

Chapter VI

CONCLUSION

Some historicists of the modern day's , e.g. Karl Marx, believe in the economic and material factors for the building of civilizations. They have somehow completely ignored the historical role of reform and reconstruction, which a great thinker could play. In modern Asia, man lives in a world of ever increasing urbanization and economic activities. One's self-identity can be as vague as a mere digit at times. Al-Ghazzali's and Mencius' concept of perfect man would not naturally gain a hearing if not the effort of cultural workers or educators to reclaim their thoughts.

6.1 Al-Ghazzali's Perfect Man: The engagement of Islam with man's fundamental problem

As a pious Muslim who believes in God, His Messenger and the life hereafter, Al-Ghazzali's main concern is to urge man to escape from the punishment in hell. In order to pursue the well being in the hereafter, Al-Ghazzali's ethics show what a person should attempt even in the here and now. This is why Al-Ghazzali calls his ethics the Science of the Path of the Hereafter (*Ilm Tariq al-Akhira*), or the Path trodden by the Prophets and Righteous Ancestors (*As Salaf as-Salih*). His ethics is earmarked as both religious and mystical, very much unlike secular ethics that is exclusively concerned with human good in this life.¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ Quesem, Muhammad Abul, *The Ethics of Al-Ghazzali: A Composite Ethics in Islam* (Petaling Jaya: Muhammad Abul Quesem, 1975) p. 22.

Generally, Al-Ghazzali' concept of the perfect personality comes in a structure of dual spectrums. The first spectrum is that of the attribute of divinity. Such perfection depends solely on the gifts of God and is thus rather unachievable by normal beings. The second spectrum contains the different degrees of perfection achievable by ordinary men through effort of their own and through the grace of God. [Refer to Appendix VI for Chart (E).]

The higher spectrum consists of at least seven classification of perfect personality that reflects the attribute of the divine. The *Angel* or *Angelic* ones (*rubūbiyyah*) is one of them. An *Angel* is one who engages all his limbs, thoughts and actions to please God and thus receives His favor to be named as such. For example, Joseph of the Quran is one who is approved of God as an honorable *Angel*.¹⁹²).

The Holy Prophet or The Great Prophet, the none other Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. , was *the* man known as "*The Perfect Man*" (*Al-Insanul-Kamil*). The **Book 2, Chapter 11 of Ihya** contains an elaborated description of his conduct and character, for he is the greatest model of Muslims. "All praise is due to God who created the universe and taught His greatest prophet Muhammad the best good manners, purified his character and conduct and adopted him as His friend." He is "the most patient among men, the bravest, the best judge, and one who pardoned most" . "His constitution was the most beautiful. No worldly duties could keep him busy. He used to put on whatever he had got" . He is "the greatest of the Arabs in oratory and sweet speech" . "His actions, his habits, his management of affairs, his treatment with the different classes of people, his showing straight path to them, his wonderful answer to

difficult and subtle questions, his untiring efforts for the good of people, his good guidance regarding the open laws of *Shariat* – all these matters lead one to the conclusion that these were beyond the power of a man without the help of an unseen hand” ¹⁹³

The rank of a *Prophet* or *Apostle of God* is nevertheless highly regarded. It is understood that “all secrets are disclosed to him (the *Prophet*) without his efforts” .

“It is only the *Prophets* who are able to combine within themselves the knowledge of this world and the next ” . ¹⁹⁴ The people of this category were Moses, Noah, Ihyā, Prophet Zakaria, Jesus Christ, Hazrat Muaz, Hazrat Omar, Hazrat Ibn Mas’ ud, Hazrat Huzaifa, etc.

Coming next would be the *Saints*. In the Islamic tradition there are a host of others who are recognised as the *Saints*. Among others were Sarri Sakti, Atiyyah-b-Abed, Sahal Tastari Abed, etc. In *Ihya.*, **Book 4**, Hazrat Hasan Basari, Sufiyan, Ibn Sirin, Taus, Ihyā-b-Muaz and Susi were especially addressed as the *Great Saints*.

