this paradoxical statement, I personally see, after examining Kant's idea, that the above seemingly paradoxical statement is only a matter of strategy to clarify and to sharpen the essence of idea that Kant wants to declare.

When Kant says that morality cannot be based on religion, we should not misunderstand this statement. What Kant wants to underline is the fact that through the idea of supreme good as object and final end of the pure practical reason, the moral law leads to religion, that is, to the recognition of all duties as divine command. This divine command is not expressed as sanctions, but as essential laws of every free will in itself, which, however, must be looked on as commands of a Supreme Being, because it is only from a morally perfect (holy and good) and at the same time all-powerful will, and consequently only through harmony with this will, that we can hope to attain the highest good as the object of our endeavor.<sup>82</sup>

True religion, for Kant, consists in this, "that in all our duties we regard God as the universal legislator who is to be honored."<sup>83</sup> But what does it mean to honor or to reverence God? It means obeying the moral law, acting for the sake of duty. In other words, Kant attached little value to religious practices in the sense of expression of adoration and prayer, whether public or private. And this attitude is summed up in the often quoted words: "Everything which, apart from a moral way of life, man believes himself to be capable of doing things to please God, is mere religious delusion and spurious worship to Gad."<sup>84</sup>

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80. *KrV*, A 819/B 847, p. 827-8; *First Critique*, p. 644. *Groundwork*, p. 110; *The Doctrine of Virtue*, p. 110.

81. Frederick Copleston, S.J., *Op. cit.* p. 343.

82. *Loc. cit.*

83. *Religion*, p. 95.

84. *Ibid.* p. 158

At the first glance, we can say, therefore, that Kant's interpretation of religion was moralistic and rationalistic in character. But, to interpret Kant in this way also can be misleading. For it may suggest that in the content of true religion as Kant understands it every element of what we may call piety towards God is missing. But this is not the case. He does, indeed show scant sympathy with mystics, but we have already seen that for him religion means looking on our duties as divine commands (in the sense at least that the fulfilment of them fits into the end which is willed by the holy will of God as the final end of creation).

What is clear from this discussion, besides that seemingly paradoxical statement, is that we get the gist of Kant's idea concerning the idea of moral law as the one valid path to faith in God is retained intact, by which Kant is inclined to lay greater stress on the immanence of God and on an awareness of our moral freedom and of moral obligation as an awareness of the divine presence, without saying that 'morality' should be grounded on 'revelation'.

What lurks behind this idea is Kant's emphasis on the contribution of human 'active' subject in implementing the divine commands exemplified in the 'religious ethics'. Kant hardly grasps the religious ethics as an ethical system that can stand alone or as something given, and should be forcedly implemented by human beings, without the real contribution of human reason exemplified in his will and consciousness. This theme is rigorously fixed in Kant's initial notion towards the existence of religious ethics. From this standpoint, let us see another Kant's basic idea concerning the religious ethics to see his consistency in holding such a view.

We noted earlier that for Kant the highest good is sought not in the virtue and happiness of a single individual, but in an entire world of persons, each with an absolute value and dignity as an end in himself. The highest good consists in a systematic union of rational beings under common objective laws, moral laws, and is in this way a social end and a social good. The highest good, says Kant:

cannot be achieved merely by the exertions of the single individual toward his own moral perfection, but require rather a union of such individuals into a whole towards the same goal - a system of well - disposed men, in which and through whose unity alone the highest moral good can come to pass.<sup>85</sup>

Each man, says Kant, has the duty to join a moral community of men, and to regard all rational beings as members of such a community. In this minimal sense, men are already a 'people of God' prior to the actual founding of any such community as a human

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85. *Religion*, p. 89.

institution. But in a fuller sense, men are to become a 'people of God' by their own realization, in practice of their social end.<sup>86</sup>

Human reason, says Kant, allows us to form an idea of moral community of men as goal of our actual social endeavor. A moral community must be under laws of reason alone; God is thus thought of as the 'highest law-giver' for this community, but it is reason, and not His arbitrary will which is the "Author" of these laws.<sup>87</sup> God commands morally because he is holy and not because he has the power to coerce. A moral community of men must also be universal; its laws, deriving from reason, are equally binding on all men.

Religion, then, "the heart's disposition to fulfill all human duties as divine commands", is derived from the social character of man. In my pursuit of the highest good as a social good, I must recognize the moral law not only as pertaining to me as a rational being, but also as a law which obliges me to see myself as part of a moral unity with such persons as members of a Kingdom of Ends under a divine head.<sup>88</sup>

Besides the importance of the social dimension of Kant's ethical thought, Kant also emphasizes that it is not sufficient for our purposive action toward the highest good. Trust in God does not mean complacently waiting for God to accomplish our moral ends. "Man is not entitled", says Kant, "to be idle in this business and to Providence rule, as though each could apply himself exclusively to his own private moral affairs of the human race (as regards its moral destiny)."<sup>89</sup>

This point of thought reminds us that Kant still sticks on the same line with his previous idea, that human mind and human being has to be the law-giver in understanding the nature, and here, in the realm of practical reason, we find the similar thought emphasizing that a human being has to be active to attain the highest good. This line of thought can be traced back when he formulates the relation of virtues and happiness insisting that the former is the ground for the latter and a human being has to be active in following that dynamic relationship of a cause and effect. The active participation of a human being in gaining the moral virtue is much more underlined by Kant than the aspect of 'God's grace' upon the human being.

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86. This 'social aspect' of Kant's moral philosophy has been unjustly neglected by Greene's hasty conclusion that Kant, along with his entire century, was distinguished by an 'uncritical individualism' and a 'lack of historical imagination'. See Theodore M. Greene, "The Historical Context and Religious Significance of Kant's Religion" in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, p. LXXIV.

87. Immanuel Kant, *Die Metaphysik der Sitten* (Metaphysics of Morals), quoted by Allen W. Wood in *Kant's Moral Religion* Op. cit. p. 192.

88. *Groundwork*, p. 101.

89. *Religion*, p. 92.

Another crucial point in Kant's thought dealing with revelatory ethics is his unique conception of pure religious faith. Even, in religion, there is so-called "pure" and "empirical" element in its relation to the religious practices found in human society.<sup>90</sup>

In the plurality of world-religions or 'ecclesiastical faith' (*Kirchenglauben*)<sup>91</sup>, Kant sees the single aim of establishing a pure religious faith (*reine Religion*). These attempts are, to be sure, imperfect and conditioned by historical circumstances, but they are nonetheless recognizable approximations to the idea of a 'people of God'.

Pure religious faith is concerned only with what constitutes the essence of reverence for God, namely, obedience, ensuing from the moral disposition, to all duties as His commands; a church, on the other hand, as the union of many men with such dispositions into a moral commonwealth, requires a public covenant, a certain ecclesiastical form dependent upon the conditions of experience.<sup>92</sup>

Pure religious faith is therefore not the alternative the opposite of ecclesiastical faith. Rather it is the true and rational essence of ecclesiastical faith. Ecclesiastical faith is the 'vehicle', of pure rational faith. It is the 'shell' which contains the rational kernel of pure religious faith.<sup>93</sup> Thus religion, like human knowledge and practice, has both a pure and an empirical part.

Ecclesiastical faith, however, is at its best imperfect vehicle of pure religious faith. Ecclesiastical faiths are numerous, divided into competing sects. Further, they base their claim not on reason, but on empirical revelation, as transmitted through a historically, conditioned tradition. For both these reasons, no ecclesiastical faith can lay claim to true universality. "An historical faith", says Kant, "grounded solely on facts, can extend its influence no further than tidings of it can reach, subject to circumstances of time and place and dependent on the capacity of men to judge the credibility of such tidings."<sup>94</sup>

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90. In this sense Kant does not discuss merely the religion of Christianity. He does discuss Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and other religions in his book *Religion*. Kant is concerned to show that many historical religions exhibit a morally based conception of God. See *Religion, Op. cit.* p. 74, 102, 127n, 131n, 172n and 182n.

91. We can extend this notion into other community of religious people, such as Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and so forth.

92. *Religion*, p. 96. My emphasis.

93. *Ibid.* p. 98, 113n, 126n.

94. *Ibid.* p. 94.



Ecclesiastical faiths are moreover often not content with the service of God through obedience to His will, but hope to placate God, or to win divine favor by means other than morally good conduct. Ecclesiastical faith is thus subject to the danger of 'religious illusion' (**Wahn**), the belief that man can become well-pleasing to God by means other than a morally good disposition.<sup>95</sup>

Kant does not condemn practices of this kind as such, but condemns the belief that they constitute a genuine duty to God, or an essential part of religion. This belief transforms faith (**Glaube**) into supersition (**Aberglaube**).<sup>96</sup>

We cannot rest content, therefore, with ecclesiastical faith as the vehicle for pure religious faith, but must attempt to further the ideal of a moral community of men through the use of our reason.<sup>97</sup> Ecclesiastical faith is thus not only the vehicle for pure religious faith, but it is also the historical prerequisite for a moral community of men founded on pure religious faith. Men must set free pure religious faith from its shell.<sup>98</sup>

How is this to be done? It cannot be done through abolition of ecclesiastical faith by 'external revolution', says Kant, but must, like all human progress, be carried out through a gradual reform according to fixed principles.<sup>99</sup> The principle of progress toward a moral community is enlightenment. The service of -God must become "first and foremost a free and hence a moral service."<sup>100</sup> Through enlightenment man is released from his self-incurred tutelage, freed by his own use of reason from his subjection to arbitrary statues and the particular historical tradition through which ecclesiastical faith has presented itself to him.

Kant does not, however, intend to say that ecclesiastical faith, its practices and its historical tradition shall be abolished by progress. He rather says that it is to come to an understanding of itself as a vehicle for pure religious faith so better to serve the pure faith which is its essence. Kant thus looks forward to an epoch when ecclesiastical faith will be no longer any more than a mere vehicle for pure religious faith, and he expresses the hope that:

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95. *Ibid.* p. 156.

96. *Ibid.* p. 162-3.

97. Although not exactly similar, but Kant's statement is near to Muslim philosopher, Farabi's (d. 950) statement which underlines that philosophy is both logically and temporally prior to religion. See Farabi, *Book of Letters* (Kitab al-Huruf), ed. Muhsin Mahdi, Dar el-Mashreq Publisher, Beirut, 1969, p. 131.

98. *Religion*, p. 97, 126n.

99. *Ibid.* p. 113.

100. *Ibid.* p. 167.



in the end religion will gradually be freed from all empirical determining grounds and from all statutes which rest on history and which through the agency of ecclesiastical faith provisionally unite men for the requirements of the good; and thus at least the pure religion of reason will rule over all, "so that God may be all in all."<sup>101</sup>

If we summarize Kant's thought on revelatory or religious ethics, we can find at least four main features which Kant wants to underline. **The first** is the idea of moral law as the one valid path to faith in God, without saying that morality should be grounded on 'revelation'. **The second** is the social dimension of religious ethics, namely that the goodness is not merely centered and possessed by an individual but also has to be flourished and embedded in the social life. **The third** is that the individual human being should be 'active' in pursuing those virtues and happiness, not only to say that he has to wait for God's bounty and grace. And **the fourth** that the adherence of the historical religions - any historical religions - has to think and to put emphasis on the essence and the pure element of religious teaching which is universal. This element of universality in revelatory ethics can only be seen from the vantage of intellectual perspective, namely by our human reason itself. This pure element of historical or revealed religion is much more important, for Kant, in order to gain the ultimate purpose of morality propagated by any religion.

## 2. Ghazali and the problem of religious ethics.

Although Ghazali totally discredits the role of reason in metaphysical sciences, he seems ambiguous in criticizing the *falasifa's* idea concerning ethics. There is an obvious reason for that ambiguous attitude since the *falasifa's* thought on ethics is frequently mixed and blended with sufi or mystical doctrines.<sup>102</sup>

The ethical theory which Ghazali sets forth is the outcome of his later years, when he was living the life of an ascetic and mystic.<sup>103</sup> In that period, he has a state of mind and attitude towards life and the world which he had not had previously. This state of mind determined, to a great extent, the nature of his teachings on different moral problems and the sources from which he derived his view.

The main concern of his life and thought during the sufi period was well-being of man in the hereafter. This concern determined various aspects of his moral theory.<sup>104</sup> It

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101. *Ibid.* p. 112.

102. *Munqidh*, p. 32-4; W, p. 61-3; Mc, p. 94-6. Cf. Quasem, *Op. cit.* p. 32.

103. Quasem, *Op. cit.* p. 16.

104. *Ibid.* p. 22.

made his ethics purely religious and mystical. To achieve that initial purpose, Ghazali considers that instead of looking for the foundation of his religious and mystical ethics from the human reason, he prefers to look for it in human psychology. We will see later that Ghazali employs the *falasifa's* conception of psychology. With a little modification, Ghazali modifies the *falasifa's* conception in accordance with his main purpose to establish his mystical ethics.

a. The psychological basis of ethics

Ghazali sets out to examine the psychological nature of man and discovers that all psychological phenomena originates in the Self. The Self or **Qalb** as Ghazali calls it, is the essence of man.<sup>105</sup> It is the spiritual entity which abides in his physical body and controls his organic and psychical functions. The spiritual heart is the substance, but the physical is only an accident of it. According to him, the concept of the self is expressed in Arabic by four terms, viz., **Qalb** (heart), **Ruh** (soul, spirit), **Nafs** (Self), and **'Aql** (intellect, reason).<sup>106</sup> Each of these terms signifies a spiritual entity. Ghazali prefers to use **Qalb** for the Self in all his writings. The knowledge of this entity is essential to the knowledge of the ultimate reality.

The Self fulfils the bodily needs through the motor (**muharrika**) and sensory (**mudrika**) powers. The motor power comprises propensities (**ba'itha lil haraka**) and impulses (**mubashira lil haraka** or **qudra**)<sup>107</sup> The two special types of propensities are appetite (**al-Quwwa ash-shahwaniyya**) and anger (**al-Quwwa al-Ghadabiyya**). The former urges the body to strive for and obtain what is good for it. It includes hunger, thirst, sexual craving, etc., The latter urges the body to avoid various forms like rage, indignation, revenge, etc. Impulse is the power resident in muscles, nerves and other tissues, that moves the organs at the behest of appetite and anger.

The sensory power (**mudrika**) is the power of apprehension, which perceives and takes cognizance of what is harmful and what is good for the body. Apprehension includes, firstly, the outer sense, viz, sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch; with their special sense organs; and secondly, the inner sense, viz. common sense (**his mushtarik**), imagination (**Takhayyul**), Reflection (**Tafakkur**), Recollection (**Tadhakkur**) and Memory

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105. *Ihya'*, III, p. 3.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 3-4.

107. *Mizan*, p. 23-4.

(**Hāfiza**). After explaining their function Ghazali says that all these powers control and regulate the body and the **Qalb** controls and rules over them.<sup>108</sup>

Appetite, anger, and apprehension are common to man and animals. The self of man possesses two additional qualities which distinguish him from animals, and enables him to attain spiritual perfection; these are '**aql** (intellect) and **Irāda** (will). Intellect is the fundamental rational faculty in man which enables him to generalize and form concepts.<sup>109</sup> There are then six powers included in the Self of man, viz.: appetite, anger, impulse, apprehension, intellect and will. Impulse, apprehension and will cannot take place unless there is the activity of appetite, anger, and intellect, and whenever there is activity of the latter, the former must occur. Appetite, anger and intellect are basic to all other powers of the self. These basic powers have their origin in certain principles in the nature of man. Appetite is derived from the beastly (**al-Bahīmiyya**), anger from the ferocious (**as-Sab'iyya**), and intellect from the divine (**ar-Rabbāniyya**). The last mentioned power is contra-distinguished from that which rebels against the intellect, i.e. the Satanic (**ash-Shaytāniyya**). Thus, there are four elements in the nature of man: the sage ('**Aql**), the pig (**ash-Shahwa** or Lust), the dog (**al-Ghadab** or anger) and the devil (i.e. the brute which incites these two animals to rebel against '**aql**).<sup>110</sup>

'**Aql** and **shaytāniyyah**<sup>111</sup> are contrary forces in the human self that work through the **shahwa** and the **Ghadab** for construction and destruction, respectively. The animal forces, instigated by **Shaytāniyyah**, revolt against '**aql** and try to overcome it. '**Aql**, because of the divine element in it, fights these forces and tries to control and divert them into its right channels in order to make them useful to the Self. If it succeeds in making them completely submissive to itself, the devil in him is weakened and rendered ineffective and a harmony conducive to the realization of the ideal is born. When '**Aql** has

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108. This element of the faculties of the soul is a reproduction of Avicenna's account of the soul with some changes with respect to the order of such faculties and omitting the discussion of external senses Cf. particularly Avicenna, *al-Najat*, ed. M. Kurdi, Saada Press, Cairo, 1938, p. 158-163. Also F. Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology*, Oxford University Press, London, 1952, pp. 25-31. Ghazali's discussion of the soul can be traced directly to that of Avicenna and indirectly to the Greek philosophic tradition, especially that of Aristotle. It must be remembered here that Ghazali considers Avicenna and Farabi the best authorities on Greek philosophy. Cf. *Tahafut al-Falasifah*, p. 40.

109. *Ihya'*, I, p. 64-65; p. 75-77.

110. This account of the faculties of the soul is derived from the philosophic tradition. Nevertheless, according to Mohamed Ahmed Sherif, Ghazali in his work was generally unwilling to use philosophic terms. Sherif, *Op. cit.* p. 27.

111. This dual category of the soul, from the basis of psychology, is several times mentioned by Ghazali, in his theory of ethics. It should be remembered that Kant, from his rational approach, also has dual category. Kant has several terms for this: reason and inclination, objective and subjective, form and matter, morality and prudence, and virtue and happiness.

checked the evil tendency and subdued and harmonized the animal forces, its struggle ceases and the self is enabled to pursue its progress unimpeded towards its goal. It is this state of the self, when struggle in it ceases and harmony prevails, which is described by the Qur'anic phrase *al-nafs al-mutmainna* (the tranquil soul). But, on the contrary, if these forces instigated by *Shaytaniyyā*, rebel against 'aql and overcome it, the evil tendency gets strong and gains complete ascendancy over them, while the divine element becomes weaker till it is almost completely smothered. The evil tendency becomes stronger and stronger, continually inciting them to gratify themselves even at the expense of the good of the self.<sup>112</sup>

It is the evil tendency at its strongest, instigating the animal forces to revolt, which is the active principle in *al-nafs al-ammara* (the instigating soul). The divine element, however, fights and struggles with these forces, and it is seldom that it is completely subdued and its struggle ceases. It is this condition of the human Self, that is denoted by the Qur'anic expression *al-nafs al-lawwama* (the admonishing soul), which is the divine element that is continually struggling against the human evil tendency.

Keeping those psychological basis of ethics in mind, Ghazali begins his discussion of the virtues. According to him, there are only four principle virtues, which are based on the analysis of the faculties of the soul. The three principle virtues, namely, wisdom, courage, temperance correspond to the intellect, anger, appetite or lust respectively. The fourth principle virtue i.e. justice, has the task of properly ordering these faculties in relation to one another. All other virtues enumerated by Ghazali are subordinated to these principal ones. Ghazali's account of these virtues corresponds to that of the philosophers in general and the *falasifa* in particular.<sup>113</sup>

The close resemblance between classifications of these virtues made by Ghazali, and by the *falasifa*, reflects Ghazali's acceptance of philosophic virtues. But we have to be cautious in accepting this view, since Ghazali will develop the philosophic virtue which he accepted towards religious virtue. In the religious virtue Ghazali does not accept completely the philosophic virtues as they are presented by the *falasifa*. He makes his own changes and modifications so that these virtues can be incorporated into his moral theory. Now, we turn to the subject in which Ghazali totally modifies the philosophic virtues in accordance with religious or revelatory virtues.

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112. *Ihya'*, III, p. 6, 9-10.

113. To have a detail explanation of the philosophers' and the *falasifa's* presentation of philosophic virtues, see Sherif, *Op. cit.* pp. 39-76.