Apart from the *Saints*, there are others greeted as the *Sages* in the *Ihya.* For example, Muhammad Ibn Sayeed, Sahal Tastari are specially greeted as the *Great Sage*. Then, there are yet honorable ones generally known as the *Sages*. The people of this category were Wahab-b-Monabbah, Maimun-b-Mahran, Ata-b-Ziyad, Ibn Aswad, etc.

¹⁹² Refer to the *Quran* 12:21; Quoted in Maulana, Fazal-Ul-Karim (trans.), *Imam Ghazzali's Ihya Ulum-Id-Din (The Revival of Religious Learnings, Book 3)* (Lahore: Lahore, Kazi Publication, n.d.) pp. p.9.

¹⁹³ *Ihya.*, Book 2, pp. 259-263.

¹⁹⁴ *Ihya.*, Book 2, p. 8 and p. 21.

The *Friend of God* as well as the *Sufi* or *Ascetic* are other categories of perfect personality not easily achieved by normal beings. These are people who devotedly seek after the knowledge of God and wait for His favor. It is their hope that “by God’s help, screens of darkness will be removed and the real nature of divine affairs descends upon them” .¹⁹⁵ A *Friend of God* is one who acts to purify the souls and make it shines. Al-Ghazzali said, “the light of faith of the *Friends of God* is the dazzling ray of certain faith” .¹⁹⁶ The people addressed as *Sufi* or *Ascetic* are people with the special spiritual experience.¹⁹⁷ They are the people whom the knowledge of God descends by means of inspiration. Imam Abu Hanifah was the recognised *Ascetic* of the time.

The other spectrum with the perfect personality achievable by all devotees contains categories such as the *Wise* , the *Learned*, the *Pious*, the *Warrior* and *Martyr*, the *Believer* as well as the *Worshipper*. The *Wise* is defined as a learned man who is able to differentiate and refrain from the wicked.¹⁹⁸ The *Learned*, as appraised by the Holy Prophet, “is a trust of God on earth.” They are people who are “near to the rank of prophets” ; “have been sent for which the prophets were sent” ; “to be the guides to the people” . As the *Warriors* wage wars in the path of God, the *Learned* “works among the people like the apostles” The *Learned* ranks higher than the warriors for “the ink of the *Learned* will be weighed against the blood of the *Martyrs* on the Resurrection Day” . It is also emphasized that “God will keep the *Learned* over the ordinary believers by 700 degrees above!”¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ *Ihya.*, Book 3, pp. 22-23.

¹⁹⁶ *Ihya.*, Book 3, p. 17.

¹⁹⁷ *Ihya.*, Book 3, p. 28; Book 1, p. 40.

¹⁹⁸ *Ihya.*, Book 1, p. 72.

The *Pious* is defined as a learned man of practical science -- as compared to those of esoteric knowledge. A *pious* man is "he who believes in God, His Prophets, and do not entertain any doubt that will jeopardize his faithful living in the way of God. It was thus said that "God has reserved for the pious what no eye has seen, no ear has heard and no heart has conceived" . Imam Malek and Hammād Ibn Abī Sulaymān were men of such stature.²⁰⁰ The *Warrior* and *Martyr* are those who fight against the enemies of God, whether of the spiritual or the physical²⁰¹

The *Believer* is one whose trust God for his faith and life. It was described that "the soul of a believer is bright as if there is a lighted lamp" However, the *Believer* is far lower in rank in comparison to other categories of the perfect personality. "The light of the faith of the prophets and apostles is like the rays of the sun, the light of the Siddiqs is like that of the moon, the light of the friends of God is like that of the stars and the light of the general believers is like that of a lamp."²⁰² For Al-Ghazzali, it is not good to be a mere *Worshipper* – the one who only acquires the form of piety but does not possess the substance. He wrote, "a *Worshipper* is always worshipping but he might not have possessed knowledge. The superiority of a *Learned* man over a *Worshipper* is thus like that of moon over the star!"²⁰³

¹⁹⁹ *Ihya.*, Book 1, pp. 14-19; Book 3, p. 27.

²⁰⁰ *Ihya.*, Book 1, pp. 26, 45; Book 4, pp. 317, 395.

²⁰¹ Kindly refer to Maulana, Fazal-Ul-Karim (trans.), *Imam Ghazzali's Ihya Ulum-Id-Din (The Revival of Religious Learnings, Book 4)* (Lahore: Lahore, Kazi Publication, n.d.) pp. 406-407 for the four classes of martyrs.

²⁰² *Ihya.*, Book 3, p. 27.

²⁰³ *Ihya.*, Book 1, p. 16.

6.1.1 Islam *versus* Secularization

Secularization is in some way or another the 'menace' of the post-industrial society. It awakes our world in different ways, e.g. the politicians of the country with hot debates over the success or failure of Islamization; the business world with the so-called "value-free" marketing approaches; the young ones with an "accountability-free" relation with their guardians; and the ordinary men with the loss of awe for God. What embedded in secularism are actually "ideologies and theory systems that are man-made and thus anthropocentric, particularistic, context-bound, arbitrary and historically contingent".²⁰⁴ On the other hand, the Islamic perceptive is divinely ordained, fundamentally universal, that of essential and holistic.

It is not the intention of the dissertation here to apply persuasion that one should adopt the Islamic mystic way in dealing with the soul and life. It is the humanistic concern of man's loss of self-understanding that leads to this study of man. In comparison to Mencius' pure humanistic outlook, the theo-centric framework of Imam al-Ghazzali is objectively surveyed.

Islamic civilization is the sum total of the thoughts and deeds of the traditionalist, the rationalist, the reformist and the ordinary pious men. Islam being a diachronic, dynamic and evolutionary religion has never failed to discourse and attend to various issues of the modern world. The superficial understanding of man's dignity and his positioning in the cosmic is certainly one of the fundamental problems for the

²⁰⁴ Refer to the definitions by Farish, A Noor, "*Secularism is Not our Enemy: An Open letter to Malaysian Islamists seeking a Project to call Their Own*", an article released in the JUST website: www.jaring.my/just.

modern society.²⁰⁵ The concept of *Tawhid* (the unification of the truth) and man as the '*khalifah*' (vicegerent) of God, if understood and taken seriously, will rectify at least man's problem with himself and therefore his relations with his world.

6.1.2 The Way of Islam

Although one could be very sceptical about a Sufi²⁰⁶, none will have too much of problem with Imam Al-Ghazzali whose thoughts and teachings being Islam. His notion of human essence being imperfect but perfectible is derived directly from that revealed in the *Quran* 91:7-10, that says: "[I swear] by man's personality and that whereby it has been formed, God has engraved into it its evil and its good [whereby it can guard itself against moral peril. He who makes his personality pure, shall be successful, while he who corrupts it shall be in the loss]." Regarding embracing Islam to attain one's moral perfection, Al-Ghazzali's treatises on the "*Qalb*", the knowledge, the purifying of the soul from vices and beautifying it with virtues, are fairly helpful. This is why his treatises are quoted by some in the sermons even though Al-Ghazzali's narration will not be allowed in the Creed (*aqidah*).

As Al-Ghazzali aptly coined it, knowledge and action are the two means to the other-worldly happiness. Ethics, in Islam, is a study of beliefs (*itiqadat*) of rights and wrongs of action and not for the sake of mere knowledge. There is no room for faith without action in Islam. Thus, when one embrace Islam, the entire person has to change to meet with the ends. The saying of the Prophet appropriately coined Islam as such: "God adorned Islam with good character and beautiful actions. Good company,

²⁰⁵ Wan Hashim Wan Teh, *Sumbangan Sarjana Islam* (Bangi: Penerbit UKM, 1978) pp.57-59.