## b. Revelation and moral conduct

The preceding discussion has shown that the four principal virtues - namely, practical wisdom, courage, temperance and justice - occupy a central position in Ghazali's treatment of philosophic virtues in its connection with the psychological basis. But he also shows that the good can only be perfected when accompanied by the goods of the body - health, strength, beauty, and long life; and the bodily goods, in turn, cannot be useful without the external goods - wealth, family, fame and noble birth. Ghazali calls all these goods "bounties" (*ni'am*), "forms of happiness" (*sa'ādat*), and "virtues" (*fada'il*).<sup>114</sup>

Ghazali's agreement with Aristotle goes beyond the mere enumeration of external and bodily goods which comprise the instruments for obtaining happiness. By calling these types of happiness bounties, Ghazali suggests that happiness is a gift which God bestows a favor.<sup>115</sup> Aristotle also maintains that happiness is somehow a divine gift, even when it is achieved as a result of human actions. Ultimately, happiness does not depend completely on the human will for its realization. There remains some element of happiness which cannot be acquired but must be bestowed as a God-given blessing. Aristotle says:

Now if anything that men have is a gift of the gods, it is reasonable to suppose that happiness is divinely given - indeed, of all men's possessions it is most likely to be so, inasmuch as it is the best of them all. This subject however may perhaps more properly belong to another branch of study.<sup>116</sup>

Aristotle may be suggesting here a 'theology' or 'metaphysics' of happiness, even though he does not reopen this question in the metaphysics or elsewhere. Ghazali, in contrast, treats this question explicitly when he discusses a fourth category of goods which he calls "the virtues of divine assistance" (*al-fadā'il al-tawfīqiyya*).

While regarding bodily and external good as useful and important instruments for the attainment of virtue of the soul, Ghazali considers the virtues of divine assistance necessary and essential to the virtues of the soul. Indeed, no virtue at all can be acquired without divine assistance.<sup>117</sup> According to Ghazali, assistance (*tawfiq*) is a divine favor, which he defines as the concord of man's will and action with God's decree and determination.<sup>118</sup>

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114. *Mizan*, p. 109-10.

115. *Ibid.* p. 109.

116. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1099b 11-14.

117. *Mizan*, p. 110.

118. *Ibid.* p. 114-115.



In the Qur'an *faḍl* is several times attributed to God alone; for instance, "That is the free gift of God; He giveth it to whom He Willeth".<sup>119</sup> Qur'anic verses even combine *faḍl* and *ni'ma*, such as "... joyful in blessing (*ni'ma*) and bounty (*faḍl*) from God",<sup>120</sup> and in all these cases the virtues of divine assistance are spoken of as gifts or favors from God (*faḍl min allāh*).

Thus, by applying the term virtue to divine assistance Ghazali attributes it to God. In so doing he emphasizes that no other virtues can be achieved without divine assistance. He even maintains that without divine assistance man's own effort in seeking virtue is in vain and may even lead to what is wrong and evil.<sup>121</sup> This statement suggests that the virtues are fundamentally different from the philosophic virtues: philosophic virtues can be understood completely in terms of human choice, whereas the basis of the virtues of divine assistance must be sought in the bounties of God. With in this new framework, divine support of morality becomes crucial for the realization of ultimate happiness. In the final section of Book I of Quarter III of the *Ihya'*, which is the key work in the discussion of vices and virtues, Ghazali says that some people are created for paradise and others for hellfire, and that each person will be divinely directed toward that for which he is created.<sup>122</sup> By this statement Ghazali tightly locks the door for the possibility of human reason to think about his own end, giving thereby less suggestion towards moral reasoning in the way to reach this important human destination.

In order to understand this position, it is necessary to discuss the virtues and divine assistance in greater detail. Since they are related to God and are discussed in a theological context, the virtues of divine assistance are in fact religious and theological virtues. Ghazali maintains that there are four of these virtues, namely God's guidance (*Hidāyat Allāh*), His direction (*rushd*), His divine leading (*tasdid*), and His support (*ta'yid*)<sup>123</sup> Ghazali intentionally makes these virtues correspond in number to the external and bodily goods, as well as to the four principal virtues of the soul<sup>124</sup>.

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119. A.J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, Macmillan publishing Company, New York, 1955, V, 59; also verses such as "the bounty is in God's hands", III, 73; III, 57 and LVII, 29.

120. Qur'an, III, 171 and also see III, 174.

121. *Mizan*, p. 115.

122. *Ihya'*, III, p. 41-2.

123. *Mizan*, p. 110.

124. *Loc. cit.*

1. Divine guidance (**hidāya**), according to Ghazali, is a virtue which is the precondition for the attainment of any other virtue because it is the source of all the goods. He supports this statement with the Qur'anic verse; "He gave unto everything its nature, and further, gave it guidance".<sup>125</sup> In the *Noblest Aim* Ghazali states that "the Guide" (**al-ḥādī**) is one of the attributes of God and that it means "He who guides par excellence"<sup>126</sup>.

2. Direction (**rushd**),<sup>127</sup> for Ghazali, means divine providence (**al-'ināya al-lahiyya**). In the *Maqṣad*, Ghazali lists direction as one of the attributes of God: "the one who directs (**al-rashīd**), meaning he who gives direction to all men in proportion to their guidance.

3. Leading (**tasdīd**) is the third of the virtues of divine assistance. It is present when man's will and actions aim at the right end. It facilitates his action so that he may achieve his end in the shortest time.<sup>128</sup>

4. Support (**ta'yīd**) is the last and the sum of all of these virtues. It sustains man in his actions internally by giving him insight, and externally by strengthening him and providing suitable conditions to attain what is desired with the means at this disposal.<sup>129</sup>

The virtues of divine assistance are not to be found within the strict limits of the philosophic tradition. Rather, Ghazali is inspired here by the Islamic theological tradition, and his special contribution consists in his effort to define, classify, and relate these virtues to those of the soul. In dealing with these virtues, he emphasizes primarily that man cannot attain virtue without God's assistance. For him, God is the ultimate source of good and evil because He is the cause of everything.

Man 'acquires' (**yaktasib**) his actions, that is, they become his by virtue of man being the place of or channel (**mahāl**) of God's power (**qudra**). Reward and punishment are determined on the basis of God's will and not man's will. A man may spend his entire life performing virtuous deeds without attaining happiness unless he receives divine aid.

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125. *Qur'an* XX, 50 and also *Mizan*, p. 115. Most of the verses quoted in relation to these virtues were subjected to extensive analysis by the Muslim theologians, especially those who belonged to the Ash'arite school.

126. Ghazali, *Al-Maṣṣad al-Asna fi Sharh Ma'ani Asma' Allah al-Husna* (The Noblest of Aims in the Explanations of God's Fairest Names), trans. Richard Joseph McCarthy S.J., in *Freedom and Fulfillment*, *Op. cit.* p. 354. Henceforth I shall quote as *Maṣṣad*.

127. *Mizan*, p. 116 Direction is used in the active sense of moving the subject towards the goal.

128. *Loc. cit.*

129. *Loc. cit.*

The virtues of divine assistance as characterized above are different from the philosophic virtues and indeed are even opposed to them. Their basis is a theological concept of divine determinism, whereas the basis of philosophic virtues is human will and habituation. Both kinds of virtues however, are regarded as 'means' and not 'ends' in themselves. Those divine assistance are the means by which God helps man attain happiness, while the philosophic virtues are the means by which man attain happiness by his independent effort, and it is obvious that there is a fundamental difference between them.

The basic issue here is the assertion that without God's aid man cannot attain happiness and thus there is no assurance that the philosophic virtues will lead to happiness which is their end. Surely, they cannot be the philosophic virtue because Ghazali does not believe that unaided reason is able to know the exact nature of such things. Furthermore, anything which comes about as a result of an assumed free will of man is only an illusion. Thus the only way for man to know the real things which call forth God's assistance is through God's revelation in the form of commandments. Therefore, only by fulfilling these commandments can man assure for themselves the possibility of acquiring virtue and consequently of attaining happiness.

In Ghazali's conception, virtue becomes primarily religious-legal virtue. Ghazali even goes so far to equate virtue here with the act of obedience to God (*ta'a*), and therefore investigation of the Islamic virtues is fundamentally a description of the proper way of carrying out the divine commandments. In Ghazali's view, divine commandments and the judgments derived from them are divided into two parts: those which are concerned primarily with belief and actions directed towards God, and those which consist of the actions which man directs toward his fellow man. The former class he calls acts of worship (*ibadat*), such as prayer (*salah*), purity (*thahara*), alm-tax (*zaka*), fasting (*sawm*) and pilgrimage (*hajj*),<sup>130</sup> while the latter he calls custom (*adat*) such as food, marriage, business transaction, permissible and forbidden things, companionship, and travel.<sup>131</sup>

What is important to be noted here is that in contrast with Avicenna who emphasizes the usefulness of the acts of worship in sustaining God's remembrance and the resurrection in the hereafter and also essential for the continuance of social life,<sup>132</sup> Ghazali

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130. Ghazali explains this act of worship in the whole *Ihya'*, Volume I. For the English reader consult M. Umaruddin, *Op. cit.* pp. 260-265, also Sherif, *Op. cit.* pp. 86-92 and Quasem, *Op. cit.*, pp. 199-206.

131. Ghazali explicates custom (*'adat*) in *Ihya'*, Vol. II. Cf. M. Umaruddin, *Op. cit.* pp. 229-259; Mohamed Ahmed Sherif, *Op. cit.* pp. 92-101 and Muhammad Abul Quasem, *Op. cit.* pp. 208-226.

132. Ibn Sina, *Shifa: Metaphysics*, II, *Op. cit.*, p. 445.

finds in the act of worship very little political and social virtues, and his apparent aim in dealing with them is to emphasize their importance for the individual salvation<sup>133</sup> and the part they play in helping him master his passions, schooling him in virtue, and above all, enabling him to seek divine assistance in order that he may attain happiness.

There is a clear tendency in Ghazali's thought to choose "psychology" as the basis of his religious and mystical ethics. By accentuating the psychological nature of man and by the modification of philosophical conception of this human psychology into a strict religious-theological conception, Ghazali can avoid from being trapped into the intellectual discussion of the problem of causal law.

The movement of Ghazali's thought from 'philosophy' to 'theology', or from 'philosophic ethics' to 'religious ethics', actually, starts from his critique of rational-metaphysics in *Tahafut*. In Ghazali's conception of religious ethics, as we have discussed above, the problem of causality comes to the fore again. Ghazali refuses the idea of causality in religious ethics, since the law of causality inevitably presupposes the use of 'reason' in religious field. Whereas, from the early beginning, Ghazali has sharply separated between 'ulūm shar'īya and 'ulūm aqliya. Instead of depending on 'reason', Ghazali chooses 'psychology' which is much more attached to the 'emotion' rather than 'reason'.

The clear realization of Ghazali's conception in refusing the idea of causal law in morality is exemplified in his choice of the 'divine guidance' to lend human beings to get the right path for their ethical conduct. He picks up the verses which denote that the virtues of divine assistance is a gift or favour from God, not from the human endeavour. The most clear implication of this choice is the absence of the idea of law in Ghazali's framework of thought in general. In other words, there is no causal relationship or purposive relationship between God as the ultimate Highest Good and the human beings who seek to attain these ultimate Highest Good. I shall discuss this implication in detail in Chapter IV.

Based on that conception, there is only one available traffic to obtain the ethical and religious virtues, namely from God's initiative. Ghazali does not have a conception which underlies the possibility of human initiative as an active subject to obtain those ultimate virtues. As a result, he denies the notion that the divine commandments in the Qur'an had any purpose (they were rather to be obeyed merely because they were divine commandments).

No matter how highly valuable and plausible Ghazali's conception is, which he claims that it is based on the Qur'an, we can see that Ghazali falls into the **theological re-**

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133. The individual salvation is much more stressed by Ghazali is also found in Sherif's examination, *Op. cit.*, pp. 51, 53, 55, 86, 90, 102 and 108.

**ductionism!** He thinks that by this theological thought, we will be kept away from the 'relativeness' of human thought as the 'guiding principle' of our ethical conduct. For Ghazali, the absolute guidance only comes from 'revelation'. He never thinks that his theological conception may also be 'relative' since it is also nothing but merely a product of human intellectual construction, which is not immune from being criticized and evaluated. Any kinds of 'reductionism' cannot give us the real feature of phenomena at hand.

The gist of Ghazali's idea in accentuating psychology is to refuse the possibility of human reason to construct an intellectual understanding and to interpret the Qur'anic Revelation as the primary guidance in ethical conducts. His theological reductionism underlies the importance of 'revelation' as the sole source of ethical conduct, and strictly prevents the intervention of reason in formulating those universal basic principles of Qur'anic guidance in the actual and historical human life.

We do not question the truthfulness of Ghazali's conception in his theological reductionism when it is applied merely in the field of religious whorship ('*ibāda*). But Ghazali's theological reductionism tends to cover all spheres of life. In that case, it will create difficulties since the human activity as the vicegerent of God in this earth is much wider than only to be confined in sphere of pure whorship to God in Ghazalian sense.

This line of thought will be much more clear in the following discussion concerning Ghazali's theory of mystical ethics. For Ghazali, even 'religious ethics' is not sufficient to guide human being to acquire and to attain the virtues. It is only 'mystical ethics' that will fulfill this demand. Now, we will see a step further where Ghazali removes the actual function of human reason to grasp and to strive in obtaining those ultimate virtues and to conduct life based on the guiding principle of revelation and reason, not to say merely by revelation without reason.

### c. Mystical experience and moral conduct

The notion that those in a religious community who understand inner meanings may attain two kinds of happiness is based ultimately on Ghazali's well-known distinction between the multitude (*al-'amma* or *al-'awwam*) and the few (*al-khāssa* or *al-khawwass*).<sup>134</sup> According to Ghazali the multitude can only understand the external aspect (*zāhir*) of divine commandments, whereas the few can understand both the external

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134. *Ihya'*, Vol. I, p. 5.



and internal (**bātin**) aspects. By repeatedly linking the external commandments to the activities of the body, he suggests, that the external aspects rank below the internal.<sup>135</sup>

In spite of this attitude, the external aspects of the divine commandments remain essential because they are meant for every member of the community. Ghazali rejects those doctrines taught by some Islamic philosophic and mystical schools, according to which some or all Islamic religious practices could be disregarded by the few on the grounds that they are of secondary importance or good for the masses only.<sup>136</sup>

The virtues appropriate to the few who seek ultimate happiness in the hereafter, that is, the vision of God or nearness to God, are established by Ghazali on the basis of a careful and elaborate interpretation of the hidden meanings of the divine commandments. This interpretation can be mastered by the truly learned men (**ulama**) only. These are not jurists, theologians, or philosophers, but only the mystics (**Sufiyya**); and Ghazali identifies himself with the mystics:

I learned with certainty that it is above all the mystics who walk in the path of God; their life is the best life, their method the soundest method, their character the purest character.<sup>137</sup>

Ghazali discusses these mystical virtues in Quarter IV of the *Ihya'*. He also deals with them in a summary way in the fourth part of the *Book of the Forty Concerning the Principles of Religion (Kitāb al-Arba'in fī Usūl al-Dīn)*<sup>138</sup> which is an abridgement of the *Ihya'*. A longer summary in Persian known as the *Alchemy of Happiness (Kimiya-yi Sa'adat)* deals with the same mystical virtues.

As we discussed above, Ghazali learned the 'philosophic virtues' from the **falasi-fa**, especially Avicenna and Farabi. Those philosophic virtues have been modified by Ghazali to be religious-legal virtues through Qur'anic revelation and Tradition. This strategy reoccurs in Ghazali's formulation of mystical virtues. It seems, he cannot refuse the

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135. *Ibid*, p. 4. The titles of "Books" dealing with acts of worship in Quarter I of the *Ihya'* reflects the same view of Ghazali. For example, he calls the book on prayer, "The Mysteries of Prayer"; the one on fasting, "The Mysteries of Fasting".

136. *Munqidh*, p. 40; p. 71-2; Mc. p. 103-4.

137. *Ibid*. p. 32; W. p. 60; Mc, p. 94.

138. Ghazali, *Kitab al-Arba'in fī Usul al-Din*, Kurdistan al-'Ilmiyyah, Misr, 1328.

philosophic virtues as the basis of his mystical virtues as he did before when he formulates his religious virtue. Ghazali clearly gives the content to the philosophic virtues whether with religious or mystical virtues.<sup>139</sup>

According to Aristotle, the passions are: desire, anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, friendship, hatred, longing, jealousy, pity, and generally those states of consciousness which are accompanied by pleasure or pain. He argues that:

Neither the excellences (virtues) nor the vices are passions, because we are not called good or bad on the ground of our passions, but are so called on the ground of our excellences (virtues) and our vices, and because we are neither praised nor blamed for our passions (for then man who feels fear or anger is not praised, nor is the man who simply feels anger blamed, but the man who feels in it in a certain way) but for our excellences (virtues) and our vices we are praised or blamed.<sup>140</sup>

Only when a passion is felt in a certain way can it become a virtue. Virtue is a state of character. It is concerned with passions and actions, in which both excess and deficiency are blamed, while the intermediate is praised and is a form of success; and being praised and being successful are both characteristic of virtue, which is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean relative to us.<sup>141</sup>

Ghazali takes the same passions which are used as the basis for the philosophic virtues, and looks at them in the light of his views of nearness to God. This is the genesis of Ghazali's 'new' virtues which he calls mystical. For example, because the philosophers regard death as the object of the greatest human fear, they conclude that fear is a defect for which the corresponding virtue is courage. Ghazali, on the other hand, looks at the same passion in the light of man's relation to God, who ought to be feared both in this life and the next, and concludes that the right state of character is 'fear of God'. Thus the passions are raised to higher levels beyond the usual low rank assigned to them in the treatment of 'philosophic virtues'. In the same way, Ghazali frequently takes a disposition generally understood in terms of man's relation with his fellow men, abstracts it from the social context and reformulates it in terms of his concept of nearness to God. For example, he takes 'trust', as exercised by man toward his fellow men, and modifies it in terms of man's special relation to God, thus establishing the mystical virtue of 'trust in God'.

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139. Ghazali's rational approach to mysticism in general was perceived and commented upon by some later Muslim thinkers as well as by his contemporaries. Ibn Taimiyyah, for example, states that "Ghazali was inclined toward philosophy presented it in a mystical form, and expressed it in Islamic terminology". See Ibn Taimiyyah, *Naqd al-Mantiq*, Matbaah al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah, Misr, 1951, p. 56.

140. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1105 b29-1106 a2.

141. *Ibid.* 1105 b25-35.

The ultimate end of mystical virtues, according to Ghazali, necessitate purifying the soul and freeing it from the body as far as possible, so that it may devote itself entirely to the highest passion, namely, 'love of God'.

After establishing the mystical qualities as virtue, Ghazali emphasizes what he calls their basic characteristic. In his view, each one of these virtues comprises three elements which follow one another consecutively. The first is knowledge, which produces the second, a positive disposition (*hāl*) which in turn causes the third which is action. Ghazali develops a complicated mystical theory, mostly taken from his *Sufi* predecessors, which involves the term *maqām* (station) and *hāl* (state). According to Ghazali, when a character trait of the soul becomes permanent and persists, it is called a "station": if, on the other hand, occurs sporadically, it is a state. This view of states and stations shows that only stations can be regarded as virtues, since stability is an essential characteristic of virtue. It is for this reason that Ghazali calls mystical virtues 'stations'.<sup>142</sup>

In relation to that conception, Ghazali preserves the notion of order or hierarchy in mystical virtues, that is, which virtue must be acquired first, which one should follow, and finally, which is the highest virtue, which one can acquire it.<sup>143</sup> He agrees with most of earlier *Sufis* in regarding "repentance" (*tauba*) as the first station for the novice, and regards "Love" (*mahaba*) as the highest station possible for man in this life. In his view, repentance, patience, gratitude, hope, fear, poverty, ascetism, divine unity and trust, in this order, all lead to love; whereas yearning, intimacy and satisfaction are the fruit or the by-product of love. These virtues which are also known as 'stations', are the principal mystical virtues because they are presented as the major plateaus to be reached by the few in their pursuit of ultimate happiness.

Besides those mystical virtues which are taken from his predecessors, Ghazali adds six other mystical virtues, namely, resolution, sincerity, truthfulness, vigilance, self-examination, and meditation. The six mystical virtues in question are discussed in Books, 7,8,9 of the fourth Quarter of the *Ihya'*. The basic characteristic of these six mystical virtues is to prepare the way and provide the psychological basis for the major mystical virtues. To distinguish between these two groups of virtues, we call the major ones "principal mystical virtues" and the other "supporting mystical virtues".<sup>144</sup>

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142. *Ihya'*, IV, 3.

143. In my earlier discussion concerning the function of reason in Ghazali's view, I have introduced the role of *Shaykh* instead of reason, to guide the moral-mystical conduct. Here the role of *Shaykh* is very prominent in Ghazali's view. See. *Ihya'*, III, p. 52-54.

144. Sherif, *Op. cit.* uses the term 'supporting' and 'principal', while Quasem, *Op. cit.* uses the term 'means' and 'ends' of the mystical virtues.

These six supporting mystical virtues are divided into three groups by Ghazali. The first includes resolution (**niyya**), sincerity (**ikhlās**), truthfulness (**sidq**), all of which are the subject of Book 8 of Quarter IV of the *Ihya'*. The second group is composed of vigilance (**Murāqaba**) and self-examination (**mahāsaba**) dealt with in Book 8 of Quarter II of the same work. The third is meditation (**tafakkur**) which is the subject of Book 9 of Quarter IV of the same work<sup>145</sup>.