good manners, modest talk, doing good to others, feeding, spreading peace, visiting the ill pious or sinner, following the bier of a Muslim, treating good with a neighbour believer or non-believer, showing honour to a Muslim having honour, to accept invitation, to forgive, to settle disputes among the people, to give charity, to greet first, to pardon the faults of the others, to give up songs, instrument of songs which Islam prohibited, not to backbite, to speak truth, to give up miserliness, greed, deceit, to give up bad treatment with enemy, not to cut off blood tie, to give up bad conduct, pride, glory, haughtiness, indecencies, hatred, rebellion, enmity, oppression, etc. – all these are the attributes of a believer.”²⁰⁷

6.2 Mencius’ Perfect Man: The basis of man’s inner resources in the Chinese Civilization

Mencius’ concept of the perfect personality also ranges from that of the attribute of divinity to the level achievable by all. Basically, Mencius proposed a theory whereby “the *Sages* and we (ordinary human beings) are the same in kind”²⁰⁸. What makes the *Sages* distinguished from others is that they “apprehend *before*” the others are able to do so. The *Sages* are above the normal level of human beings because with their effort, “they are now different in degree” in the moral character as compared to others.²⁰⁹

The *Godly Men* (*Shenren*), the *Sage-kings* (*Shengwang*) and the *Sages* (*Shengren*) are categories grouped under the first spectrum in Mencius’ spectrums of

²⁰⁶ Even the reformist Muslim, for example the Muslim Brethren could not accept Sufism for their Shrine cult practices.

²⁰⁷ Quoted in Maulana, Fazal-Ul-Karim (trans.), *Imam Ghazzali’s Ihya Ulum-Id-Din (The Revival of Religious Learnings, Book 2)* (Lahore: Lahore, Kazi Publication, n.d.) p. 262.

²⁰⁸ Refer to “*Gaozi, Part 1, 7:3*” and “*Gongsun Chou, Part 1, 2: 28*” in *The Work of Mencius*.

perfect personality. This first spectrum contains categories that are of the attribute of divinity. The high moral goal of this spectrum is achievable in theory but in practical, even Confucius admitted “a *Sage*, it is not mine to see, could I see a man of real talent and virtuous, that would satisfy me.” [Refer to the Appendix VI for Chart (E)]

There are very few mentioning of the *Godly Men* in Mencius’ work. *In The Work of Mencius*, the only one time that refers the perfect man as the “*Godly*” is found in “*Jinxin, Part 2, 25:8*” . In other portions of the work, however, there are regular mentioning of the *Sage-kings* and the *Sages*. The *Sage-kings* were none other than the legendary King Yao, King Shun, King Yu, King Gao Tao, King Shang Tang and King Wen. The *Sage* refers to one who satisfies the design of his bodily organization to bring about the Heaven-conferred nature. Yi Yi, Lai Zhu, Taigong Wang, Shanyu Shen, Confucius, Poyi, Hui of Liuxia, the duke of Chou.²¹⁰

The perfect personality that is achievable by all devotees is described by different names, which can be group under the second spectrum. “*Jinxin, Part 2, 25: 3-8*” broadly defines the six degrees of moral perfection as such: “A man who commands our liking is (what is called a) *Good* (man). He whose goodness is part of himself is (what is called a) *Real* (man). He whose goodness has been filled up is (what is called a) *Beautiful* (man). He who has completed goodness and the indwelling goodness is brightly displayed is (what is called a) *Great* (man). When this great man exercises a transforming influence, he is (what is called a) *Sage*. When the *Sage* is beyond our knowledge, he is *Godly* and of the divine.

²⁰⁹ Refer to “*Gaozi, Part 1, 7:8*” and “*Gongsun Chou, Part 1, 2:28*” in *The Work of Mencius*.

A person who rectifies himself and at the same time causing others rectified is called a *Great Man (Dazhangfu)* ²¹¹ According to Mencius, Gongsun Heng and Zhangyi were not qualified yet at this category. It is, however, one's role to be the *Complete Man (Chengren)*, which also means the *Matured Man* and is described as the 'beautiful' in character. The *Complete Man* refers to one who "in view of gains thinks of righteousness; who in view of danger is prepared to give up his life; and who does not forget an old agreement however far back it was." A *Complete Man* is recognized as one who is accomplished of the rules of propriety and music in two chapters in the "*Confucian Analects*", i.e. the chapters entitled "*Xianwen*" and "*Yanhui*".

In the second spectrum of perfect personality, the *Superior Man (Junzi)* is most frequently mentioned of. A *Superior Man* is one who is 'real' and truthful. The object of the *Superior Man* is truth. Food is not so much of his concern. A *Superior Man* is anxious lest he should not get truth but he is not as anxious over poverty and suffering. A *Superior Man* is someone with excellent mind and vigorous endurance with his mandated task. The mind of a *Superior Man* is conversant with righteousness. Therefore, he is always satisfied and composed. ²¹²

The *Scholar or Learned (Shi)* stands for one dominant category in Mencius' spectrum of perfect personality. A *Shi* is not a mere learned person. Illustrating on the role and ambition of a *Shi*, Confucius said, "men of the ancient

²¹⁰ Refer to "*Jinxin, Part 1, 38*", "*Jinxin, Part 2*" and "*Tengwen Gong, Part 1*" of *The Work of Mencius*.

²¹¹ Refer to "*Jinxin, Part 1, 19:4*", "*Jinxin, Part 2, 25:8*" and "*Tengwen Gong, Part 2*".

²¹² Refer to "*Jinxin, Part 1, 21:4*", "*Jinxin, Part 2, 25:8*" and "*Lilou, Part 2, 28*" and the numerous chapters of the "*Confucian Analects*" i.e. "*Weileng Gong, 31*", "*Taibo, 6*", "*Li Ren, 16*" and "*Shu-er, 36*".

times learned with a view to their own improvement; but men of nowadays (should) learn with a view to the approbation of others.”²¹³ The “*Shi*” is someone who has decided to stay akin with the principle of uprightness. He is one who when “poor, not letting righteousness go; ... when prosperous, not leaving the proper path”²¹⁴

The *Worthy (Xianzhe)* as well as the *Virtuous and Talented (Nengzhe)* are categories fairly appraised of in a few chapters of *The Work of Mencius*, i.e. “*Gongsun Chou, Part 1, 4:2;5*”, “*Gongsun Chou, Part 1, 2:18*”, “*Gaozi, Part 1, 7:6-7*” and “*Jinxin, Part 1, 31:2*”. The men of these categories were probably Zhaiwo, Zhigong, Yanniu, Minzi, Yanyuan, Yiya, Guang, Zidu, etc. Last but not least is the *Man of Moral Determination (Renren or Zhishi)*. These are the people described as ‘good’ men in “*Jinxin, Part 2, 25:8*” and are appraised of in the “*Confucian Analects, Weiling Gong, 8*”. The people of this category persistently live a virtuous life, abiding good principles into real life contexts. Briefly, the initiatives and persistency of one in venturing into whatever is noble and good, here again, reflects on Mencius’ advocacy of man’s role in the moral perfection.

The main objective of the Confucian concept of perfect man is to nurture men of the moral courage and with integrity. Self-perfection is only a subjective gain but the urgency is that the right principles should prevail throughout the empire and that the empire should enjoy tranquility and good order. The clarion call of Mencius’ moral advocacy spells as such: “But Heaven does not bring about tranquillity and

²¹³ Refer to the “*Confucian Analects, Xianwen, 25*”.

²¹⁴ Refer to “*Jinxin, Part 1, 9:4*”.

good order to the empire. If it wished so, who is there besides me (a perfect man) to bring it about?!"²¹⁵

6.2.1 From Self to Society

In Mencius' context, the goal of moral-perfection is not necessarily bound to one's emotional and spiritual satisfaction. It also seeks to bring upon the kingdom tranquility and good social order. Mencius' life experience, however, reveals the cruel fact that a man of such high moral integrity is not necessarily given opportunity to serve others.