The principal mystical virtues comprises repentance (**tauba**), patience (**sabr**), gratitude (**shukr**), hope (**rajā'**), fear (**khauf**), poverty (**faqr**), asceticism (**zuhd**), divine unity (**tawhid**), trust (**tawakkul**), love (**mahabba**).<sup>146</sup>

We mentioned above that these mystical virtues are particularly concerned with the internal relationship of the faculties of the soul. They make it submissive and obedient to the will of God, and enable the mystic to struggle against the whim of the soul and seek its purification so that it can ascend through the spiritual 'stations'.

Ghazali's analysis of the mystical virtues occupies all of Quarter IV of the *Ihya'*, the largest quarter of the entire book. In his analysis, Ghazali emphatically, asserts that the mystical virtues are the virtues of excellence, not because they describe man's relation to God, but because they are primarily the virtues of the few namely the mystics. Ghazali, by nature, then admits the stratifications of religious men. The lower degrees are usually assigned to pious religious men, whereas the higher degrees can only be acquired by the mystics; it is to these higher degrees that the term mystical virtues most properly applies.

Following Ghazali's argument in constructing his mystical ethics, we can critically note the following: There are two important steps in which Ghazali refrains to allow the human 'reason' to act properly in conducting his ethical life. The first is his conception of religious ethics in which he insists that the notion of good and bad, namely, normative ethics, only can be derived from 'revelation'. As a result of this formulation, he denies that divine commandments in the Qur'an have any purpose; they are rather to be obeyed only because they are divine commandments. The second is his accentuation that in order to get the ultimate mystical virtues, namely the vision of God, a Muslim should strictly train his 'heart' according to the mystical doctrine in the acquisition of **maqām** (station) and **hāl** (state). This training is also much more focused on the improvement of the immediate experience **dhawq** -literally 'tasting' which cannot be apprehended by study or by training the cognitive function of 'reason'.<sup>147</sup>

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145. Cf. Quasem, *Op. cit.* pp. 153-178 and Sherif, *Op. Cit.* pp. 115-123.

146. Quasem, *Op. cit.* pp. 178-189 and Sherif, *Op. cit.* p. 123-152.

147. *Munqidh*, p. 28; p. 54-5; Mc, p. 90-1.

In both realms of ethics, religious and mystical, Ghazali never pays a sufficient attention to the role of human reason in the process of character building. This attitude is only the inevitable consequences of Ghazali's opposition to the 'reason' which ever leads human beings to go astray in the area of rational-metaphysics.

This way of solving the problem, as we shall see, leads to an implausibility when Ghazali begins to assert the necessity of having 'moral guide' (**Shaykh**) in order to train the novice to practice those mystical staircase of virtues. Due to the decisive role of 'moral guide', - whatever the quality of this moral guide is - the follower of mystic cannot have an 'autonomy' of thought and a critical enterprise in general. In short, in the mystical milieu, the function of the human intellect is reduced below even below the level of human thinking.

Most probably, the quality of the character of mystic is extremely pious, but since they are less attentive to the intellectual training and sharpening the cognitive function of reason in all fields of life, this specific character might easily lead them to in the idea that they are the only ones who hold the Truth. Because of this exclusiveness, the character of the follower of mystic, generally, is 'reactive' rather than 'discursive'; 'apologetic' rather than 'demonstrative'.

Nothing is wrong actually in our effort to train our heart, since we are human beings consisting of 'heart' (or feeling) and 'reason'. But to train only 'heart' and become less attentive to train 'reason', as Ghazali's conception stresses, is much more questionable especially in the age of pluralistic society in which the form of 'exclusive type of thought' will face many difficulties.

### C. Absolutism or Relativism in Ethics

So far I have introduced two types of ethics, represented by our thinkers; rational ethics by Kant, and religious or revealed ethics by Ghazali. I have further argued that even religious ethics is seen insufficient by Ghazali to guide man in attaining virtues. Thus he posits another ethics that is overlaid upon his religious ethics and gives it a mystical character, which justifies us to name it "mystical ethics". Does Ghazali actually hold two different kinds of ethics? In order to answer this question let us distinguish between "ends" and "means" in our moral conducts. Suppose the ends are moral virtues, whatever they may be; in this case the "means" are the ways and the tools used to reach those moral virtues. If we maintain this rough distinction between ends and means then the Ghazalian revealed ethics represents **the ends**, whereas his mystical ethics represents **the means**. It is only on the basis of an assumption, therefore, both ethics can be united into a coherent ethical system. This assumption is the idea that 'ends' and 'means' mainly belong to the



same coherent whole. Therefore, on the basis of this assumption we can say that Ghazali has a **mystical revealed ethics**.

It is indeed one ethical system that is in Ghazali's mind but with a tension on both sides; first is on the side of mysticism which holds paradoxically a mystical ethics over and above the revealed ethics; seconds is on the side of intellectualism, which again holds paradoxically a revealed ethics over and above rational ethics. This brings us to a crucial question to be answered by our philosophers: is ethics absolute or relative? In the midst of all those ethical theories let us try to examine their answers to this question. I would like to posit this question first in relation to the rational ethical theory, then in relation to the religious ethical theory; and finally examine Kant's and Ghazali's replies to both cases.

### 1. Is Rational ethics Absolute or Relative?

#### a. Kant's position.

Kant sees only 'reason' as the foundation of ethics. But in saying this, he does not automatically relegate the existence of religious ethics. When he emphasizes the 'reason' or 'pure reason', he actually refers to the aspect of universality of moral law which he wants to promote. He believes that there is a universal law in our human conduct, as he finds it exist in the realm of nature as well. The universal aspect of morality implies the apriority and necessity.

After constructing such a foundation, Kant differentiates the 'formal' and the 'material' aspect of human morality. He validates the material aspect of human morality, since it is the real content of morality which is historical, and changes from one place to another, from one age to another. It is only the 'form' of morality which is universal, autonomous and objective. This 'form' of morality which can only be grasped from the intellectual and rational perspective is much more emphasized by Kant since this is 'absolute', binding all human beings and thus is rational. The material aspect of morality cannot be absolute, since it will be different, and frequently in contrast to one another, even though, Kant always sees the mutual interrelationship of both, namely form and matter,

The 'categorical imperative' is universal, rational and necessary, while the 'hypothetical imperative' is particular and conditional. To reach the understanding of the 'formal' aspect of morality which is absolute, human beings have to struggle and strive with the process of the historicity of his self and the history of human beings in themselves. There is dynamical continuity between the material aspect of morality which is historical and the formal aspect of morality which is rational and ahistorical. Kant regards that the rational ethics which is based on pure practical reason is absolute', binding all human be-

ings, regardless their nationality, religion and race, although its process necessarily needs an historical process.

#### b. Ghazali's view

All ideas and reflective thought that come from reason alone cannot be taken as the basis of guidance of morality at all. Therefore Ghazali does not admit the idea of universality proposed by human reason. He regards human reason as 'relative', therefore, its conclusions change from person to person. There is no such a thing which can be used as the common ground on which all human beings can hold inter-dialogue on morality, irrespective of their differences. That is why he does not admit that morality is derived from human reason. If there is such an ethics it is merely 'relative'. It will change from one place to another, and from one community to another.

It is really very difficult for Ghazali to grasp the rational and the universal aspect of ethical norms which binds all human beings, regardless their nationality, religion and race. He does not accept any kinds of law, even he cannot find any law, which can be grasped and apprehended by our human reason. This kind of belief is the natural consequence of his serious effort to defend one particular way of life and thought in front of many diverse kinds of ways of life flourished in the history of human beings. His strategy to defend one particular way of life, namely the originality of a particular religious morality is by defending the value of this particular moral conduct based on a particular revelation, and entirely neglects the basic principle and the universal aspect of this particular morality which can only be grasped by the intellect of all religious adherences, nations and races.

Ghazali does not emphasize the common or the general things on which we can make a mutual and inter-dialogue on morality among all human beings. Ghazali's strategy is merely to defend one particular moral value, namely Islamic religious value, and more specifically the mystical value. He thus entirely neglects the possibility of finding a common and general value between his norms and others. This is the reason why he always prefers to look at and to look for the "exception" of any general and universal law of morality. His conception of morality is based on those "exceptions" which, indeed, can be found in any universal law of morality and not on the 'common' or the 'universal' ground of morality which can be grasped intellectually and experienced by all human beings. Ghazali only sees that morality based on reason is 'relative'. I shall discuss the implication and the consequences of this notion in my critical examination in Chapter IV.

## 2. Is Religious Ethics Absolute or Relative?

### a. Kant's view.

Although Kant's conception on ethics is 'rational', but he is very religious in his world view. He sincerely admits that his 'rational ethics' cannot stand by itself, even it is threatened by moral despair, if it is not accompanied with the postulates of immortality and God's existence.

Nevertheless, Kant has a unique position here. Without sacrificing his religiousity, he does not agree with the ecclesiastical faith in which the religious ethics is well sustained, since ecclesiastical faith too much emphasizes the particular value of religious ethics. Protestant with the Protestant ethics, Catholic with Catholic ethics, Islam with Islamic ethics, Hinduism with Hindu ethics and so forth. Kant's standpoint is clear; any religious ethics is 'relative' due to its impossibility to be universalized in its real meaning. Any religious ethics embedded in the ecclesiastical faith is based on its own historical setting, which is particular in its very characteristic.<sup>148</sup> Those religious ethical teachings cannot be taken by themselves as universal laws of ethical norms. It is 'reason' and not 'religion' which can formulate the universal law of morality. Religious ethics for Kant is no doubt the source of morality, but this specific religious ethics remains in its particularity if the 'reason' cannot fully and properly function. Even, in its most extreme position, religious ethics can be hindrance to reach a mutual and common ground to have inter-dialogue concerning the human morality.

Kant does not refuse religious ethics as such, but he proposes and emphasizes the 'active contribution' of reason and intellect to grasp the 'pure' element of each ecclesiastical faith. Kant, at the same time, admits that the ecclesiastical faith has a great function in making the formal aspect of morality to have a definite content. That is why Kant also stresses the 'social end' and the 'social good' of religious ethics in the ecclesiastical faith. But this admission cannot however, hinder his initial argument that religious ethics is 'relative'. In order to have a wider and universal perspective, religious person has to enlighten himself by paying more attention to the 'rational' or 'pure' or 'intellectual' aspect of religious ethics. The dimension of causality in morality also has to be recognized in order to make human reason more 'active' in grasping the essence of morality, not only to say, that they have only to wait for God's grace. I shall discuss the implication and the consequences of this position also in the Chapter IV.

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148. Kant himself does not conclude his idea as such. But we can grasp the clear implication of his basic idea concerning the historical religions in general. See, *Religion*, p. 74, 102, 127n, 131n, 172n and 182n.

b. Ghazali's position.

For Ghazali, ethics and morality which has an absolute characteristic in binding human conduct to be a moral is only 'religious ethics', especially Islamic religious ethics which he enthusiastically defends. In another words, religious ethics is 'absolute'. Ghazali's attention is focused only on a particular way of life, namely Islamic community. Whether this particular way of life is accepted by other communities or not is excluded from his initial attention.

The criterion and the standard of its absoluteness is taken from the historical standard, namely that God once upon a time has revealed this moral law. The only criterion for its absoluteness is the belief, not the 'reason'.

This fundamental idea has its main root in his refutation of the function of reason in its endeavor to know the law of causality in nature and in knowing the law, which is supposed to be there, in the realm of human morality. As the direct consequence Ghazali depends on revelation and God's gift to know the real moral conduct, and not on the human's active endeavor to get and to know his own moral conduct. God's gift can be obtained by a strict mystical disciplin conducted by a person under the supervision of *shaykh* (spiritual guide).

Although Ghazali stresses the 'absoluteness' of religious ethics on the basis of revelation, but he himself use his "reason" and even borrows the philosophic virtues to formulate his "mystical virtue". If his conception of religious and mystical ethics is based on human reason, namely based on Ghazali's own way of understanding the revelation, then, it is not immune from the subject of critique. I shall discuss this in the following Chapter. Nevertheless, while Ghazali accepts the absoluteness of religious ethics, he himself takes the benefit and the advantages of 'human-reason' which has been decided before as 'relative' to formulate his mystical doctrine. If that is the case, we have to be critical in understanding Ghazali's statement which underlines that only the religious or mystical ethics is absolute - not in the sense that the teaching of revelation is not absolute - but in the sense that Ghazali's conception concerning the function of human reason is questionable.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE IMPLICATION AND CONSEQUENCES OF GHAZALI'S AND KANT'S ETHICAL THOUGHT

A careful study of ethics that can be constructed out of a critique of dogmatic metaphysics exemplified in Ghazali's and Kant's philosophy reveals two types of thought. The first type of thought is represented by Ghazali, who puts more emphasis on the psychological element and is less attentive to the rational element of our human condition. The second type of thought is represented by Immanuel Kant who underlines the rational element of our human constitution, without neglecting its psychological aspect.

As we have examined above, Ghazali matches this psychological element of our human constitution with the content of divine revelation, and puts aside any hints in the revelation itself which more or less puts also the same emphasis on the rational or intellectual element of our human condition. While Kant, although his methodology is rational, he is still deeply concerned with the religious or revelatory ethics which he regards as the real 'vehicle' for the pure religious faith.<sup>1</sup>

Our investigation reveals that both philosophers use a different methodological approach. This is perhaps the most striking contrast between their ethical philosophy. In order to distinguish this contrasting tread of thought, I would like to call Ghazali's approach "hypothetical", and Kant's "analytical". They themselves, as a matter of fact, do not designate their methods with this terminology; but from a careful study of the way in which they explain their essential idea we can infer the following observation so as it will enable us to classify their approaches into two contrasting methods; the first one is Ghazali's Hypothetical method by which I mean a tool of analysis which emphasizes a striking feature of 'exception' in any general law which may be attached to any kind of discourse. Thus, a Hypothetical method is a procedure which focuses primarily on the problem of 'incomplete induction'; and hence it infuses a skeptical stand into every universal law, be it natural or moral. These general or universal laws are usually held to be constructing a systematic way of understanding a certain problem based on a certain fundamental law and rule.<sup>2</sup> The second is the Analytical method of Kant as a tool which analyzes several functions of the subject and separates them from each other.<sup>3</sup> In Kantian perspective, this

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1. Wood, *Op. cit.*, p. 196.

2. This formulation is taken from George F. Hourani's idea in his article "Ghazali on the Ethics of Action", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 96, 1, 1976, especially p. 71-2 and 84. Reprinted in *Reason and Tradition*.... , p. 138, 159.

3. Kröner, *Op. cit.* p. 109, 111n.



method is used to critically analyze the function, the role and the limits of our reason by explicating philosophically the palpable systematic network of the mechanism of our mind.

The Hypothetical method of Ghazali, generally, puts forward the conditional "if" or conjunction "but" and "when" in order to refer to the "exception" of any rational or universal law established by the discovery and the creativity of human reason. And since this method focuses its attention on the incomplete induction, it is by nature that this method inclines to construct a type of thought which is 'deductive' rather than 'inductive'. A little later I shall discuss this in more detail.

The Analytical method, on the other hand, does not pretend to be able to exhaust the reality of phenomena, but it is clearly in opposition to the Hypothetical method. It works with a principle of induction. To obtain an essential knowledge or a main feature of phenomena, be it natural, social or human, this method tries to decipher the phenomena into its detail items of exploration and collects a variety of the available data from those detailed items. In the next step, it tries to build constructively the main body of knowledge based on the result of those detailed elaboration and examination. To obtain a certain knowledge of phenomena, there is a reverse movement in its practical operation as contrasted with the Hypothetical method. Analytical method, in essence, is 'inductive' rather than 'deductive'. Now I shall attempt to discuss both of these approaches in detail in order to demonstrate the point I am making with regard to the positions of both philosophers.

### **A. A different methodological approach.**

Our critical examination to see the implication and the consequences of Ghazali's and Kant's ethical thought will precede the discussion of 'methodology' used by Ghazali and Kant. As far I can discern, the problem of methodology is very central if not highly decisive, in both thinkers. It will be a great help for us to grasp the essence of their ethical thought through their methodological approaches. Understanding their methodology properly will lead us to comprehending of the subsequent ramifications of the problem at hand, without losing ourselves in the midst of complicated ethical argumentation. What I claim is that the main ideas of Kant and Ghazali have a close connection with their methodological approach in solving their philosophical problem, especially in ethics. Let us begin with Ghazali's methodology.

#### **1. Ghazali's Hypothetical Method**

To establish his mystical ethics, as a positive reaction to his refutation of the dogmatic-emanative metaphysics, Ghazali deliberately employs hypothetical method. As I

have explored in Chapter II, Ghazali prefers using the conditional "if" (for instance: "Lying is evil" is not universal **if** it is intended to save the prophet's life) or the conjunction "when" "Killing is not evil", **when** it is punishment for crime) to refer to the "exception" of any rational or universal laws of morality.

Ghazali uses hypothetical method in the realm of morality as well as in the realm of nature. The most striking feature in both realms is their close resemblance and clear analogy with Ghazali's argument in proving the validity of miracles. It is well-known, that Ghazali's account for a miracle is much more emphasized on God's intervention in the natural courses of the events. God's intervention is a kind of a supernatural 'exception' which can be formulated in hypothetical statement: "... if God wills", or "... if God does", etc. This formula is an abbreviated statement which says, for example,: "The sun rises at a certain regular time if God wills"; "The stick can be changed into serpent if God does", etc.

Ghazali exaggerates the reality of this unique historical event which occurs only once in a time during the life of a prophet. And this event is hardly supposed to occur again after the time of a prophet. Nevertheless, Ghazali is much more impressed by this miracle and, in turn, this deep impression has an important contribution to formulate his hypothetical method. For this purpose, Ghazali clearly overlooks and willingly sacrifices the reality of Qur'anic revelation as a miracle, which is far beyond the notion of miracle in the traditional sense.<sup>4</sup>

Hypothetical method in Ghazali's mind is very strategic and decisive, since only by using this method he can easily defend and prove the validity of religious doctrine; particularly, the Islamic revelatory ethics. Furthermore, due to his rigorous conviction of the validity of this hypothetical method, Ghazali does not restrict its application merely within the confines of ethics, but its application is extended into the realm of 'causal necessity' which is prevalent in the domain of science. Indeed, it is in this domain that he develops this method. For, as we have seen, he refuted the necessary conception of causality and represented causality as a contingent phenomenon on the universal will of God, which is absolute. Therefore, this method is merely extended to the ethical field as well.

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4. This standpoint is contradictory to Averroes' view. Averroes, in understanding the reality of miracle, stresses the latter rather than the former. See Averroes, *Tahafut al-Tahafut*, Dar al-Ma'arif, Misr, 1981, p. 315 and Cf. Barry S. Kogan, "The Philosophers Al-Ghazali and Averroes on Necessary connection and the problem of the Miraculous," in *Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism*, Parviz Morewedge, ed. Caravan Books, New York, 1981, p. 125. Also Cf. Leaman, *Op. cit.* p. 81. Not only Averroes who refutes, or at least doubts the validity of Ghazali's conception of miracle which is conducive to be mislead and misunderstood. Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905) also opposes Ghazali's idea when he says: "in requiring faith in the exercise and unity of God, Islam depends upon nothing but proof the reason and human thought, which follows its natural order; it does not astonish you with miracles, nor extraordinary occurrences nor heavenly voices". See Dwight M. Donaldson. *Studies in Muslim Ethics*, S.P.C.K., London, 1953, p. 250-1.

In the immediate discussion, I want to focus my critical examination concerning Ghazali's hypothetical method which is applied in the field of ethical discourse, whereas the same method which is applied in the realm of nature or in the scientific discourse will be elaborated in another section of the following discussion.

#### a. Hypothetical method and particular religious ethical norms

Ghazali's hypothetical method is clearly understood in his refutation of the idea of universality of ethical norms proposed by our human reason. Instead of supporting the idea of universality of ethical norms based on reason alone, Ghazali with his hypothetical method stresses the greater value and the importance of the particularity of ethical norms, namely, particular revelatory ethics, especially, Islamic ethical norms.

From this specific perspective, Ghazali is more consistent than Kant in his effort to construct ethics on the basis of a critique of dogmatic metaphysics; for he critically abandons all metaphysics including metaphysics of ethics. But for Kant, metaphysics is divided into two branches. First is **Speculative** and second is **Practical**. Kant denies the metaphysics which operates in the Speculative field, namely, in the field of ontology, philosophy of nature, rational cosmology and rational theology. While in the Practical field, he allows metaphysics to operate and this operation is restricted in this specific field alone.<sup>5</sup>

We must, however, note here that there is a difficulty or perhaps a handicap in Ghazali's methodology which seems to close the possibility of having an 'intellectual perspective' to see whether a particular religious norm has any contribution towards establishing universal ethical norms. When we consider the structure of modern societies today it seems more plausible to move gradually to a universalistic conception of ethics. For since modern societies are structured in a pluralistic way, a relativistic conception would also lead to a pluralistic ethics that may lead to a chaos in legal and political spheres. In the face of this chaotic situation, if an ethical system defends universal norms it will be more cohesive with the pluralistic world-view. We shall see later whether Ghazali's outlook promotes a better solution for the problems which a pluralistic society faces. If it does, then we must still further ask how?

First of all, in a pluralistic society a mutual dialogue is essential. In this case we must ask how diverse religious ethical norms, including of course secular ethics as well,

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5. Kröner calls this aspect of Kant's idea as 'metaphysical validity of the moral life' or 'a metaphysical tendency within the critical system'. See *Op. cit.* p. 4, 41-2.

entertain mutual dialogue; in other words, how can we construct a model in our moral philosophy that would prepare such a favourable atmosphere? In the second place, in order to justify our discussion of a mutual dialogue, we must show that the problem of the universality of ethical norms has this social dimension. If this social dimension is neglected this problem cannot be solved philosophically. My discussion of Ghazali's and Kant's method shall exhibit this convergence point of the philosophical with the social. Therefore, I would like now to return this aspect of their methodology in order to demonstrate my point.

Ghazali's hypothetical method, is originally, intended to defend and to salvage the existence of 'particular' historical Islamic ethical norms, although the Qur'an itself suggests that we should acquaint other particular traditions in order to get to know and to recognize each other<sup>6</sup> To have such a platform or framework of dialogue, especially, in a pluralistic society is out of Ghazali's initial concern. It is my argument, that to have and to grasp the idea of universality of ethical norms in our mind will contribute to a valuable clue toward a mutual dialogue among the adherence of those diverse members of pluralistic society.

Following Ghazali's argument, we can identify that there is an interesting distinction between those obligations which are known and motivated by our reason alone and those obligations which are known and motivated by revelation. There is quite a difference between these two types of obligations, not just by virtue of the different routes to them but in themselves. Norms established by reason are universal while those based on revelation are particular and revealed to us in detail so that we know how to act if we wish to merit the ultimate reward. Instead of assimilating these two types of norms, Ghazali puts a 'contradistinction' between them. He cannot reduce his formula of 'contradistinction' to be a 'mutual interrelationship' between them.

We can know, indeed, by the use of our intelligence the broad direction in which our moral activity ought to go, but the more detailed and specific rules provided by revelation complete the picture to provide us with a practical guide to everyday actions within the framework of the entirely general and rational rules. Although revelation provides us with these rules, they are readily seen to conform to the universal principles of reason and the desirability of our attaining our ultimate goal. In that case we need to determine the precise role reason and revelation play in the construction of ethical norms.

However, it is problematic whether we could arrive at these rules just by the use of reason. And due to this problematical issue, Ghazali constructs rather too impetuously a

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6. Qur'an, *Hujurat*, 13.

strategy by putting reason and revelation into a contradistinct plane. Ghazali's strategy is, I believe, dichotomical to such an extent that it does not leave any room for compromising between reason and revelation. Given his philosophical system, however, it is more appropriate not to indulge into such a strategy. For we could determine just how we should act, at least in general terms, by the use of reason alone, although our attainment of moral perfection and the spread of moral perfection over all classes of society is far less likely than would be the case were we to be provided with revelation.

Ghazali, therefore, with his hypothetical method, is not concerned with utterly 'general rules or truths', but rather with defending the dogmas established by a particular lawgiver-prophet within a certain religious and cultural context. The purpose is to strengthen faith and acceptance of the law by those who are not capable of following the justification on purely philosophical lines, and so he must be content to accept a justification in terms of only the 'similitudes' (*amthāl*) of the demonstrative truths.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, Ghazali and his fellow theologians are sometimes over-ambitious to argue that the principles and customs represented in positive law are equivalent to the universal truths of the philosophers, and in such cases much confusion arises. This is solely due to a category mistake, to a misunderstanding of the differing logical natures of philosophical ethics and religious ethics, since the philosophic ethics relies on the idea of form in the intellectual plane, while the religious ethics depends on the 'particular-historical' religious teaching.

Nevertheless, to put philosophical ethics, which is universal in its main characteristic, and religious ethics, which is particular in its most striking feature, face to face does not give much benefit. There is something lost in such an understanding, especially when it is seen from the perspective of complexity of social life in our pluralistic age. It will create more problems rather than contribute towards a clue in order to develop a serious effort to build a peaceful life among the adherence of diverse religious ethical norms, and among the adherence of secular ethics as well. What we need is a kind of 'intellectual perspective' that enables us to gaze the clear border line between religious ethical communities, and at the same time we can intellectually 'leap' these border lines without losing our own cultural and religious identity.

My critical appreciation toward the problem of hypothetical method and particular religious ethical norms is formulated in this question: Does the act of rescuing the 'particular norms' - any particular religious norms - need to be in a total opposition to the idea of having an idea of universal ethical norms? How should we, actually, behave and conduct our own way of life in this real pluralistic society with its diverse standard of ethical

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7. Oliver Leaman, *Op. cit.* p. 142-3.



norms? Even, I have to add here that in certain religious community, be it muslim or non-muslim, there are various types of ethical thought which are not easy to be compromised. Can a particular norm of life be universalized? Ghazali, with his hypothetical method, will answer that it is impossible to do so and it will be futile to undertake such an enterprise. This answer is absolutely right, but this simple answer has its own limits and defects. This limit will be clearly seen if 'every' adherence of particular religious ethical norms will defend rigorously their 'exclusive' truth emotionally, and moreover, if they tend to spread their own standard of particular norms into another neighbouring culture. Indeed, it will cause much problem, since this is actually the initial source of conflict.

Only through a philosophical thought, I believe, we can contribute a valuable solution to get rid of such an impasse which is confronted by any custodians of particular religious norms by means of introducing the idea of universality of ethical norms at the intellectual level. It is this philosophical approach that I call "intellectual perspective". I shall discuss this more later on. Introducing the idea of universality of ethical norms does not entirely pretend to replace the deep meaning and the value of all particular religious ethical norms, since it is also beyond its essential aim. In other words, having the idea of universality of ethical norms in mind does not mean that all particular religious ethical norms are meaningless and have to be obliterated. This is something absurd and even an impossible project.

The only contribution that 'philosophy' can offer is to submit a fresh explanation through the language of those particular religious norms concerning the intellectual understanding of the idea of universality of ethical norms which goes beyond the bounds of particularism, but simultaneously never pretends to replace those valuable and meaningful particular norms by something else. In such a way a social and religious tension among the adherence of diverse religious ethical community, even among those secular ethics, can be reduced into its minimum degree. This way a relatively high degree of universality can be achieved.

#### b. Hypothetical method and deductive thinking

Let us see another aspect of having a framework of hypothetical method in our mind. With his hypothetical method, there is some kind of a psychological tension in Ghazali's way of thought. A psychological tension between the necessity to appreciate and to defend the 'unique-particular-historical event', exemplified in the occurrence of miracle, and the necessity to explain the 'general-regular events' which regularly occurs through time. To solve this psychological tension, Ghazali convincingly approves the high value of the former and thus becomes less attentive to have a serious undertaking to the latter.

In all his works, consequently, Ghazali regards miracles as unique particular historical events which he takes as a starting point of his thought. In other words, his thought is always overshadowed by miracles. Furthermore, only under the light of miracles that he tries to analyze and to deduce all phenomena, be it human, social or natural, in this world. This is actually what I mean by the term '**deductive thinking**'. This principle of thought underlines the basic original formula exemplified in a revelation, and from which all phenomena are explained and analyzed.

The principle of verification, in Ghazali's mind, is valid only by means of regressing to the 'original formula' permanently explained in a particular revelation. All diverse phenomena have to be analyzed from the angle of particular revelatory historical event. In some cases, this way of thought is true indeed; but not all phenomena can be explained in this way.

It is hardly possible for Ghazali to effectively use the principle of verification in the reverse way, namely, by means of 'inductive thinking'. He cannot begin observing the diverse phenomena, then examine them into detail items of exploration in order to obtain a 'relative' final conclusion to understand and to explain those phenomena from our human perspective. Due to this psychological and philosophical tension, Ghazali is suspicious of the inductive thinking.<sup>8</sup> Most probably, he thinks that this methodology will easily lead the agent into 'unidentified area' and loose contact with that 'particular historical event', that is the guidance of revelation. If that is true, the agent will go astray. To prevent from going astray, he prefers emphasizing hypothetical method within the mould of deductive thinking, rather than analytical method within the framework of inductive thinking.

Are these psychological and philosophical tensions plausible? Does inductive thinking always lead one into the realm which is in opposite to the guidance of revelation? To be clearer on this problem, let us continue our examination into the analytical method which is used by Immanuel Kant.

## 2. Kant's Analytical Method

In order to refuse the doctrine of dogmatic-speculative metaphysics which, in its very essence, is rational, Kant uses analytical method to vindicate how actually our reason works. The most striking contrast between his and Ghazali's methodology in their effort to

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8. Cf. Ghazali's understanding the meaning of 'ijtihād' which is 'analogy based on revelation (*qiyas shar'i*)'. The starting point must be a rule (*hukm*) known exclusively from scripture, and this must not be distorted by enunciation of divine reason (*'illa shar'iyya*) at this stage. The *'illa* is to be inferred from the original rule, through understanding this rule in its context. See, Hourani, *Reason and Tradition*, p. 162.

deny the doctrine of dogmatic-speculative metaphysics is this : Ghazali depends on the 'supernatural power' in thi sense that he emphasizes a miracle which is beyond the human reason to grasp, while Kant depends on rigorous rational analysis concerning the inner core of network of human reason alone.

To achieve such a purpose, he uses analytical method by means of separating the several functions of the subject-matter, namely, the whole mechanism of the understanding and pure reason in acquiring the knowledge. Step by step, Kant analyzes the notion of 'space' and 'time' in his Transcendental Aesthetic. The most important finding he reaches from this initial analysis is the notion that space and time is the 'form' of our intuition. Our direct and immediate acquaintance with an object can only be meaningful if it is under the 'form' of space and time.

From analyzing the notion of space and time, Kant then investigates philosophically the notion of 'categories' of understanding in his Transcendental Analytic. His investigation leads him to have an important conclusion that those twelve 'categories' are a priori in our understanding, and as such they are 'forms' of our understanding. The combination of the form of intuition and the form of understanding yields the human knowledge in general. Kant does not stop at this notion. He goes further and comes to the Dialectic of our Idea of Pure Reason in which he severely criticizes the idea of speculative-metephysics.

It is this process of investigation that I call "**inductive thinking**". By this method, Kant collects all available data to come to the final conclusion. By using those various data, he is able to depict the anatomy of palpable systematic work of our reason. In doing so, he merely depends on the rational analysis to vindicate the role, the function and the limit of our reason. In the *First Critique*, he carefully scrutinizes the systematic network of our mind. Now I shall examine this method in its detailed outlook.

#### a. Analytical method in the *First and Second Critique*

To mention only some of Kant's essential findings with his analytical method in the *First Critique* is that reason always acts on a certain principle, not to say it acts haphazardly without any principle whatsoever; that 'space' and 'time' are forms of intuition; that 'categories' are pure forms of the understanding. And only by a mutual cooperation between those two forms, knowledge can be acquired. The result of this mutual cooperation is defined by Kant in his well-known formulation as "reason prescribes to nature and to morality its laws". Kant's most important discovery with his analytical method concerning the nature of our reason is his clear idea that human reason is limited in its ability to know the nature of things, let alone the nature of God which is beyond its ability to grasp. What can be known by human reason is merely 'phenomenal'.

This analytical method is also well applied in his *Second Critique*. Besides 'categories', he finds in the realm of human understanding, Kant also sees the 'categories' which are peculiar to sphere of moral life, such as freedom, duty, conscience, motive, guilt, responsibility, etc.<sup>9</sup> The idea of 'moral law', as a matter of fact, functions as the 'categories' in our mind. Both of them, namely, 'moral law' and 'categories' prescribe to their own domain their own laws. Theodore M. Greene plainly sees a similar function of these:

sistible apprehension of moral value, takes the place of, or at least constitutes an essential supplement to, sensuous intuition and 'practical' reason, whose law (the moral law) is the analogue to the categories of the understanding, organizes blind moral intuition into a rational moral apprehension.<sup>10</sup>

Analytical method, which is inductive thinking in its gist, rests upon the sovereignty of reason over nature and inclination. This sovereignty is the result of ethical subjectivism, namely, a type of ethics that underlines the role of the subject. Even the expression the intellect prescribes to nature and to morality its laws has a practical connotation, for prescribing is a kind of practical action. Kant interpretes the relation between theoretical reason (or understanding) and nature by the analogy of the relationship between practical reason and will. The logical form, i.e. the highest principle of natural order, are conceived as norms, rules, regulative concepts—all terms play a decisive role in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. And all these terms indicate that Kant interpretes the operation and function of reason, even in the theoretical field, along the lines of ethical legislation; he alludes directly in one passage to the idea that the root of reason as such is practical. Nature indeed depends upon reason, for it is rational and scientifically knowable only on this account. Reason, be it practical or theoretical, is legislator in both fields, but the idea of legislation itself is a practical one.

From this specific angle, I argue here, that there is a different decisive implication of using hypothetical and analytical method in the sphere of moral life. (I shall discuss its implication in the area of natural science later).

Ghazali with his hypothetical method which leads him to construct a mystical ethics has a clear and strict policy to treat the reality of human desires, impulses and inclinations. Kant with his analytical method also faces the same problem which finally leads him to construct a rational-moral law. It is important to see an exact and a clear difference between Ghazali and Kant here.

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9. Kröner, *Op. cit.*, p. 33.

10. Theodore M. Greene, "The historical context and religious significance of Kant's religion", in Immanuel Kant, *Religion* ....., p. lii. The Italic is added.

Ghazali takes the policy, which I call a 'suppressive policy', in order to reduce those inclinations and desires into its minimum degree, and if it is possible to nullify them by means of a strict mystical discipline and daily ritual habits in the mystical milieu. While Kant takes another policy, which I call it as 'managerial' or 'organizing' policy. Kant regards those inclinations and desires as a natural instinct which, in some cases, will be needed for the survival of human beings themselves, but Kant, with his rational and moral law, wants to organize rationally those various subjective impulses and desires into the higher objective ultimate end.

#### b. Analytical method and the active role of the subject

We still critically discuss the analytical method used by Immanuel Kant. By emphasizing the hypothetical method, Ghazali hinders himself to grasp the idea of universality not only in the area of morality but also in the area of natural sciences exemplified in his critical opposition to the idea of universal causality in nature, not to use the term mathematical formula of nature. Kant, on the other hand, sees clearly the advantage of mathematical formula within his analytical method. What is important, in Kant, is that for him even mathematical formula itself is originated from 'practical reason'. A notion that is far beyond Ghazali's imagination, since Ghazali considers that ethics includes in religious sciences ('*ulūm dīniyya*), and has nothing to do with mathematics.<sup>11</sup>

Kant conceives of space and time primarily as principles of mathematical knowledge both pure and applied. Nature can be known mathematically because space and time are both forms of human intuition and therefore forms of nature herself. Space and time are subjective and therefore objective too, for it is the knowing subject which is the legislator here. Space and time are the forms that order the sphere of objects which can be known mathematically.<sup>12</sup> The doctrine of space and time, in Kant's idea, is invoked for the purpose of explaining the possibility of mathematical physics, but it has an ethical background and ethical implication. The knowing subject is able to encompass the sphere of objects because it is on the same level as the moral subject. Man as a subject is not a mere product of nature because, and to the extent that, he is a moral agent, i.e., free and autonomous author and initiator of his own actions.<sup>13</sup>

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11. *Mustasfa, I*, p. 5-6; 62-3.

12. Cf. Ghazali's understanding of space and time which is merely focused on the reality that space and time are created by God, since the discussion of space and time is strongly related to the creation of the world. The idea of the world that is created by God from 'nothing' (creation *ex nihilo*) and created in time are the only obsessive idea of Ghazali. Since he is tightly tied with this transcendental idea, he hardly sees its connotation with the mathematical formula of the nature.

13. Kröner, *Op. cit.* p. 69.



The most important result of our examination of Kant's analytical method in its relationship with our critical contrast to Ghazali's hypothetical method is the way he places the role of subject in his system of thought, be it in theoretical or in practical spheres. He puts the human subject in a central figure which has to be active in both realms, since it is this subject himself, in fact, who legislates the law. Without this 'activity', 'curiosity' and 'creativity', cannot be achieved in the domain of morality as well as in the domain of sciences.

Now, I think that the difference between hypothetical method used by Ghazali and analytical method used by Kant is clear: Ghazali puts a transcendental God as a central point, manifested in his explanation concerning the miracle, and from Whom he deductively tries to analyze the reality of the phenomenal world. In refusing the peripatetic philosophers, Ghazali always speaks of God as a willing subject and as a willing creator, which is absolutely true, indeed, but it is unfortunate that Ghazali is "less attentive" to search the reality and the consequences of admitting human being as a 'willing subject', too. While Kant in his system of thought takes God as a willing subject for granted and focuses his examination on the human being as a 'willing subject' which has to be active in formulating the basic laws of nature and laws of morality.

Placing human being as 'active subject' in a central figure opens more possibility for the human beings themselves to operate and to perform the mode of inductive thinking. The primacy of practical reason, if it is seen from Kant's conception, means putting the 'human subject' or the 'human agent' as a central figure, who has to be active in using his intellectual capacity in the domain of theoretical and practical reasoning while seen from Ghazali's conception, the primacy of practical reason means subduing the human subject under a strict discipline of mysticism.

### c. Analytical method and particular religious ethical norms

If from the beginning Kant doubts and refuses the ability of our reason to do metaphysics and strongly holds that no science can be constructed out of a critique of dogmatic metaphysics, Kant apparently transgresses his own principle, when he seriously tries to apply his own 'refused' principle in the domain of ethics. The term 'rational ethics' by itself approves that Kant's own formulation of ethics is still tightly attached to his confidence on the ability of human reason to formulate a law of morality by itself. If that is true, then, Kant is not consistent with his own previous principle of thought. Nevertheless, we have to be careful to charge Kant's system of thought as inconsistent only due to his allowance for metaphysics to operate in the area of practical reason.

As far as I understand, the notion of 'metaphysics' in a practical realm and 'metaphysics' in a dogmatic-speculative realm is different. If a dogmatic-speculative metaphysi-

cian puts emphasis on the 'logical' formulation or 'rational' foundation of God's existence and inclines to pass beyond the boundaries of human capacity to grasp, Kant replaces that emphasis to be 'ethical' foundation of God's existence in his system of thought, which has a direct practical connotation with a daily life of every human being.

Kant's discussion of particular historical revelatory ethics in his work *Religion* remarks a great difference from his predecessors and even his successors of dogmatic metaphysicians. Kant is deeply convinced that all religious life must result from a moral disposition of mind, or even more that religious life is nothing but a special mode of moral life.<sup>14</sup> Due to that appreciation, Kant has a special attention to the particular historical revelatory ethics which explicitly stated that he does not want to abolish those particular religious ethics which are well sustained in many cultural traditions. Rather, he suggests that those particular religious ethics are to come to an understanding of themselves as a 'vehicle' for pure religious faith, to serve better the 'pure' faith which is their essence. Kant, thus, looks forward to an epoch when particular 'ecclesiastical historical faith will no longer be any more than a mere 'vehicle' for 'pure' religious faith.<sup>15</sup>

Whether Kant's original idea can be realized or not is another matter here. In any case, if we are sufficiently convinced to accept the alleged charge that Kant is inconsistent with his own thought, we have to take two things into a broader consideration: First, how Kant is able to accommodate the historical and particular revealed religious ethics into the whole system of his ethical thought. Second, Kant's own conception of God which is supposed to be the answer for the deadlock confronted by the metaphysicians. For one thing, that Kant obviously cannot leave his basic methodology constructed in his *First Critique* which is rational and analytical. But as I have argued above that the usage of the methodological approach which is rational and analytical does not automatically yield the result which is rational and dogmatic. The idea of 'personal and living God' in Kant's metaphysics of moral, for example, is totally different from the idea of God proposed by the dogmatic metaphysicians such as Spinoza who emphasizes the conception of unwilling God that acts merely according to the necessity of nature.<sup>16</sup>

Kant is in a difficult position here, as Ghazali is when he faces the same difficulty. When Ghazali faces the difficulty of ascertaining and assigning the task of human rea-

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14. *Ibid.* p. 35 and Cf. J.B. Schneewind, *Op. cit.* p. 189-191.