"*Gaozi, Part 1, 9:1-2*" records on the dialogue between Mencius and Song Goujian on the question of whether Mencius would give up his persuasion visits to the princes. Mencius answered as such, "If a prince acknowledges you and follows your counsels, be perfectly satisfied; if no one affirms you in this way, be just as happy!" In the conversation later, Mencius expressed very firmly his stand on the matter, "Honor virtue and delight in righteousness and so you may always be perfectly satisfied."

Mencius advocates that a man with moral integrity should "even in poor situation, does not let go of his righteousness; and when prosperous, does not leave his own path." The principle of "poor and not letting righteousness go; prosperous and not leaving the proper path" should always be kept. Mencius said, "when the situation allows the man of antiquity to realize his wishes, great benefits will be

²¹⁵ Refer to "*Jinxin, Part 1, 43:1*" and "*Gongsun Chou, Part 2, 13:5*".

brought upon the people. If the situation does not allow the man to realize his vision for society, the man still will become a good illustration to the world with the personal character that he has cultivated.”²¹⁶

This is the precious moral heritage from the Chinese Civilization to the world, that one should seek moral-perfection not at his own disposal but to offer his moral courage whenever necessary to rectify and transform the world for the better.

6.2.2 The Insight from the Sagely tradition

In “*Gongsun Chou, Part 2, 13.3*”, Mencius said, “it is a rule that a true imperial sovereign should arise in the course of five hundred years, and that during that time their should be men of renown in their generation.” In his understanding, the history of Ancient China unfolds in a cyclical pattern.²¹⁷ He sees 500 years as a milestone of the fall and rise of Chinese Civilization.²¹⁸ In every cycle, a *Sage-king* would rise upon the nation. The king was mandated to curb the social problems and rule with a humane government (*RenZheng*).

The *Sage-kings* were linked together by a sagely tradition. The tradition embraced the way and teachings of the ancient *Sages*, which is expounded in the Confucian teachings. In “*Jinxin Part 2*”, Mencius said, “From King Yao, King

²¹⁶ Refer to “*Jinxin, Part 1, 9:4-6*” in “*The Works of Mencius*” in Legge, James, *The Chinese Classics, Vol. 2* (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 1994).

²¹⁷ Another reference depicting on the rise and fall of civilization reads as such: “there has been along its history that there is a period of good order, and there is again a period of confusion.” Refer to “*Tengwen Gong, Part 2, 9.2*” in “*The Works of Mencius*” in Legge, James, *The Chinese Classics, Vol. 2* (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 1994)

²¹⁸ The 500 years is a symbolic earmark for a cycle, not significant in the actual calculation of years. Refer to He, Xiaoming, *Menzi Yu Zhongguo Wenhua* (Kaifeng: Henan Daxue Chubanshe, 1995) p. 131.

Shun to King Tang, there was 500 years. Kung Yu and King Tiao Tao were eyewitnesses of the way of Yao and Shun. King Tang was only a hearer of the way. From King Tang to King Wen, there was also 500 years. King Yi Ya and Lai Zhu were eyewitnesses of the way of Yao and Shun. King Wen was only a hearer of the way. From King Wu to Confucius, there was another 500 years. King Tai Gong Wang and Shan Yusheng were eyewitnesses of the way. Confucius was only a hearer of the way. From Confucius until today, it was slightly more than 100 years. We are not too far from the glorious age of the *Sage*, neither are we too distant from the homeland of the *Sage*. It is a shame that none of us have witnessed the practice of the way of Yao and Shun. There will be hardly anyone to hear about the way of Yao and Shun in the future.”