15. See footnote 90, Chapter III, p. 87.

16. Benedict De Spinoza, *On the Improvement of the Understanding The Ethics Correspondence*, translated by R.H.M. Elwes, Dover Publication, INC, New York, 1955, Part I, Prop. 17.

son in seeking the ultimate ethical truth, he directly leaves the human reason, or it might be better to say that he puts a minor role of human reason, and takes the revelation and rashly mixes it with the mystical tradition with which he is supposed to be familiar. Kant, on the other hand, cannot do the same although he is very familiar with revelation, and cannot leave aside the benefit of reason as the base for ethical conduct without necessarily sacrificing the essence of the historical revelation.

Principally, Ghazali and Kant have the same broad perspective in appreciating the existence of divine revelation. Both of them frequently quote the verses of revelation to support their idea. The only difference, as far as I can see, is in how they assign the task of reason. In other words, are we legitimate to ground our ethical conduct on 'reason' alone? Ghazali refuses the legitimacy of our human reason to be the base of our ethical conduct, while Kant accomodates both of them. He can accomodate reason and revelation, but the accentuation is much more on the former rather than the later. For Kant, it is clear that moral life can give faith its content but faith can never give to moral life its content. Faith can never provide a basis for the autonomy of the moral will; it is the moral law which provides a basis for faith. It is the fate of human history, that those two different methodological approaches to ethics shape a different colour of human thought. Ghazali's religious-mystical ethics and Kant's rational-religious ethics represent two different types of thought, which are different in their 1. 'Basis', 2. 'Mode of thought', 3. 'Essential element of thought', and in their 4. 'Ends'. Now, I shall try, to examine those two different types of thought from these four perspectives in order to see their further implications and consequences.

### **B. Two types of thought**

A different methodological approach to ethics yields two types of thought which are opposite in their nature. The existence of these two types of thought is important and deserves a careful study, not because they are in themselves different but because they actually come from the same root and motive, namely, to refute the rational-dogmatic metaphysics. They succeed in refuting the dogmatic-metaphysics based on reason alone, but they also bring a different and great impact on the ethical issue. It is my hypothesis that examining the ethical thought is much more urgent and strategic than metaphysics or epistemology, since it is in this particular branch of philosophy actually lies the inner structure of human thought.

Ethical or fundamental moral claims, basically, are not merely matters of knowledge of good and bad as the traditional notion of ethics tries to concentrate upon. Moreover, in this traditional notion of ethics, the knowledge of good and bad is usually connected strictly with a theological or a certain religious doctrine and blended with theoretical pre-

occupation. This theoretical preoccupation is so tight and sophisticated, that closes all possibilities to see another horizon of ethical discourse becomes almost hopeless. To much concentration on the notion of good and bad in this literal meaning brings us to come back again to the area of metaphysics. We are again for the second time to be blundered by metaphysics in another form of discourse. In this case, we totally miss to focus our attention on the fundamental feature of ethics, namely, to obtain a clear understanding concerning the role of 'active subject' to express attitude, decision of principle or declaration of intention.<sup>17</sup>

Human beings as individuals or as a social group, who perform his broad activity in his daily life, is always involved to this broad meaning of ethics. This wide meaning cannot be represented nor justified by the simple celebrated terms 'bad' and 'good', since this part of human activity is much more subtle and intricate. The 'decision' to do something or to refrain from doing something in all fields of life, be it in the field of social, cultural, scientific, religious or moral activity, which are directly related to the feature of dynamic individual or social group that actually comes from this inner structure of human thought. It involves many aspects and various elements of basic principles of thought which have been intensively absorbed and rigorously embeded in the human personality as such.

From this point of view, ethics has a close relatedness with the human '**mentality**', namely, the mode or **way of thought**. If a person's mentality were different, his whole experience of life would be different. He would not only behave differently, but would also have different thoughts, feelings, attitudes and desires.<sup>18</sup>

Human mentality as a whole is constructed from their ethical thought, not from their metaphysical or epistemological thought. Metaphysics and epistemology have nothing to do with human 'will' and 'decision'. Our life is always confronted with so many problems that we have to take an immediate 'decision' to tackle and to solve. From this respect, it is a contradiction with metaphysics which conceives the world as something finished and thereby leaves the will with nothing to do. Hence it was consistent when Spinoza like Aristotle and most of Muslim philosophers said that the contemplation of the idea of God is the highest virtue and when they called their metaphysics, i.e., the scientific knowledge of the eternal substance, ethics.<sup>19</sup>

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17. Nielsen, *Op. cit.* p. 117 and Paul W. Taylor who defines morality as a set of social rules and standards that guide the conduct of people in a culture. See Paul W. Taylor (ed.), *Problems of Moral Philosophy*, Dickenson Publishing Company, INC., Belmont, California, 1967, p. 8.

18. Taylor, *Loc. cit.*

19. Cf. Kröner, *Op. cit.* p. 27. And for a brief discussion of metaphysical or ontological fixation which is left by Ghazali, consult I.R.A. al-Faruqi, "The problem of the metaphysical status of values in the Western and Islamic Traditions" *Studia Islamica*, 1968, p. 55-57.

He who takes his metaphysics to be the truth will not continue to strive any more; instead he will believe that he has overcome the world and that he can be content with intellectual love of God. Such a metaphysics is not only an intellectual blind alley but also an aberration of moral reason, because a metaphysical system produces an illusory knowledge which shakes man's moral foundation and violates the majesty of the moral 'ought'.

It is common to the metaphysical circles to ascribe 'virtue' only to a privileged class of men, such as philosophers or sages. If that is true, how do they view the idea that virtue can be attained by the unlearned no less than by the learned? And in the most cases, human beings in general have a certain type of 'mentality' which has a real connotation with their ethical thought rather than with metaphysics or epistemology.

From this specific angle, I would like to see further implication and consequences of having such a different methodological approach discussed above in four different items mentioned above. First, we will proceed with the basis of these two thoughts.

### 1. The basis of thought

As it has been explicated, Ghazali grounded his ethical thought on 'revelation', while Kant on 'reason'. Basically, there is nothing crucial to be disputed between Ghazalian and Kantian way of thought since both of them maintain a personal and living God in the center of their ethical thought. However, philosophically speaking, Kant's rational guarantor for the problem of an acute moral despair is a personal God on whom he can rationally trust. Ghazali, on the other hand, regards the 'nearness and love of God' as his ultimate concern in his religious-mystical way of thought. On the basis of this conviction, we shall examine critically the way both philosophers proceed.

#### a. Foundation of morality

Although in the apex of their ethical thought, not to say in their metaphysical thought, they seem to be in a close agreement; yet I see a fundamental disagreement in the long process which leads them to reach that peak. As I have sketched above, the most fundamental disagreement between Ghazali and Kant lays in their disagreement upon the notion and the nature of "causality". I regard this fundamental disagreement as much more important to be carefully examined than their apparent agreement since here actually lies the essential difference of mode of thought between Western and Islamic culture, i.e., their respective tradition.

The direct implication and consequences of Ghazali's mystical ethics is his deliberate thought to nullify the idea of law and the fundamental notion of acting based on a



certain principle, since he does not believe that there is such a kind of notion. The absence of the idea of law, I argue, is only a matter of natural consequences of his strong belief in underlining the omnipotence of God in every sphere of life. This valuable notion is not mistaken at all, but seems to have some disadvantage and implausibility. In stating this, I do not question the reality of God's omnipotence in the sphere of natural and human life, for it has to be taken for granted, but I incline to question the structure of thought and the aspect of human CONCEPTION in constructing this initial idea. In Ghazali's conception, the underlying of God's omnipotence with His privilege to abolish all apparent regular course of events is taken more seriously than his willing permission for our reason to know and to construct a certain fundamental principal law of understanding the nature. This is, at least, the immediate impression that one can easily get from Ghazali's conception of God's omnipotence.

This peculiar thought - which is originally intended to refute a metaphysical thought of peripatetic philosophers - unfortunately leads Ghazali to take a strict policy which yields minimizing the role of reason in the field of morality and sciences into its lowest degree. This strict restriction is not merely confined in the domain of metaphysics but is also extended into the domain of ethics which is much more vital than the former. I say it is more vital since, it is in the domain of ethics, actually lies the central motor-power for all human activity in all fields of human life. In this very specific area of ethics, Ghazali totally depends on God's gift or grace, and not on the initiative of human reason.

#### b. The problem of guidance in ethical behaviour

Putting God's gift or grace as the human ultimate purpose may not be a problem in itself, for Kant also emphasizes the role of 'divine grace' to solve the problem of human despair to attain the highest moral and ethical virtues. What is crucial here is Ghazali's conception of the role of 'spiritual teacher' or 'moral guide' (**Shaykh**) in the main body of his system of thought. The role of spiritual teacher is so prominent that sufism or mysticism becomes virtually a cult of personalities.<sup>20</sup> Ghazali himself declares:

The disciple (**murid**) must of necessity have recourse to director (**Shaykh**) to guide him aright. For the way of the Faith is obscure, but the Devil's ways are many and patent, and he who has no shaykh to guide him will be led by the Devil into his ways. Wherefore *the disciple must cling to his shaykh as a blind man on the edge of a river*

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20. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, University of Chicago Press, Second edition, Chicago, 1979, p. 137,

*clings to his leader, confiding himself to him entirely, opposing him in no matter whatsoever, and binding himself to follow him absolutely.* Let him know that the advantage he gains from the error of his shaykh, if he should err, is greater than the advantage he gains from his own rightness, if he should be right.<sup>21</sup>

The implication of having such a doctrine is obvious. In any system of thought in which the spiritual dictatorship of spiritual teacher is so salient, it is hardly possible to place the role of reason in its appropriate place and in its maximum function. There seems to be no place for the human reason to develop itself naturally and autonomously. In other words, Ghazali does not agree with the 'active part' played by our human initiative and endeavor to attain those ethical virtues. For Ghazali, there is no such a basic lawlike principle, on the basis of which one would act morally to obtain virtues. The only principle in mind is spiritual teacher's guidance, no matter what his quality is. The idea of 'spiritual teacher' becomes the trade mark of sufism and mysticism and relegates the origin of Ghazali's rational construction of the mystical doctrine. The statement that says: "Thou shalt be in the hands of thy **Shaykh** like a dead body in the hands of its cleanser" is well-known aphorism summing up this teaching.<sup>22</sup>

The phenomenon of the attribution of miracles to the saints or spiritual teacher constitutes a very interesting chapter in the history of sufism. It must remain true that by far the largest number of 'miracles' were conscious products designed to enhance the prestige of a certain saint or **shaykh** or the order connected with this name. But there is also the important fact that the larger the principle of the absolute authority of the spiritual teacher was practised, the greater was the degree of passivity, suggestibility and susceptibility of the common run of disciples.<sup>23</sup>

What is important here is to see the relationship between accepting the idea of spiritual teacher along with an artificial miracle attributed to him with the idea of refuting the principle of causality. It is well-known that Ghazali, while he is suggesting that the disciples should absolutely follow his spiritual teacher he also refuses the idea of causality. The idea of causality in its very essence is rational, since the notion of cause and effect can only be grasped by the autonomy of our human intellectual or rational capacity. It is clear that there is a close connection between Ghazali's refutation of the idea of causality

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21. Quoted from H.A.R. Gibb, *Muhammadanism*, Oxford, 1961, p. 150-1. The italic is added.

22. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, *Op. cit.* p. 246.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

in nature<sup>24</sup> and in human morality<sup>25</sup>. The former is intended to safeguard the notion of miracle, while the latter is to strengthen God's omnipotence to bestow his 'divine gift'. In the long run, this original conception has important contribution to mold a way of thought which puts emphasis upon a spiritual teacher and deprives the autonomy of human reason to think independently.

c. The problem of natural and moral causality.

Ghazali denies 'necessary causality' in the phenomenal world because empirical or physical necessity, he thought, would to violence do the notion of divine omnipotence and the belief in the divine as the ultimate cause. This strategy is also applied when he enlists the mystical virtues such as poverty (*faqr*) and a complete trust in God (*tawakkul*) as the clear manifestation of the act of denying the law of causality in our conduct or morality, since this virtue is obviously intended to exclude any activity on man's part as concerns his own life.<sup>26</sup> In short, those mystical virtues cannot be attained by our human effort. Although we have exhausted our effort to practice those mystical disciplines obediently, patiently, and continuously, it is not allowed for us to have a little hope to obtain virtues from this hard-strict regular practices. This notion of mystical virtues are staunchly criticized by some modern Muslim thinkers such as Yusuf Musa and Zaky Mubarak.<sup>27</sup>

Since Ghazali always relates the idea of causality in nature and in human morality in his system let us continue our critical analysis on Ghazali's thought in the realm of the law of physical nature. The law of gravitation, for instance, is formulated by our mind, which is, for Ghazali, less important and trivial.

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24. Most writers agree that Ghazali rejected causality, although they differ in their emphasis. e.g. Fakhry, *Islamic Occasionalism*, *Op. cit.* p. 60, claims that while Ghazali rejected ontological causal necessity, he accepted the logical one. H.A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1976, p. 549, maintains that Ghazali did not accept causality, despite some modes of expression he used. A.J. Wensinck as it is quoted by Ilai Alon, *Op. cit.* p. 397, says that Ghazali's theory regarded God as the only agent in the world and thus Ghazali attacks causality, although he does not refrain from using the term itself.

25. Hourani, *Reason and Tradition .....*, *Op. cit.* p. 153.

26. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, *Op. cit.* p. 130.

27. Muhammad Yusuf Musa, *Falsafah al-Akhlak fil Islam*, Muassasah al-Khanji, Qahirah, 1963, p. 220-4, also Zaky Mubarak, *Al-Akhlak 'inda al-Ghazali*, Dar al-Katib al-'Arabi, Qahirah, 1924.

From modern philosophy of science, we fully agree that the laws of nature, any laws of nature which are formulated by our reason is 'relative', in the sense that those laws are subject to modification and innovation due to the more complete laboratory equipment, etc.. But Ghazali does not think in this way: Ghazali's argument is totally theological. He is much more interested in defending the idea of occasionalism which is originally promulgated by Ash'arite theologians. Thoroughly influenced by occasionalistic view, Ghazali emphasizes the 'atomistic' explanation of the whole phenomena, be it natural or moral.

In atomistic world of view, there is no such a thing as 'causal law'. Every entity stands independently by itself, and it is God who combines those diverse entities according to His absolute Will. From this point of view, it is very hard to understand the notion of 'regularities', 'uniformities' or 'universalities' which can be studied and observed by the continuous exploration of human reason. From this specific angle, Ghazali contradicts Kant in his basic argumentation.

Kant's formulation of the law of causality, which presupposes the idea of 'regularities' and the 'uniformities' not only in nature but also in morality,<sup>28</sup> does not need to contradict God's sovereignty while Ghazali has a grave psychological tension in admitting the existence of causality. For he strongly believes that if there were such a natural law, it would be a serious rival to God's sovereignty. This psychological and theological tension that leads Ghazali to abrogate the notion of causality from the whole system of thought.

Understanding the phenomena of nature, human beings and social life is the primary task of the human 'intellect'. In order to understand those diverse phenomena, our reason needs to presuppose the regularities or the uniformities of nature on which it will build a rigorous framework of thought and a tool of analysis to study and to investigate all natural and human phenomena. This activity does presuppose the 'active' work of human reason to explore and investigate the phenomena which are created by God. It seems, in such an activity, there is no such notion which impedes and violates the absolute will of God as Ghazali is always worried about.

Due to that psychological and theological tension, instead of pushing our human intelligence to work hard to discover those laws of nature which are 'relative', Ghazali prematurely decrees that all human works, scientifically or nonscientifically, will end with vain and futile since God as the Lord of everything could decide to destroy the world out of indifference and nothing could interfere.<sup>29</sup>

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28. Kant formulates this initial idea by saying: "Der bestirnte Himmel über mir, und das moralische Gesetz in mir" (The starry heavens above me and the moral law within me). See, *KPV*, A 289, p. 300; *Second Critique*, p. 166.

29. Sherif, *Op. cit.*, p. 136.

Ghazali in this way rushes to conclude that those 'regularities' and the 'uniformities' in nature will be changed and abolished by God whenever he wills, even this presupposition is also valid for those laws of nature which are not discovered yet by human intelligence. Due to that strong preestablished presupposition, the scientific ethos to pursue and to capture those undiscovered laws of nature and the spirit of trial and error are automatically absent from Ghazali's way of thought. What in Ghazali's mind is this : that the law of gravitation or any other laws of nature is believed to be the sole domain of God's sovereignty. He never has in mind a reverse way of thought that those laws of nature have to be discovered and invented by our reason for the sake of large benefit and welfare of human beings in this world. This 'basis of thought' has a close relationship to the ultimate aim or the end of human thought. I shall discuss this in the end of this critical discussion.

Logically speaking, Ghazali seems always not satisfied and frequently disturbed by the major premise which states "All crows are black", since in his inner thought, he has a permanent hidden syllogism which tells him that "There is a white crow". This hidden premise diametrically contradicts the major premise, although this 'white crow' that always disturbs him is not found yet. This structure of logical thought always hinders him to see the reality of natural and moral phenomena which only can be well understood through a certain principal law of understanding. From this clarification, it is obvious that Ghazali's orientation is strictly metaphysical one. He is tightly attached to the idea of metaphysics and fails to see its dire implication in the field of ethics that is immediately related to our human activity in this present world.

Just like Ghazali, Kant also regards that 'causality' in natural phenomena and in human morality are instance of the problem of causality in general. Both kinds of causality are different in their nature, but similar in the way in which our mind approaches and understands their real nature. If Ghazali doubts the validity of 'causal necessity' without being aware of its dire consequences, Kant emphasizes the validity of 'causal necessity' with a deliberate consciousness of its beneficial and advantageous consequences. What actually makes Ghazali always worry, but indeed puts him in great trouble is the possibility of "the religious implication" of our acceptance of the validity of the idea of causal necessity in general. For Ghazali, the causal necessity is only valid in the domain of ontology,<sup>30</sup> because if this notion is valid in the domain of ontology, it will threaten the validity of 'miracles'. Suppose that Ghazali's great trouble is plausible, nevertheless, I still have an alleged impression that the way he explains his initial doubts concerning the 'causal neces-

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30. Fakhry, *Islamic Occasionalism. ...., Op. cit.* p. 61.



sity' is too obscure for the common people as well as for the educated one. His acceptance of the validity of causal necessity in the realm of logic does not have a sufficient emphasis and even it is easily relagated by his own 'theological' formulation which is stated by his well-known term that the only real agent is God.<sup>31</sup>

This obscuracy is reemphasized, when Ghazali himself mixes his theological formulation with his mystical doctrine and less attentive to motivate our human mind to focus its attention in more appropriate balance to his former understanding concerning logic. When Ghazali enters into a deep and sophisticated mystical virtue, he totally neglects his preoccupation with the idea of 'causal necessity' in the domain of logic or in the domain of human mind.<sup>32</sup> His sole main focus is centered upon the problem of how we attain the mystical virtues by implementing and cultivating a strict mystical practices and behaviour under the guidance and supervision of 'spiritual teacher', which is, of course, going far and far from the realm of logic, intellectual scrutiny and scientific ethos. In other words, Ghazali does not motivate our human mind to work logically and autonomously, namely, to work on the principle of accurate premises and to act on the principle of law. By his mystical doctrine, Ghazali does not impel the people to sharpen their logical and rational capacity to understand the human, social and natural phenomena based on a certain principal law of understanding. This is an implausibility attached to Ghazali's system of thought, no matter how useful his theory of mystical ethics is in changing one's character and behaviour.

Kant, on the other hand, has a valuable thought in this specific area which is totally opposed to Ghazali's. Kant can formulate his conception of causality easily without necessarily colliding with the problem of the possibility of violating God's omnipotence and sovereignty. In explaining the principle of causality, Kant confines himself in looking for a priori element of the principle of causality. What is a priori, Kant believes, is that events take place according to a definite rule or principle or law. The empirical side of this principle, namely, what that rule itself is, must be determined a posteriori or empirically. This very conception does not touch and does not involve negatively the authority of God at all. In this respect, Kant is more consistent than Ghazali in attacking the dogmatic metaphysics, since in this very crucial area, namely, the problem of whether this alleged 'causal necessity' ascribes to God or to nature, he can keep away from the discussion of God's involvement positively or negatively. Meanwhile Ghazali is thoroughly trapped with this difficult issue without giving a satisfactory plausible solution. Kant consistently regards

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31. Leaman, *Op. cit.* p. 84.