Mencius’ cyclical theory suggests clearly of the role of *Sage-kings* in the ordering of society and the continuation of civilization. His thought was not unique among the contemporaries. Laozi, for example has proposed that “the holy man is capable of shepherding the people.”²¹⁹ However, Mencius’ concerns on the moral character of the Sovereign is definitely distinct if compared to that of Mozi’s which adored the “learned and capable”²²⁰ and that of Hanfei’s which sought for “a king who makes independent and dominant decisions”²²¹.

In a material world today, many seek to become corporate leaders for power and fame. In many cases, skills come first but the nourishing of one’s moral self is not

²¹⁹ The verse reads as: “圣人抱一为天下式。” in *The Work of Laozi*, Chapter 22; other manuscript reads as: “圣人执一以为天下牧”. Refer to He, Xiaoming, *Menzi Yu Zhongguo Wenhua* (Kaifeng: Henan Daxue Chubanshe, 1995) p. 134.

²²⁰ The verse reads as: “天下之贵可者” in the chapter of “*Shangtong*” in *The Work of Mozi*. Refer to He, p.134.

the concern at all. Man is happy to be a mere economic being, to exist with facial values and function one-dimensionally. The phenomenon described in Hegel's philosophy whereby "man's self-consciousness in absolute disintegration" takes place in the daily lives of common people. Man's moral self turn thin everyday, and one will not be surprised to realize that he is '*alienated* from the self' in the end! When it is so, what will happen to human history and world's civilization? Will man's life be as desperate as that spelt by Thomas Hobbes: "man's life is but solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" !?²²² Here, the sagely tradition brought to us a reminder of man's identity, integrity and historical role.

6.3 The Similarities and Differences between Al-Ghazzali and Mencius on the Concept of a Perfect Man

In this closing chapter, a brief comparison on the similarities and difference between the philosophers will be listed. The intention here is to promote cross-cultural understanding and to strengthen the common celebrated values of the two world's greatest civilizations.

There are at least three ways in which Al-Ghazzali's *Concept of a Perfect Man* differs from Mencius's. On, the natural state of the man, Al-Ghazzali believes that an infant is void of knowledge and given birth to a mixed nature of good and evil. Mencius, on the other hand, teaches that the infantile heart is undefiled and endowed with good attributes and talents. The difference in their doctrine of human nature leads to the differences in the methods of moral perfection, whether the emphasis is of

²²¹ The verse reads as: "能独断者可以为天下主" in "*Wai Zhu Shuo You, Part I*" in *The Work of Hanfeizi*. Refer to He, p.134.

²²² A popular saying of Thomas Hobbes, English philosopher and social-scientist.

one's preserving the goodness or discarding the evil. Al-Ghazzali understands man as a mixed being containing both good and evil attributes. His emphasis is thus the discarding of the evil and the purifying from iniquities, without which one is unable of grooming the good. As for Mencius, he has rebutted all the theories of his contemporaries who tried to doubt on the goodness of human nature. His theory differs from Al-Ghazzali's on the ground that suggests man being good in nature and hence his proposal is to preserve and extend the goodness from *within* to his outside world and not otherwise. Besides, there is a big difference between Al-Ghazzali and Mencius on the question of whether the knowledge for moral perfection is "*hidden*" or not. Mencius' learning is clearly guided by the practicing of *Ren-yi* while Al-Ghazzali's practical knowledge (*Ilm al-Muamala*) is somewhat insufficient without one venturing into the higher, intuitive knowledge (*Ilm al-Mukasafha*). Apparently, this difference comes from the difference of their respective frameworks, i.e. Al-Ghazzali being of a theo-centric belief system whereas Mencius is of the humanistic.

On the contrary, the similarities of themes between Al-Ghazzali and Mencius on *the Concept of a Perfect Man* are many. Firstly, they are similar in promoting the use of the superior organ of the body, the "*Qalb*" as in Al-Ghazzali's or the "*Xin*" as in Mencius' teachings. Both Al-Ghazzali and Mencius perceive the "heart/mind" of man as the superior parts of the body for it is the dwelling place of human intellect and where the rectification and purification should take place. Mencius advocates the reclaim of the lost "heart/mind" (*qiu fangxin*) while Al-Ghazzali looks into the change of human behavior through knowledge and action. Both Al-Ghazzali and Mencius believe that learning takes a man to the limit of humanity from the limit of animality.

Secondly, both Al-Ghazzali and Mencius have outlined the cardinal virtues of man under 4 titles. These fours, though differ in each selection, forms the root of all virtuous expressions of a person in the respective teaching. Al-Ghazzali's four are: the virtue of *Wisdom*, the virtue of *Courage*, the virtue of *Temperance* and the virtue of *Justice*. Mencius' four are the virtue of *Benevolence*, the virtue of *Righteousness*, the virtue of *Propriety*, the virtue of *Wisdom*. The cultivation and nurturing of the fours are necessary in a person's character.

Thirdly, both Al-Ghazzali and Mencius have describe the unity with the *Ultimate* as the wholesome experience of goodness. Both propose some abstract idea of a union with the *Ultimate* which is believed as the way to one's total transcendence. The *Ultimate* referred to by Al-Ghazzali is none other than God while that by Mencius is the *Tian*.

Fourthly, both suggest that moral perfection brings happiness and dignifies a person. Al-Ghazzali describes the people with a perfect personality as someone who shines through the darkness. The prophets and learned are as distinguished as the shining moons and sparkling stars high in the sky over the others. Mencius' account of a person being complete with the *Immense Passion-nature* is of one who stands between the Heaven and earth.

Lastly, both Al-Ghazzali and Mencius advocate that man is self-responsible for the exercise of moral perfection. Even though both philosophers do not deny that there are degrees to which one can be successful in the moral exercise, or there is even doubt of whether some are totally unfit for perfection; one is definitely

responsible for the perfection of himself. Those who are 'unmindful' (warned by Al-Ghazzali) or 'playing thief with the natural endowment' (warned by Mencius) with lost sight of his glory to be.

6.4 Recommendation for Future Research

It is during the writing of this dissertation that the writer has been personally disturbed by Mencius' constant referring to *Tian* and other related ideas, e.g. the Heavenly-ordained mandate; the Heavenly-ordained beings; etc. The writer was contemplating on how far can the Confucian concept of *Tian* be exhausted as that found in the Islamic belief, of *Allah* or in Christianity, of *God*. The writer believes that there would be some past research on the idea but not at the disposal of local scholarship at the moment.

Thus, the writer would recommend the above-mentioned topic of comparison to be looked into so as to enhance the science of cross-cultural studies.

6.5 Conclusions

While the world population expands beyond 6 billion by the end of the last millennium, problems of moral deterioration, family dysfunction and social disharmony are rising at an alarming ratio too. While there are attempts to turn the world into an interactive global village, clashes between men of different ethnical background never seem to subside. The fundamental problem of man does not rely with one's intolerance of others or exploitation of the natural environment, as some

would have suggested. The fundamental problem of man, I suspect, is one's disillusion of *who* one actually is.

When an individual is unable to understand himself, he fails to perceive his moral obligation towards himself. Without realizing that he is to safeguard his own soul from wasting away, he would not be striving hard to incline to the good and turning away from the non-good, or in religious connotation, the evils.

In both the teachings of Al-Ghazzali's and Mencius' , there is a notion of human character being perfectible. Although their teachings do not synchronize on the point of view that man is good in nature, both instructed their followers that one should nurture oneself towards realizing the ideal self.

The discussion of Al-Ghazzali and Mencius opens the readers' eyes to the beauty and clarify of human soul and mind when one seeks and obtain its perfection. There are, of course, rooms to debate on Al-Ghazzali's mysticism and whether Mencius' theories are credited for practical ethics of mere metaphysics. The writer will not pretend to understand all but hope to present the comparison as one of the preliminary effort in civilization dialogue between Islam and Confucianism.