32. Cf. Ernest Wolf-Gazo, "The conception of God in Islam and the West: A Philosophical Lecture", *Islami Arastirmalar*, 3, January 1989, p. 33. Here he argues that East, namely, Islamic tradition forgot about mathematics and continued on the old fashion metaphysics.

that this kind of discussion is beyond the ability of our human reason to solve. For Kant this problem is a kind of antinomy in which the thesis and the antithesis can be approved. Instead of submerging into the talk about God in a speculative manner in the problem of causality, Kant prefers talking about 'personal God', 'living God', 'divine grace' and 'God's moral governance of the world' as the common religious people talk in the specific domain of ethics.<sup>33</sup>

If Ghazali talks about the validity of causal necessity in the realm of logic, Kant takes this problem as something taken for granted. Kant strongly believes that the idea of causality only specifically belongs to the domain of human reason. For that reason, Kant then transforms his main attention and fully concentrates his specific interest on the search for the benefit and the implications of admitting this principle. Ghazali, too, talks about logic in his book *Mi'yar al- 'ilm*, but, it is, of course, not in the same style as Kant does. Kant's discussion is more discursive and much more intended to open the possibility of the new horizon of our human mind, while Ghazali's treatise on Logic is much more intended to explain what logic is in front of his fellowmen of theologian and its more striking feature is to criticize Aristotelian theory of efficient cause.<sup>34</sup>

For Kant it is clear that only 'human reason' is able to formulate this 'law of causality' according to their particular purposes, although this 'artificial' laws of nature is relative, in the sense that these laws are subject to change. Instead of being disturbed by the problem of whether the acknowledgment of the validity of the necessity of causal law will have dangerous implication in the religious thought or not, Kant prefers to focus his attention to the possibility of suggesting a more active portion contributed by our human mind to construct those laws of nature which are fundamental for any branches of any sciences. Another striking difference between Ghazali and Kant is clear : If Ghazali is thoroughly occupied with the ontological status of the necessity of causal law and less attentive toward the possibility of human effort to construct a model of understanding of these laws of causality for the benefit of human welfare, Kant goes to the opposite direction: he is

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33. Wood, *Kant's Moral religion*, *Op. cit.* p. 248. We can see here how Kant transforms those 'ambiguous' notion of causal necessity in the domain of speculative thought into a practical one. I believe that Kant also has a definite answer to which Ghazali has, but Kant's strategy is more compromisable and plausible than Ghazali's. In underlining the role of God as a creator of the world *in time* (See Allen W. Wood, *op. cit.* p. 139), Kant has an exact similar thought with Ghazali, notwithstanding Kant has 'more detailed conception' than Ghazali's since he can accentuate the idea that 'our mind' has to be active to discover those lawful nature and morality. To borrow Fazlur Rahman's term 'God works through causes'. See Fazlur Rahman *Op. cit.* p. 131.

34. Michael E. Marmura, "Ghazali and Demonstrative Science", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, III, 1965, p. 184, and also Michael E. Marmura, "Ghazali's attitude to the Secular Sciences and Logic", in George F. Hourani (ed.), *Essays on Islamic ...*, *Op. cit.* p. 102, 109.

less attentive to the ontological status of that causality and directly moves his deep concern toward searching the greatest possibility for our human mind to work actively to search those hidden laws in nature and in human morality.

Inspired by Copernicus, Kant firmly says that human mind is the 'lawgiver' of nature. The basic principle which says that there is a comprehensible causal order in nature and morality is strongly believed by Kant. For him, this 'causal order' is imposed by the understanding. In other words, we have to bring laws to the world rather than drawing laws from it. This formulation might be misleading, but Kant's essential thought is clear that human mind has to be 'active' in the search for those laws in nature, which works in accordance with the principle of causality. Ghazali, on the other hand, throughout his voluminous works never touches this problem and he has not such a view.<sup>35</sup>

Consequently, Kant brings this original basic principle into the domain of ethics. The echoes of his own message in morality is clearly understood from his conception concerning the relationship between 'virtues' and 'happiness'. We can disagree with Kant here, but it is clear for him that the relation between both is causal. Two terms, namely, 'virtues' and 'happiness' is necessarily combined in one concept, says Kant, namely must be related as 'ground' and 'consequences', viz. 'virtues' producing 'happiness'.<sup>36</sup> An exact causal relation between virtue and happiness in the world, therefore, requires more than human purposiveness, human volition and effort. The moral effort of men<sup>37</sup> is much more emphasized by Kant than the other aspects of morality.

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35. I wonder here whether my critical understanding will be confused with the new modern discovery in physics. It is usually said that the causal explanation is not sufficient any more to explain the phenomena. The well-known Heisenberg's principle of 'indeterminacy' might invalidate my argument. We totally agree with the principle of indeterminacy, but 'agreeing' to that principle does not mean that all sciences do not work on a certain principle discovered by our human reason. Even the discovery of the principle of indeterminacy itself is also based on a previous rigorous certain principle established by the former scientist. For the principle of indeterminacy, see Henry Margenau, "Quantum Mechanics, Free Will, and Determinism", in Richard Olson (ed.), *Science as Metaphor*, Wadsworth Publishing Company, inc., California, 1971, p. 292 and John Lukacs, "Quantum Mechanics and the End of Scientism", in Richard Olson (ed.), *Ibid.* p. 296. Furthermore, a moral argument also presupposes and involves a certain principle on which we can conduct our own life R.M. Hare, *The Language of Morals*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1952, pp. 60-61 says:

.... to learn to do anything is never to learn to do an individual act; it is always to learn to do acts of a certain kind in a certain kind of situation; and this is to learn a principle... without principles we could not learn anything whatever from our elders... every generation would have to start from scratch and teach itself. But ... self-teaching like all other teaching, is the teaching of principle.

36. KPV. A 200, p. 239.; *Second Critique*, p. 115.

37. *Groundwork*, p. 106.

Kant's moral theory which is 'rational' originates from his exact formulation of the relationship between virtue and happiness. There is a rule or a law which orders, regulates and commands our conduct in our moral life. This law is universal, applicable to all rational human beings regardless their nationality, religion and race. This moral law arises in the sense of duty, which commands us categorically. From this basic presupposition, Kant regards human being as an autonom person in his moral conduct.

Ghazali, in this very important domain, has an opposite idea. For him, there is no such a kind of law, order or basic structure on which we can build our moral conduct. The only valid moral basis is God's revelation. Human reason cannot be regarded as its basis or foundation. Morality which is builded on the basis on reason will be futile. In saying this Ghazali neglects the important aspect in the moral discourse, that the subject or the 'agent' of the ethical conduct is the human beings themselves. In addition to that, Ghazali also forgets that 'religion' or 'religious ethics' basically is enacted for the welfare of human beings, not for the welfare or the benefit of God. Ghazali emphasizes the later rather than the former and consequently regards our human reason as a passive organism which has no choice within itself. In accordance to that, Ghazali suggests that our human reason has to receive God's command without allowing our human reason to digest it rationally. With this notion in mind, not only Ghazali will find the difficulty with the people who never heard such a revelation, but he also will face the difficulty to place the appropriate function of the reason for the obedient adherence of those religious people themselves. Ghazali's difficulty is obviously seen when he refuses the autonomy of the human reason in the ethical choice and prefers to chose 'shaykh' as a moral guidance, without realizing its danger, to guide our ethical conduct.

Metaphorically speaking, when Ghazali sees a building or a house he has not a sufficient picture in his mind that that building needs a strong 'foundation' on which a physical construction can be builded. A building or a house manifested in the body of religious ethics is considered by Ghazali as the foundation as well as as the main body of building, while Kant can differentiate between both. He regards 'reason' as the 'foundation' for the main body of the construction of those religious or revelatory ethics.

Kant believes that the most important thing in morality is its basis or foundation on which one can build his main body of the moral conduct. Whatever his religion is or whatever his revelatory ethics is, one has to use his own 'reason' actively in understanding the essence of a religious guidance. Explicitly he agrees with those revelatory ethics, but he has more to say here than Ghazali, namely that the human mind as the 'foundation' of those ethical conduct has to be active in digesting those divine command. In Kant's own word, we have to be rationally conscious with the kernel of those religious ethics, not only satisfied with their shell. We have to be intelligently find the 'pure' aspect of every relig-

ious message in order to be able to find the universal aspect of its mission and not be easily trapped in the shallow trivial particular matters.

It is important to note in this section finally that from the comparative critical study of their thought emerges two major lines of thought which try to depict the human effort to build ethics based on the critique of dogmatic metaphysics. This fundamental difference of the 'basis of thought' subsequently will shape their 'mode of thought'. What I mean by the term 'mode of thought' is the real manifestation of having these basis in the practical life. Having those different basis of thought people will have a different 'mode of thought' in their daily thought. This different mode of thought as the direct impact of having those different basis which we are going to examine next.

## 2. A mode of thought

Having a different 'basis of thought' in mind, will consequently lead people to construct a different mode of thought. Those people who are accustomed to think and act in Ghazalian way of thinking and those people who are used to think in Kantian style are usually engaged in different manners of thinking. Let me call this difference in the manner of thinking 'a mode of thought'.

Ghazali's dependence on the psychological element of human condition which is originally intended to explain the incompetency of dogmatic-emanative metaphysics to exhibit a willing and living God, brings his followers unconsciously to have a 'passive' and 'regressive' type of mode of thought. This passivity is not because of the existence of divine revelation, but due to Ghazali's type of CONCEPTION which is conducive that philosophy.<sup>39</sup>

On the other hand, Kant's dependence on the rational element of our human constitution which is originally intended to vindicate the insufficiency of rational-speculative argument to prove the traditional problem of metaphysics, namely, God, immortality and freedom, leads us to have an 'active' and 'rigorous' mode of thought.<sup>40</sup> Kant also has a rigorous belief in revelation in his mind, but his original conception concerning the mechanism of human mind opens the possibility of having such a type of thought.

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39. Cf. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam, Op. cit.* p. 159.

40. G.E. von Grunebaum, "Concept and Function of Reason in Islamics", *Oriens*, Vol. 15, 1962, p. 13-16.



Ghazali's hostility to the human reason can only be remedied by the 'intuitive certainty'. This intuitive certainty is mystical in its main characteristic and there is no such clear standard of certainty. The 'intuitive certainty' can be satisfied only by the psychological tranquility and not with a discursive thought-content.<sup>41</sup> No one doubts that this psychological aspect of our human constitution is far closer to our 'emotions' rather than to our 'reason'.

The reality of human emotion itself, however, does not lead to such a difficult position, since humans are psychological beings. What is crucial and important to be carefully examined in Ghazali's case is the obvious chain between his idea of miracle, his attention to the psychological element of human being and the type of emotionalized religion which is typical in the circles of sufi order.<sup>42</sup> This type of religiosity is emotional and less attentive to the rational or intellectual aspect of the Qur'anic message. Furthermore, it is not 'sensitive' to the Qur'anic message which also puts a serious attention in suggesting human beings to study and search into all natural as well as human phenomena which are called by the Qur'an 'the sign of God' (*ayah*).<sup>43</sup>

#### a. A passive and regressive mode of thought

It cannot be denied that underlying the importance of 'miracles' is one of the characteristics of the mystical ethics. Whether this notion of miracle as it is in Ghazali's sense or in the one that has been modified to be the possession of a saint or spiritual teacher. As I have discussed above, Ghazali's own formulation of miracles is easily misunderstood by the sufi followers. Sufistic spiritual delinquency often exploited by the clever sufi leaders for their own ends.<sup>44</sup>

If that is true, then, the orientation of this "mode of thought" is not purely religious any more, but it is mixed and tightly blended with the personal cult. In this situation, the people - the laity and the educated alike - will be emotionally satisfied, but not intellectually trained. People emotionally and psychologically indulged by believing those 'ar-

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41. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam, Op. cit.* p. 222.

42. For the term 'emotionalized religion', see *Ibid.*, p. 246.

43. *Ibid.* p. 217.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 245.

tificial' miracles of saints but they cannot use and sharpen their intellectual capacity in a proper way. Even, in their practical life, if they want to do or to make a decision for something, they usually have to consult their spiritual teacher whether he will approve this deed or not. It is clear now, what the relationship is between having a 'passive' mode of thought and the 'unautonomous' character of human reason in sufi or mystical tradition, which is, of course, diametrically opposite to Kant.

Ghazali's conception of mystical ethics might be valuable in itself but most probably Ghazali does not realize the dire impact of his valuable idea. Furthermore, his original conception of mystical ethics which puts a prominent role of the 'spiritual teacher' opens and paves the way for his followers to have such a mode of thought. The intervention of spiritual teacher and the prominent role of saint in Ghazali's system of thought makes the people think uncritically and regressively imagine the fantastic and grotesque miracle of the late or the living sufi leaders.

This passive mode of thought is only a direct impact and a negative side effect of Ghazali's conception of the mystical virtues<sup>45</sup> which directly involves the exaggerated role of personal 'spiritual teacher'.

The Qur'an as a revelation is totally misunderstood by the sufistic interpretation; for it is not just 'rational' but is also full of genuine religious 'emotion'.<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately, Ghazali's ethical formulation of the Qur'anic teaching is not so properly balanced. He picks out the verses which denote the mystical hint, if the term 'mystical' here is appropriate for the Qur'an itself, but he leaves aside the verses which tell the believers to be active and discursive.

It is the emotional strength and the theoretical weakness of Ghazali's system of thought that allocation of ultimate responsibility remains problematical; or to put it more

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45. I do not want to be confused and misunderstood when I mention the term 'mystical ethics' and 'religious ethics', especially in Ghazali's system of thought. In his conception of 'a religious ethics' which is simply the exact implementation of Qur'anic teaching concerning the 'devotional behaviour and practices' in the daily life of muslim, I do not have any objections to this at all. Even al-Farabi and Avicenna, the most rationalist Muslim philosophers, underline the important aspect of this Islamic guidance. Farabi says that: "A philosopher must perform the external acts and observe the duties of the law, for if a person disregards a law ordained as incumbent by a prophet and then pursues philosophy, he must be deserted. He should consider unlawful to himself what is unlawful in his community". See Oliver Leaman, *Op. cit.* p. 147-8, with reference to Farabi's, *Risala Zainun al-Kabir*, Hyderabad, 1930, p. 9. While Kant has a controversial idea in this matter since he puts a little value to religious practices in the sense of expression of adoration and prayer, whether public or private. See *Religion*, p. 158-9; Copleston, p. 344.

46. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam, Op. cit.* p. 248.

concretely, the 'latitude of choice' allowed to man is uncertain, and even occupied by his spiritual teacher. This mode of thought, unfortunately is not only valid and confined to the middle ages but it is still alive even in our days all over the Muslim societies.<sup>47</sup>

b. A discursive and active mode of thought

Kant's conception of ethics which is 'rational' has a reverse implication in shaping or constructing the mode of human thought. A rational and autonomous character of the human reason suggested by Kant makes our mode of thought 'rigorous' and 'discursive'. The dispelling of mystery is its peculiar task; truth held on the authority of tradition represents a specially irritating challenge to it; criticism is its primary function; the demonstration of the sovereignty of man is its real objective. Nature is so constituted as to yield its secrets to reason; in fact, it there are any such secrets that is merely because reason has not yet sufficiently been focused on them. The world is man's not simply because man stands highest in the hierarchy of creatures and because God has adjusted the world to the requirements of his survival but because it is within his power to comprehend it, to dominate it through his comprehension and by dint of reason to extend his mastery over it progressively.<sup>48</sup>

This mode of thought is likely to arise from Kant's conception due to his initial conception of 'causality' which is 'necessary' in the domain of human thought. Ghazali, too, admits this necessity of the law of causality in the domain of logic, as I have pointed out above, but Ghazali's accentuation on his mystical conception relagates his former idea consciously or unconsciously. From the first starting point, Kant puts an emphasis on the 'subjective factor' contributed by the reason to discover all things which are available to our thought to decipher. Even in the domain of ethics he stresses this point clearly, not in the sense that our "actions" can be explained causally as the behaviourism tries to do, but in the sense that the relation between the 'virtue' which is 'autonomous' and the 'happiness' which is 'heterogeneous', in its very essence, is rational. If it is rational, Kant wants to emphasize, then, that we have to be 'active' in obtaining those virtues.

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47. *Ibid.* p. 245 and also according to the observation of Joseph McCarthy, Ghazali's book especially his *magnum opus* (*Ihya'*) until nowadays is in the best seller list of Arabic literature in many Arabic and non-Arabic speaking Muslim countries. See Joseph McCarthy S.J., *Freedom and Fulfillment*, p. LVI.

48. G.E. on Grunebaum, *Op. cit.*, p. 16-7.

Placing a reason as an 'active organism' is the prerequisite to shape and to construct a mode of thought which is 'rigorous'. Although Kant puts a strict limitation to the domain in which our reason can operate, this restriction is only confined to the domain of 'noumena'. In the domain of phenomena which is available for human reason, Kant does not bring any limitation, in the sense that our reason has to play an 'active' role in pursuing the natural laws which are the ultimate condition to build all human sciences. Further, Kant writes:

Reason in a creature is a faculty of widening the rules and purposes of the use all its powers for beyond natural instinct; it acknowledges no limits to its projects. Reason itself does not work instinctively, but requires trial, practice, and instruction, in order gradually to progress from one level to another.<sup>49</sup>

The most striking feature of Kant's mode of thought, as far as I can understand, is his ability to put the same emphasis on the 'active' role of human mind in the domain of morality and in the sphere of sciences alike.<sup>50</sup> In doing so, from one side, he has a great merit to safeguard the philosophical conception of God which is originally promulgated by the dogmatic- metaphysicians from the severe critique of religious thinkers and theologians. It is clear, in Kant's ethical conception, that Kant is able to do justice in building a conception of God which is in the similar line with the conception of the theologians. Besides, he can also put a similar emphasis on the 'active' role played by our human reason and human effort in order to attain the ultimate virtues.

In another side, he can explain the mechanism of mind in his theory of epistemology in the *First Critique* which opens the possibility to have a spirit of scientific ethos. This rational spirit does not hinder his sincere admission of the existence of personal and living God. It becomes clear now that in acknowledging the idea of personal God, Kant loses nothing. He can ever consistently maintain his idea that our mind has to be 'active' in the domain of morality as well as in the area of sciences.

All theologians and mystics,<sup>51</sup> of course, more specifically Ghazali, does not entertain such a critical analysis which can combine and compromise the two seemingly antagonistic nature of human 'mind', namely, the necessity to obey the moral law which is the forefront feature of 'religions' and the necessity to develop our mind in its optimum de-

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49. Kant, "Idea for a Universal History from a cosmopolitan Point of View" trans. L.W. Beck, quoted by T.C. Williams, *The Concept of the Categorical Imperative*, *Op. cit.*, p. 131.

50. Kröner, *Op cit.*, p. 83.

51. All muslim theologians, including those who are mystics focused their preoccupation and their attention only on the 'divine attributes' which remained constitutive of all orthodox Islamic positions throughout. See I.R.A. al-Faruqi, *Op. cit.* p. 48-55.

gree. It is not by accident, indeed, if the impact of Ghazali's mystical zeal brings his follower to be far from accepting mathematics as the language of nature, understanding this as the language of revelation of God's beauty (*jamil*) and His greatness (*'adhim*), i.e. the Deist argument.<sup>52</sup>

From our close examination, it is clear at present as to why Ghazali's way of thought brings us to have a 'passive' mode of thought; while Kant's way of thought leads us to have an 'rigorous' mode of thought. Due to their different conception and their different analysis of the role, the position and the function of reason, they bear opposite characters in their modes of thought.

If my critical examination is designed and can be metaphorically depicted as a tree, then I would like to draw a parallel between this tree and the whole body of human system of thought. So far we have passed two stages: the first is the 'basis of thought', that is, the root of that tree. The second is the 'mode of thought', namely the stem of that tree. Now we are going to the third part of my critical analysis, viz., the branch of that tree, which I call the 'essential element of thought'. Usually, we can find in the branches of a tree leaves, flowers and so forth. Also in the next discussion of the 'essential element of thought' I shall discuss the problem of 'form' and 'matter' in its relationship with the problem of universality of ethical norms in Kantian and Ghazalian perspectives: As a matter of fact, there are other related problems such as objective and subjective moral law, autonomy and heteronomy, categorical and hypothetical imperative, and so forth. In the following discussion, I shall concentrate only on the problem of 'form' and 'matter' in ethical discourse since this initial problem actually is the source of those other problems.

### 3. An essential element of thought

In my discussion of Kant's and Ghazali's methodology, I have touched on the problem of universality and particularity of ethical norms from the perspective of both respective thinkers. What is certain in the foregoing discussion is that Ghazali refuses the idea of universality of ethical norms. But Ghazali is unable to find the reason for his conclusion so long as he refuses the philosophical or intellectual discussion concerning the status of our ethical or practical behaviour in our daily life. All theological discussions

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52. G.E. von Grunebaum, *Op. cit.*, p. 16 and Cf. Ernest Wolf-Gazo, *Op. cit.* p. 33.



concerning this problem will face some sort of difficulty, since the main feature of theological argument is to defend only the norms of a particular religion.

It is my personal claim that the problem of universality and particularity of ethical norms has a strong relationship to the notions of 'form' and 'matter' which is a very specific issue in philosophical discussion. In this particular branch of thought, namely, in the essential element of thought, Ghazali and Kant have also a great difference. To put it in a simple formulation, Ghazali acknowledges only the 'matter' or the 'content' of any particular religious ethical norms. Whether this 'matter' or 'content' has 'form' on our mind or not is out of his concern.

#### a. Ghazali and the problem of 'formal' and 'material' aspect of ethical rules

From Kant's perspective, we can say that Ghazali is content to have only a 'material' aspect of ethics which is strikingly exemplified and embodied in a 'particular' religious ethics, especially in his mystical ethics. The doctrine of the necessity for the few to attain stations (**maqām**) and state (**hāl**) through 'moral guide' in his basic mystical ethics is very 'particular'. Its 'material' content can be found only in Ghazali's system of thought which is embedded in the specific particular society. To be sure that Ghazali is not alone here, since this specific 'religious' ethics is the main characteristic of every religious ethics, be it Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Shintoism, even for those 'secular' ethics, not to say liberal-individualism, atheism or communism.

If this 'material' content of any system of ethical norms exemplified in the religious or secular ethics is rigorously and fanatically defended by its adherence and if these defenders claim their 'exclusive' truth over other systems of ethical norms this will cause a grave problem. For the basic notion of tolerance, solidarity and mutual understanding, for example, will lose its significant meaning. The intolerant attitude, for instance, will easily arise from the fanatic defenders of any particular 'material' content of any religious or secular ethics. This attitude arises, most probably, due to the absence of the intellectual understanding which can help to grasp the 'general basic principle' belongs to these diverse ethical norms. The urgency of having the capacity of grasping the 'basic universal principle' seated in those particular norms is clearly important in the pluralistic society. This basic universal principle is what I call the "form" of an ethical rule, and it is this form that gives universality to such rules and norms.

In this case, Ghazali's accentuation on the 'solitude' of life in order to purify the 'heart' to obtain the ultimate mystical virtues, namely, the vision of God in the hereafter is an indication that he is less attentive and does not lay a fundamental teaching which suggests and trains his followers to sharpen their 'intellectual' capacity to grasp the idea of the basic universal principle embedded in this own particular norms. This conception of soliti-

tude is enhanced by his extra warning to his followers to have an extra careful stand in studying the 'ulūm 'aqliya<sup>53</sup>

All the basic principles of Ghazali's mystical ethics underly only the 'material' aspect of ethics, which is 'particular' in its very essence. There is no sufficient room to train his followers to sharpen their intellectual capacity, which is the important clue to grasp the 'form' or the rational and the universal element in ethics, which can lead the people to understand each other, without necessarily losing their religious and cultural identity.

#### b. Kant and the problem of 'formal' and 'material' aspect of the moral law

Searching for the 'connecting link' which is represented in his theory of 'form' does not mean at all to minimize or to relegate the value and the meaning of the 'content' or the 'material' aspect of those any particular ethical norms. To clarify his original position, Kant himself writes in his short work entitled "Investigation into the evidence of the principles of Natural Theology and Moral" (1764) as follows:

... How little is known about the concept of *obligation*! ... After pondering a long time over this subject, I have persuaded myself that the rule, "Do the most perfect that is possible through you", is the first *formal foundation* of all obligation to act. But the *formal rule of perfection leads to no special obligation, unless it is connected with material practical principles.*<sup>54</sup>

In spite of that, Kant's idea on this crucial issue is totally misunderstood by many thinkers. T.C. Williams calls this misunderstanding as a 'traditional interpretation' of the notion of categorical imperative.<sup>55</sup>

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53. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity*, *Op. cit.* p. 39.

54. Quoted from T.C. Williams, *Op. cit.*, p. 105 with reference to Gabriele Rabel, *Kant*, Clarendon, Press, Oxford, 1963, p. 66-7. The italic is added.

55. See footnote 20, Chapter III, p. 94. If I properly understand, in some sense or another, Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* also belongs to this traditional interpretation of Kant, since he is inclined to accept the Emotivist theory who asserts that there are and can be no valid rational justification for any claims that objective and impersonal moral standards exist and hence that there are no such standards (p. 19). Nevertheless, MacIntyre differs from his predecessors since he has some 'clue' to admit the plausibility of Kant's idea, as he says: "What matters at this stage is the *construction of local forms of community* within which *civility and the intellectual and moral life* can be sustained through the new dark ages which are already upon us. (p. 263).

It is beyond my subject to go deeply into the discussion of this controversial issue here. Instead of following the traditional interpretation, my own analysis apparently accords to the 'new interpretation' of Kant's idea concerning 'form' and 'matter' represented by H.A. Paton, which I shall follow.

Basically, Kant's problem conceived in its broadest perspective is to establish the objectivity and universality of moral truth. This, Kant sees, is impossible so long as the so-called moral judgements are regarded as being grounded exclusively in desires and inclinations. Let me paraphrase this notion in the following manner: The idea of universality of ethical norms is impossible so long as the so-called moral judgements are grounded exclusively in 'particular' religious ethics or any kind of particular secular ethics.

If moral truths are universal and necessary then Kant concludes these characteristics must be a **priori** in the sense that they are contributed by reason itself. But, Paton emphasizes, to say this is not to say that moral judgements must be a **priori** in the sense that they contain no 'matter' or 'content'. Also we can say, following Paton, that to say this does not mean that to have a **priori** element of morality does not mean that there is no such a kind of particular religious ethics or that its value and meaning is to be relegated.<sup>56</sup>

Kant's point is simply this: if morality is something real, then moral judgement must have both a 'form' and 'matter' - the 'form' or a **priori** element being contributed by reason, and the 'matter' or a **posteriori** element being contributed by experience or particular-historical revelation. Kant's object in the *Groundwork*, is to separate out by an analysis of the notion of morality, the a **priori** element, or 'form', that must be present in each and every moral judgement as such.<sup>57</sup> This principle can never be manifested when action is done for the sake of a material end, but only when action is done for the sake of moral law - which, with regard to the human will, is action done for the sake of duty. Action for the sake of duty is the action on a formal maxim.<sup>58</sup>

This formal maxim of morality, or 'unconditioned objective principle', as Paton calls it,<sup>59</sup> Kant expresses in the principle of categorical imperative: "Act only on that maxim which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law".

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56. H.J. Paton, *The Categorical Imperative*, *Op. cit.*, p. 20-21.

57. *Ibid.* p. 25-26.

58. *Ibid.* p. 62

59. *Ibid.* p. 133.

The categorical imperative is to be regarded as a **priori** in the sense that it expresses the purely formal or a **priori** element which must be present in each and every moral act and by virtue of which the act is moral. Nevertheless, it is not to be conceived as something outside the human action but as the principle or motive of that action:

We must not think of universal law as a principle outside the action, or as a further end for the sake of which the action ought to be done. On the contrary it is the principle of the action, the formal principle which is embodied in the action and in virtue of which the action is good.<sup>60</sup>

In Paton's view, every action must have a 'material end' or 'intention', as well as a motive.<sup>61</sup> But whereas the motive of a non-moral act is embodied in the desired end, the motive of a moral act springs from the principle of universal law, which, with regard to the human will, is the principle of duty expressed in the categorical imperative.

Kant's strategy and his basic idea is obvious. He can only see morality in two unified elements which cannot be separated from each other, namely, 'form' and 'matter'. Both of them are essential. From this standpoint, Kant does not agree with those traditional interpretations<sup>62</sup> which accuses him to be the propagator and the defender of 'Formalism', and in the same time he does not agree with Ghazali's understanding which seems to be the defender of 'Particularism'. If Kant seems trying to separate them, this is just due to his analytical methodology which is merely intended to get clarity of the gist of the problem.

By means of his critical analysis, Kant can clarify us that it is a 'form'<sup>63</sup> of morality which belongs to our 'reason'. Only this formal aspect of morality which can be universalized. The 'formal' idea of 'homicide' and 'cruelty', for example, can be understood by all human beings irrespective of their religion, nationality or race<sup>64</sup> although the 'material' aspect of this homicide and cruelty can be performed in various uncountable ways.

The 'formal' aspect of every particular religious ethics, not its 'material' content, and it thus belongs to human 'reason'. This is actually the great heritage of Kant. The 'for-

60. *Ibid*, p. 133-4.

61. *Ibid*. p. 118.

62. *KPV*, A. 277-280, p. 292-4; *Second Critique*, p. 159-63 p. 159-63 in which he says that purely formal categorical imperative, cannot, by its very nature, be represented *in concreto*. Cf. T.C. Williams, *Op. cit.*, p. 50-2.

63. See my footnote 17, Chapter III, p. 59.

64. Richard B. Brand, "Ethical Relativism", in the *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Vol. 3, *Op. cit.* p. 77.

mal' aspect of the idea of good, for example, in every particular-historical religious ethics and secular ethics as well, might be same, although its real manifestation in their specific cultural life is greatly diverse and various.

From the human history, we can learn that any particular religious ethics, or even that of secular one, cannot be universalized, no matter how long it has been striving to be universalized. The 'content' or the 'matter' of any religious or any secular ethics will be forever 'particular' that is to say Judaism, for instance, will be confined in its particularity and Islam will remain particular so will atheism, and other particular ethics. Neither of these can be universalized in the real sense.

In its strict sense, both of the defenders of 'particularism' and 'universalism' in ethics suffer from disadvantage and implausibility. Kant, for example, has been accused by this critics to be the advocate of 'formalism', 'rigorism' or 'universalism' since he is less attentive to the 'religious aspects' in ethics. If those critics were true, then, Kant falls into the 'empty' conception, since there is no such a thing as 'universal' idea of ethics without being embeded in the particular historical norms which lives in the society. Nevertheless, Kant himself does not have an idea as his critics and interpreters accused him.<sup>65</sup>

If we hold the Kantian ethics, then we can also fall into the impasse of particularism in ethics, although he defends universality of the moral law by the concept of "form" in that law. In other words, the Kantian rational ethics is one among many other possible rational conceptions of ethics. Then, we need to ask which rational ethics is universal? This is why I have defended above the view that neither religious nor secular (rational) ethics can be universalized in the real and absolute sense of the word.

In that case, what we should we do in the age of pluralistic society? We need something more than only industriously performing all particular-guidance of religious or secular ethics or indulging the 'universal' conception of ethics which has no content to be held as a guidance. To avoid the emergence of the mental attitude which prefers emphasizing an 'exclusive views' it is suggestible an advisable to have an idea of 'form' in our intellectual level. This understanding has its valuable contribution to have an 'open minded' mentality, without necessarily losing our own cultural or religious identity.

Grasping the idea of 'form' and 'matter' in its unified mould, has no negative implication in shallowing or eroding our 'belief' in the value, the meaning, and the validity of

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65. T.C. Williams, *Op. cit.* p. 46-7.



our particular-historical religious world view. By knowing the 'formal' side of ethical discourse, which, of course, needs some extra will and effort to grasp it, we would be able to have a 'connecting link' between one particular religious or secular ethics and another, without losing our own cultural identity. If we had that kind of 'connecting link', in our mind, it will pave the way to have a 'model' of dialogue among the adherence of diverse particular religious and secular ethics.

This is actually what I mean by having the idea of 'form', which is contributed by the reason alone, we will have an 'intellectual framework' which enables us to see the clear border line between one particular ethical norms and another, and in the same time we can 'leap' intellectually those border lines without losing our own particular religious and cultural identity.

From this discussion, let us see the aim or the end of Ghazali's and Kant's ethical thought. At this stage, I will complete my critical examination.

#### 4. The aim and the end of ethical thought

We have passed throughout three stages of our critical analysis to see the implication and the consequences of Ghazali's and Kant's conception of ethical thought. In the first stage, we discussed the 'basis of thought' wherein Ghazali bases his conception of ethical thought on the psychological element of human constitution and blends it with a particular revelation; while Kant bases his ethical thought on reason and still accommodates a particular revelation.

At the second stage we talked about their 'mode of thought' as a direct implication of having those bases. Ghazali's mode of thought is deductive-regressive, while Kant's is analytic-discursive.

The third stage, we come to the 'essential element of thought' which gives a rational background for them for having such a basis and a mode of thought. At this level, we find that Kant underlines both the 'form' and the 'matter' of ethical discourse, while Ghazali's attention is only focused on the 'matter'.

This discussion brings us to the apex of our investigation through a critical contrast of their conception of ethical thought, namely, into the ultimate end or the essential aim of their respective ethical thoughts.

a. The ultimate end of Ghazali's ethical thought

The most salient feature of Ghazali's ultimate end with his mystical ethics is the accentuation of 'individual salvation' through the implementation of his mystical ethics.<sup>66</sup> Ghazali's orientation of thought is merely focused on the salvation of the 'individual' destiny in this present world or in the hereafter. He opposes any approach or understanding which try to interpret or explain the body of religious doctrine from a social approach, let alone from psychological, anthropological approach, etc. If there could be such an approach or understanding, it is not his commitment to pay attention. Due to this belief, it is hard for Ghazali to differentiate between the phenomena of 'religious doctrine' which is 'particular' in its essence, and the phenomena of 'religiousity' of human beings which is 'universal'.<sup>67</sup>

In accordance to this ultimate end, Ghazali totally opposes a Hellenizing Muslim philosopher such as Miskawaih (c.940-1030) who tries to connect the importance of the religious duty to the 'social feeling' of human being.<sup>68</sup> Ghazali prefers to explain those religious ethical duties merely from 'religious approach' or revelatory approach. None of the diverse disciplines of science is allowed to approach the phenomena of 'religiousity' of human beings. The only valid explanation is coming from God's prescription.

From this limited perspective, it is interesting here to see the palpable connection between Ghazali's accentuation on particular religious or revelatory ethics within the framework of hypothetical method and deductive thinking with his ultimate end of ethical thought, namely, to achieve an individual salvation. There is a strict consistency in Ghazali's thought. Each part cannot stand by itself without the support of the other. These four elements of the system of thought are well sustained in his mystical ethics.

Besides its value to guide the detail action of the mystics, Ghazali's thought makes his followers also face a lot of difficulties to grasp and to have another approach to the 'essence' of religion in the human society. The new empirical approach to the phenomena of human 'religiousity', not to say sociology of religion, psychology, anthropology and philosophy of religion, is hardly accepted in the mystical milieu. At least, they have some psychological hindrance and intellectual difficulties to try to have an alternative thought

66. See my footnote 133, Chapter III, p. 97.

67. For the clear notion of the particularity of religious doctrine, see Oliver Leaman, *Averroes and his philosophy*, Clarendon, Press, Oxford, 1988, p. 128-9.

68. *Ihya'*, I, p. 242-3 Cf. Grunebaum, *Op. cit.* p. 6-7 and also Leaman, *Op. cit.* p. 129-130.

or alternative approach towards the phenomena of religiosity, since it is only a 'religious approach' which is believed to be valid and legitimate to see the 'whole' reality of religiosity of human beings. Having such an approach towards the phenomena of religiosity, as a matter of fact, will never minimize our belief and the value of historical-particular ethical norms embedded in all societies. The benefit that we can take from those different approaches is to widen our 'intellectual perspective' in order to have a mature thinking in the age of plural society.

I realize, of course, that those approaches in human social-sciences are new branches of human study which is not found in Ghazali's time. Nevertheless, the legacy and the heritage of Ghazali is still 'up-to-date' in all Muslim societies. Ghazali's work is still widely read and much influences the mode of people's thought in those societies.<sup>69</sup>

The idea of law exemplified in the 'causality' which is absent from Ghazali's mind also contributes another difficulty to approve the emergence of scientific approach to the whole reality of human beings. So that, the end of Ghazali's ethical thought just reflects the whole mechanism of his system of thought. The four items to which I have explored are closely intertwined. Those four items construct altogether the gist of one's mentality, to which, from the beginning of this work, I try to concentrate upon.

#### b. The ultimate end of Kant's ethical thought

To achieve the "'social end' or 'social good' is the ultimate end of Kant's ethical thought.<sup>70</sup> As we can find a consistency in Ghazali's way of thought, we can also observe the same consistency in Kant's thought. This ultimate end reflects a direct implication of his clear formulation of the 'idea of law', namely, the 'moral law' which is 'formally' valid for 'all' human beings irrespective of their religion, nationality and race. Using the term 'all' human beings, not to say 'individual' human beings, indicates the connotation of the wide range of humanity, expressed and represented in the formulation of moral law which binds 'all' human beings universally.

For Kant, the 'social end' or 'social good' can only be achieved if 'all' individuals have the palpable similarity of perception. Kant wants to underline here, that human beings have to acquaint or to grasp, at least, in one sense or another, the 'formal' aspect of

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69. See footnote 46, Chapter IV, p. 135

70. See footnote, 74, Chapter III, p. 81.

morality which is rational and universal. This is another way of saying that the only understanding of its 'particular' or 'material' content of morality, which differs from society to society is not sufficient to achieve that 'social end' in its real sense.

The 'social good', in its literal meaning, is not meant only confined in a limited circle of 'particular' member of a certain society. Every 'particular' societies, which puts emphasis on its own 'particular' specific ethical norms, will hardly have this notion of 'social good' in its wide range of meaning, namely, the whole humanity itself. It seems, it is utopian and too ideal to achieve, but we should not misunderstand the gist of Kant's idea here.

Behind this understanding, there is more essential understanding implicitly attached to his idea of social good. Kant strongly believes that the moral life in all 'particular' society is not chaotic, haphazard or aimless. Kant always sees that morality resembles a system of nature<sup>71</sup>, which involves ends and purposes.<sup>72</sup> At this point Kant himself clarifies this issue:

*The universal law is therefore as follows: Let thy procedure be such that in all thine actions regularity prevails. What does this restraint imply when applied to the individual? That he should not follow his inclinations. The fundamental rule, in terms of which I ought to restrain my freedom, is the conformity of free behaviour to the essential end of humanity. I shall not then follow my inclinations, but bring them under a rule. ... being a free agent he must have a rule, which is the essential end of humanity... But if man gives free rein to his inclinations, he sinks lower than an animal because he then lives in a state of disorder which does not exist among animals. A man is in contradiction with the essential ends of humanity, in his own person, and so with himself.*<sup>73</sup>

'Regularity', 'the idea of law', and 'the universal law of morality' frequently echoes in Kant's system of thought. These ideas finally bring Kant to the notion of one's 'duty' towards other fellowmen of human beings. A duty which prescribes oneself towards other human beings, essentially, meant a 'social orientation'.

Ghazali also has original notion of duty, namely, the duty towards God. This duty towards God is virtually intended only for the 'individual salvation'. While Kant thinks in a reverse way : the universal law of morality embodied in 'duty', firstly, binds all human beings to do goodness for a social end, then comes the second, namely, to serve God.

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71. *Groundwork*, p. 89.

72. Williams, *Op. cit.* p. 48, 121-2.

73. *Lecture on Ethics*, p. 122-3, the italic is added.

From this specific angle too we can say that both thinkers, Ghazali and Kant, always involve God in their ultimate end of ethical thought. The only difference is that Ghazali starts from the 'individual salvation', whereas Kant enters from the main gate of 'social good' or 'social end'.

In this case, Kant pioneers a new understanding which emphasizes that even in the domain of morality, which is far more abstract than the realm of nature, there is some kind of 'regularity' that can be understood and explained rationally through the universal law of morality. This regularity does not exist only in the world of nature, but also can be found in the domain of 'morality'. From this palpable regularity, actually, all main body of knowledge or science can be constructed. And Kant, from the early beginning, is very eager to search for that 'regularity', whether it is in the domain of nature or in the domain of morality.<sup>74</sup>

The gist of Kant's ethos gives much influence to his successors to see the phenomena of 'religiosity', which is much more condensed with the doctrine of morality, from various different disciplines and scientific approaches, not to say only confined in a limited scope of religious or theological approach as Ghazali and his followers try to stick on.

The emerging and the flowering of scientific approach towards the phenomena of 'religiosity', such as sociology of religion, psychology of religion, anthropology of religion and so forth cannot be separated from Kant's original effort to search for the 'regularities' attached to the phenomena exhibited by human beings. Only from these 'regularities' the body of knowledge can be constructed and, in turn, this knowledge will be useful as a tool to understand the phenomena of human beings.

### C. Towards intra and inter - cultural dialogue

From our close examination, we see that the system of thought which belongs to Ghazali and the system of thought which belongs to Kant are quite different within their respective traditions. I sincerely do not claim that what I have been trying to depict can represent the 'exact' system of thought of those respective traditions. In some cases, there are overlapping features between both systems of thought, namely, Islamic and Western.

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74. KPV, A. 289, p. 300; *Second Critique*, p. 166 And Cf. Iris Fry, "Kant's Principle of the Formal Finality of Nature and Its Role in Experience," *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. XXIX, No. 1, 113, 1989, p. 72, and Kant's conception of the 'homogeneity' in *KrV* B. 682, p. 683-4; *First Critique*, p. 539-40.



Nevertheless, when we trace back to the original sources, namely, Ghazali's work and Kant's work, we can easily see those similarities and differences. It is important to note here that both systems of thought are still alive from the very first day of their emergence up until this very day.<sup>75</sup> The purpose of this work is not to dismiss one system of thought and appreciate the other. But rather I would like to regard both system of thought as the valuable legacy of human history which has been unfolding itself within certain traditions. It is impossible that one can relagate any tradition in the course of time. The existence of each system of thought is valid and legitimate although each system of thought has its own limits, weaknesses and strengths.

My aim in this work has been simple one: Due to the above consideration, what we need actually is a kind of mutual and inter dialogue between the custodians of both system of thought. In other words, what we need is a kind of cultural dialogue in order to get the benefit from each other and to share ideas among the participant of dialogue, to solve this as well as other human problems in general.

In our pluralistic society, it is only through 'dialogue', namely, intra and inter-cultural dialogue that will guide us to go beyond the 'impasse' of universalism or particularism in their literal meaning. With a dialogue we can acquaint and be well informed with the problem which is faced by our neighbouring cultures. A prejudice is only the result of exclusiveness. And exclusiveness is not an appropriate way to solve the human problem. Only by that kind of 'dialogue', the psychological demand of having some kind of cultural superiority can be reduced to a minimum degree.

Take for an example, Kant's system of thought whose main feature is 'rational', it is possible to say that since this system aims at the dominance of reason over nature it would lead to the grave problem of ecology which threatens the whole life of human being. But, Ghazali's system of thought also faces the great problem of exclusiveness of thought. Both of them may be considered harmful to the whole community of human beings.

There is another and yet more important reason for the need of dialogue. Both Ghazali and Kant are merely the product of 'individual' thinkers who rely on their individual thought. The problem of pluralistic society cannot be solved, to be sure, by merely 'individual thoughts'.<sup>76</sup> By relying on 'revelation' alone or by depending on 'reason' alone, our global human problem cannot be solved satisfactorily.

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75. See footnote 4 and 6 of the *Introduction*, p. 3-4.

76. Raziel Abelson & Kai Nelson, "History of ethics", *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, *Op. cit.* Vol. 3 & 4, p. 95.

What we need today is a kind of 'team-work' between those diverse custodians of particular ethical norms. The individual thinkers are not adequate anymore, no matter how high the validity of their ideas is. The idea of community in the term of the 'team work' has to be put forward in order to open the dialogue between these two or more defenders of systems of thought. From the dialogue something new will appear, not only to say and to formulate the problem in two limited particular dichotomical approach., But the nature of this dialogue can be clarified in another discipline, by studying, in the above discussed manner, different systems of thought within their respective cultures. If my discussion above appears to be a dichotomical approach that is only a matter of strategy to decipher the problem into its detail items to get the clearness of the basic problem. By acquainting the body of both systems of thought, it will give more opportunity to open many possibilities to have a mutual dialogue as I have proposed.



## CONCLUSION

Our study concerning Ghazali's and Kant's theory of ethics reveals some points of similarities and differences. We will summarize the most palpable similarities and differences and its consequences in the following discussions.

### 1. The primacy of ethics over metaphysics

There is a similar line of thought between Kant and Ghazali in constructing their basic philosophical thoughts. In order to establish their theory of ethics. Ghazali and Kant have the same point of departure. Both of them engage in a critique of the theory of dogmatic metaphysics which is popular in their respective ages. The final upshot of their critique of metaphysics leads them to formulate their rigorous theory of ethics.

From a careful study of their philosophical thought, one cannot deny the similarity of the main route that has been passed by Ghazali and Kant. Even the chronological sequence of the manner they are putting their main ideas is totally the same. Ghazali starts with *Tahafut* in criticizing metaphysics and ends with *Ihya'* to construct his mystical ethics, while Kant starts with *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* to criticize the dogmatic speculative metaphysics and ends with *Metaphysik der Sitten* and other related works to construct the main body of his theory of rational ethics. Besides similar ways of putting their ideas, another striking similarity between both thinkers is this: Ghazali and Kant agree in accentuating the primacy of ethics over metaphysics. This line of thought is totally different from the philosophical trend which denies metaphysics and ethics as well.

### 2. The constitutive use of mind and the ethical conduct

Apart from these palpable similarities between them, we are confronted with the fundamental differences between both thinkers. As a matter of fact, the differences between Ghazali and Kant starts earlier, when they try to formulate their basic ideas to refute the doctrine of rational metaphysics. I have delineated that these differences originate from their different methodological approaches to the problem. Ghazali uses hypothetical method, while Kant employs analytical method. A different methodology means a different way of approach, and a different approach means a different 'way of thought'. No doubt that a different way of thought will have a great implication and consequences in all of human activities, be it intellectual, religious or social.

Ghazali's hypothetical method emphasizes the power of miracle, not to say revelation, rather than 'reason' as a decisive tool to refuse the misleading argumentation of the Muslim metaphysicians. Ghazali uses the 'rational power' of course, to vindicate the plau-

sibility of his argument and the weadhnness and the implausibility of the *falasifa's* argument. But he does use it in a 'dialectical' way, not in a 'demonstrative' one. He forces his audience to follow his own argument, otherwise one will go astray. He does not construct his argument demonstratively, in such a way that his argument can defend its plausibility by its own rigorous texture without pretending that it should force his audience to agree with its fundamental idea.

What is missing from the intellecetual plane in Ghazali's dialectical type of thought is, to borrow Kant's term, the constitutive use of mind. Ghazali might be emotionally successful in refuting the doctrine of rational metaphysics by using this 'dialectical' type of thought exemplified in his hypothetical method. But he has no such a clear conception of the use of the human mind in its proper and rigorous way. If our mind cannot be used to grasp the essence of the metaphysical knowledge, can we use it in the realm of non-metaphysical one? If it is valid and legitimate, as Ghazali himself suggests, in what sense and how?

Ghazali does not have a clear-cut conception on this crucial problem. The only clear conception is his a strict separation between '*ulūm shar'iyya*' and '*ulūm aqliyya*', with a preference to the former rather than to the later. The implication of this strict separation and preference is obvious. Ghazali does not have a 'rigorous' conception towards the latter.

Kant's analytical method in refusing the doctrine of dogmatic metaphysics has two surfaces in one coin. The first surface is to defend the possibility and the validity of knowledge exemplified in his cogent conception of the constitutive use of mind, while the other surface is to deny the validity and the legitimacy of the knowledge of phenomenal world to be applied in the noumenal world. Kant does not underline his preference here, as Ghazali does in his classification. For Kant, both of them are important while Ghazali puts a strong preference of the former, but not of the latter.

Ghazali's preference of the former, actually, does not have specific difficulty in itself. Even, his idea on this accentuation is more definite and rigorous than Immanuel Kant, since we can get a definite metaphysical and religious knowledge form revelation. Nevertheless, Ghazali's less attention to the second, even, to some extent, the second knowledge is relegated by the first causes the grave problem in the intellectual level of his followers.

### **3.Causal explanation in nature and morality**

The salient example of Ghazali's implausible attitude toward the second part of this classification is his conception concerning the law of causality. His conception is so

obscure for he gravely suffers from the 'theological tension'. His major impetus and ultimate concern is merely to defend the sovereignty of God over all natural and moral phenomena and to underline the absolute will of God. In so doing, instead of suggesting the possibility of grasping and constructing the law of causality in nature and morality by our own mind, Ghazali emphasizes the atomistic or occasionalistic world view, by which he believes that he is able to safeguard theologically the absolute will of God.

Kant, on the other hand, can disentangle this theological tension without necessarily losing contact with the basic essence of the religious experience, not to use the term speculative theology. He plainly clarifies that the idea of causality is nothing but an intellectual work or artificial formula that should be sought and discovered by an active, rational and intellectual work. The reason is the lawgiver of nature and morality is another Kant's popular aphorism. It is not Kant's business to decide whether the rational discovery and the intellectual construction of the basic causal relationship between phenomena A and B will violate the sovereignty of God or not. It seems, for Kant, the sovereignty of God over all diverse phenomena is something taken for granted, since all these phenomena are something given. But his deep concern is how to discover and to formulate rationally and intellectually those raw materials of natural and moral phenomena into a constructive body of knowledge, so that will help the human beings to understand, to organize and to estimate the future events for the benefit of human beings themselves.

Ghazali's atomistic thought might be true, indeed, but he inevitably falls into a total scepticism as Hume did in the following age. The obvious implication of having atomistic world view is that Ghazali cannot constitute the rigorous body of knowledge which is based on the idea of law of causality. This law usually presupposes regularities, uniformities and universalities of the predictable course of phenomena. Ghazali's psychological and theological tension is centered upon the alleged notion that admitting this 'regularities' means, to some extent, to have presupposed 'the natural permanency' of the mechanism of nature. And this idea contradicts the absolute will of God which can abolish these regularities any time he wills. In order to safeguard the theological notion of the absolute will of God, Ghazali sacrifices the fundamental decisive notion that human reason has to be 'active' to search for those laws of causality.

This basic conception is brought into the realm of morality as well. The gist of mystical ethics is nothing but to deny the recognizable and the understandable law of causality in the realm morality. Ghazali's accentuation is focused on the bounty of God whom he believes does not depend on a certain law, and not dependent on the 'active' contribution of human beings in acquiring the ultimate virtues. Since there is no such a strong impetus to search for the law of causality which is embedded in the palpable uniformities and regularities in nature and morality, Ghazali's type of thought is regressive and passive.



The alleged theological and mystical belief that emphasizes the notion that it is only God who will decree the merit of our actions makes the believers have no such 'rigorous' and 'active' mode of thought to capture those God's bounties and to grasp God's works through causalities.

#### 4. The role of an active subject in ethics

Kant's fundamental conception of the idea of causality is subjective, in the sense that it is the human subject that has to be active in searching and formulating the idea of law embedded in the regularities or uniformities of phenomena, be it in nature or in morality. Our position should be like an appointed judge who compels the witness to answer the question, not like the character of a pupil who listens to everything that the teacher chooses to say.

Ghazali's idea, on the other hand, swings neither to the subjective nor objective side. It is a theological stand, thoroughly influenced by Ash'arite atomistic view. He thinks that it is the absolute authority of God who decrees the relation of cause and effect. His strong emphasis on the notion that there is no such regularities are merely habit implicitly also underlies that there is no such a thing as we usually call 'rational' or intellectual construction of those palpable universalities and regularities. Theologically, Ghazali's idea might be true, but the gist of his thought does not motivate our mind to work hard. There is no such a thing in his notion which is called "a law of causality", which is nothing but only the product of intellectual work and rational active construction.

The application of Ghazali's idea in the domain of morality is much more striking. If Kant, by using his constitutive use of mind, can easily formulate the relation between virtues and happiness as the causal relationship in which the role of active subject is dominant here, Ghazali cannot see it from the same perspective. For, it is obvious, that for Ghazali human action in this world does not lead one to have a merit in the hereafter. This merit depends totally on God alone. So the real participation and the obvious contribution of the human active subject is lost from Ghazali's scenario. His doctrine of 'moral guide' (**Shaykh**) enhances the absence of the active subject to decide and to think autonomously, since he has to behave as the 'dead' in the hand of the washer in front of his moral or spiritual 'guide'.

In such a conception, there is no a purposive act. Even, for Ghazali, the divine commandments do not have any purpose, in the sense that it should be obeyed merely because it is the divine command. This doctrine, too, eliminates the real contribution of human 'active' subject to understand and to attain those divine virtues.

## 5. Ethics and the idea of social sciences

It is well known that most of the theologians and the mystics have a little knowledge of social science and the notion of social change. I have indicated above that the 'motive' to search for the regularities and uniformities of phenomena and the rational construction of these uniformities and universalities as a 'body of knowledge' is nothing but merely 'ethical' decisions, not metaphysical or epistemological decisions. So the human knowledge in general is the product of ethical decisions.

Ghazali's system of thought does not give a clue to this important notion. From his theological point of view, the idea of **akhlāq** or ethics is merely confined in the limited scope of 'normative' one. **Akhlāq** is nothing but the discourse of 'good' and 'bad' based merely on a theological perspective. Ghazali's implausibility will be obvious if we face the problem of making decisions, molding behaviour and arousing motivation to do or to refrain from doing something. These activities need and involve a critical and a long intellectual process, rather than a clear-cut judgement of being good or bad, not to say '**ḥalāl**' (allowable) and '**ḥarām**' (unallowable) in the theological sense, or merely in the **fiqh** (religious law) orientation.

Kant, in contrast, can leave this crucial difficulty. For him, morality or ethics is not chaotic. He clearly says that, in essence, morality is a law. Even, it is universal law that binds all human beings who are rational. When he says that the idea of pure practical reason is unconditioned law of morality which organizes all human subjective inclinations under a certain objective law of morality, he explicitly presupposes that there is such a kind of regularities and uniformities, whatever this means, in the realm of ethical conduct. If that is the case, it should be studied and investigated systematically. Once one can grasp the 'basic principle' underlying the law of morality, this rational understanding will act as a guiding principle for his ethical conduct in general. It is problematic, of course, whether Kant's proposal is plausible or not, since many rational beings cannot act properly as 'rational' as Kant sketched.

What is important in Kant's idea is that he opens the possibility to construct a body of knowledge of ethical conduct. His revolutionary idea that morality presupposes the idea of causality embodied in the rational causal relationship between virtues and happiness opens the new horizon for other dimensions of a new approach towards human action, be it ethical or sociological, anthropological, psychological, historical etc. The idea of social sciences, in general, can rigorously stand if it presupposes the regularities, uniformities in the human action in general.

Ghazali and his fellow theologians face certain difficulties to develop his initial theory of ethics which is confined merely in the strict limitation of normative -theological orientation. To some extent, Ghazalian methodology is very hard to explain and to

understand the phenomena and the reality of social change which gravely affects the whole life of human beings, especially in the realm of religious and ethical life. Apart from being caused by his fundamental conception of ethics, this consequence is only the natural outcome of his initial strategy to ban all the philosophers' book in order to save the religious doctrine<sup>1</sup>. By banning the unorthodox outlook, from Ghazali's own perspective, he feels that he has saved the religious life of the people. It seems, this strategy does not educate the people to have a mature thought in choosing his own action, his decision to formulate his family's life, and social life in general. Due to the absence of the constructive idea of social science and the notion of social change, Ghazali's strategy more or less leads us to have an 'exclusive' attitude to face the reality of social change in the pluralistic society.

### 6. Religious and philosophic ethics within a cultural transformation

A pluralistic society, with pluralistic ethical norms, is the reality of social life which cannot be denied. Every society, even every individual, has his own concept to conduct his own life. Even, among those proponents of religious ethics themselves have many diverse opinions which cannot be easily compromised.

To some extent, the pluralistic society have its own social tension from within, since every proponent of any particular ethical norms wants to draw the adherence of other system of ethical norm into his own community. The inevitable competition between one group and the other creates a tension between them and in some cases yields a social conflict. Now, how do we reduce a social conflict in the society and 'internal' conflict within ourselves after being encountered with these overlapping and conflicting standard of value into its minimal degree?

Ghazali seems does not have a clear conception here. His mystical ethics is intended only to save an individual fate in the hereafter and his ultimate concern is the vision of God in the hereafter. He has no conception concerning a 'social' life in general. Furthermore, this ultimate concern is achieved merely by purifying 'heart' and by 'solitude' of life in this present world. This type of solitude life might be true in Ghazali's time, when a huge cultural transformation did not occur yet. But in the modern age, where the trans-cultural value confronts us through many and various ways, the 'solitude' strategy is not adequate anymore. Purifying heart is good but not sufficient. It

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1. *Munqidh*, p. 20; W. p. 42; Mc, p. 81-1.

is the task of 'reason' in general to manage and to handle the situation. Our reason has to be trained and sharpened by giving and supplementing it with a tool of analysis to see the social realities and to evaluate critically the social change in order not to make ourselves lost in the huge waves of this cultural transformation. If we are not well prepared to see the reality of cultural transformation, this huge transformation will easily lead us to have a 'split personality'.

Understanding the philosophical ethics properly might help us to overcome the problem. To grasp the 'basic' and the 'general' principle which lies under those diverse ethical norms is the primary task of the philosophic ethics. Searching the 'form' rather than 'matter' is the primary task of philosophic ethics. The 'basic principle' belongs to the diverse ethical norms only can be understood and appreciated intellectually, not to say emotionally and psychologically.

Introducing the idea of philosophical ethics does not mean at all that it is a deliberate intention to change or to abolish any particular historical religious ethics which has been living for thousand years in society. Understanding the philosophic ethics will help us to have a clue to grasp the basic general principle or the 'universal principle' belongs to each of particular historical religious and secular ethics as well.

If this basic universal principle has been rationally constructed by human reason, this will help us to grasp the 'common ground' on which our belief of the validity of our own ethical norms and other particular ethical norms alien to us stand. When every proponent of any particular historical religious or secular ethics is able to grasp this common ground and the universal aspect of their ethical norms, without sacrificing their material content, this step will pave the way to build a type of 'dialogical society'. In this dialogical society, any particular ethical norms will have a common basic ground and understanding on which they will easily communicate and connect his specific particular norms of life with others' norms of life, without necessarily destroying his religious and cultural identity.

In this sense, the philosophic ethics which tries to discover the 'basic principle' embodied in every culture will have its value and great benefit to reduce the potential social conflict and internal tension within ourselves. The existence of any particular ethical norms is guaranteed under the umbrella of the broader perspective of philosophic ethics.

### **7. The urgency to have a new paradigm in the ethical discourse**

Based on those basic thoughts, I have an alleged hypothesis clarified in the previous chapter, that the dichotomical and reductionist approach toward ethical discourse

is not adequate to handle the current situation. Social change within pluralistic society cannot be unraveled through a narrow reductionist or dichotomical approach.

The theological way of thought, exemplified in Ghazali's way thought, is not adequate to handle the current situation. A split personality may suffer from some of the religious people, if they cannot face the current cultural transformation and social change intelligently and intellectually. Ghazali cannot appreciate the philosophical ethics since his ultimate concern is merely focused on defending his particular way of life. His objective is worthwhile but his methodology to reach that destination is less cogent. If Ghazali and other proponents of particular religious or secular ethics does the same thing in promoting his own standard of norms by discrediting the other's, it is only a social conflict that will accrue from such an enterprise. Furthermore, there is no such a kind of 'connecting link' which can stand as mediator between one system of ethical norms and others, so that it can reduce those potential social and internal conflict within us.

The philosophers' way of thought, on the other hand, who only try to see the 'universal' or the 'intellectual' aspect of the ethical norms and less regard to the specific content of this ethical norms will be less capable to appreciate the historical content of those morality and cannot construct a cogent personality. Kant has a phrase which is frequently quoted by scholars, studying his philosophy: "thoughts without content are empty, intuition without concepts are blind"<sup>2</sup> We can paraphrase this statement in the following way: If the idea of universality of ethical norms, which is constructed by human mind, is not accompanied by any basis of any particular-historical content this idea will be empty and has a little worth; whereas a particular historical or a material content of ethical norms embeded in the society - which is different from one group and the other - will be only emotionally beneficial, if their proponent do not have an 'intellectual' capacity to construct a 'connecting link' between one and the other ethical system, so that can easily communicate each other and reduce their potential social tension and the danger of split personality.

I would like to characterize the independent theological approach as well as the independent philosophical approach as "reductionist and dichotomical approach". In other words, to say that ethics can only be based on revelation as Ghazali wants to emphasize is inadequate conception. Not the revelatory norms are inadequate, but the conception is

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2. *KrV*. B. 75, p. 120; *First Critique*, p. 93.



inadequate, though it may emotionally and psychologically be true, but not intellectually. On the other hand, to say that ethics should be based on 'reason' alone seems to be an over simplification. Since reason, as Kant himself emphasizes elsewhere is limited in its capacity to grasp and understand the essence and the noumenal world.

Only 'joint production' between 'revelatory ethics' and 'rational ethics' which will save human beings from being trapped in a split personality. In this rapid social change and the huge cultural transformation, I believe, it is a great historical task to build such ideal approach to the ethical discourse. Nevertheless, the dialogue between Ghazali and Kant presented in this work will pave the avenue towards such a new paradigm by creating a lively dialogue between various traditions, not only in a limited scope between Western and Islamic traditions.



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