

AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S ETHICS

by

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## PREFACE.

Al-Ghazālī, who lived in the eleventh century of the Christian era, was one of the greatest Muslim thinkers. He had an encyclopaedic knowledge and wrote a great number of books on many subjects: ethics, Islamic jurisprudence, theology, metaphysics and logic. Ethics occupied a central position in his thought. He set forth his ethical views in many books according to the need and interest of various categories of his readers. Since his thought developed through several stages, the books he wrote including those on ethics are usually divided in accordance with these stages. They have been arranged chronologically by such scholars as Maurice Boyges, W. Montgomery Watt, George F. Hourani, 'Abd-ar-Rahmān Badawī and Farīd Jabre. The creative part of al-Ghazālī's life may broadly be divided into two phases, the early period and the later period which began from his conversion to Islamic mysticism (ṣūfīsm). His ethical works belonged to both periods and are coloured with their characteristics.

There is disagreement on the authenticity of some of the works attributed to al-Ghazālī. Some ethical works ascribed to him as of the later period of his life are of doubtful authenticity in their entirety, while some ethical works of both periods are shown to be spurious only in part. Some

ideas in an ethical work of a moderate size of the earlier period or, more accurately, of the transitional period, are regarded as superseded by those set forth in his later works.

In view of these established facts regarding al-Ghazālī's works on morals, any study of them which does not take these facts into consideration may not be regarded as revealing the truth about him in its entirety. Such a study misleads readers and scholars with regard to al-Ghazālī and engenders various theories of his life. Unfortunately, all of the very few studies hitherto made on his ethics are partly based upon the un-authentic books, unauthentic parts of books and the books containing the superseded ideas, as they are also based upon the authentic books. Besides thus mixing the non-Ghazālīan or superseded Ghazālīan ideas with the genuine Ghazālīan teachings, they often failed to investigate the basic moral principles which are explicit or implicit in his teaching and also to give as complete a description of it as possible in the length of a book. They are unsatisfactory on various other accounts also. Therefore, there is a need for a study of his ethics which is based only upon those ethical works which all the scholars have accepted as authentic and which have not been superseded by others. Such a study should give readers a true knowledge and understanding of this great man and of his thought concerning moral problems.

The present work is an effort to meet this need. It is a new approach to the study of al-Ghazālī's ethical theory for it seeks to present this theory in a reasonably complete

form by drawing only upon materials from his genuine works or genuine parts of works which have not been superseded. Among the works of the earlier period, therefore, Mizān al-ʿAmal (Criterion of Action) is discarded altogether; (reference to it is made in a few places only for the sake of comparison). Out of the large number of the ethical works of the later period whose authenticity has been generally accepted, almost a score is selected to constitute the basis of the present study, since to make use of all his works would be impossible in a limited period of time. Efforts are also made in this work to bring to light the principles of al-Ghazālī's ethics. Sometimes it has been found necessary to enquire into the sources of his inspiration and ideas. This study, however, does not seek, except very rarely, to determine the influence of al-Ghazālī's ethics upon the subsequent development of ethical thought in Islam or in Christianity - a task which may form the subject-matter of a separate study.

It is a great pleasure to be able to acknowledge my debt to all those who have helped me to bring this work to its conclusion. I am grateful to Professor W. Montgomery Watt for his kindly supervising it and making valuable comments on it, and to Mrs. Phyllis Graham for the trouble she has taken in going through the manuscript. I also wish to express my gratitude to the Government of the United Kingdom for financing me for my studies, and to the members of the British Councils in London and in Edinburgh for rendering me all possible help in various matters during my three years stay in Britain.

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## ABBREVIATIONS.

The works of al-Ghazālī referred to in this study are abbreviated as follows:

<u>A.D.</u>	<u>Kitāb al-Arbaʿīn fī Usūl ad-Dīn.</u>
<u>A.W.</u>	<u>Ayyuhā l-Walad.</u>
<u>B.H.</u>	<u>Bidāyat al-Hidāya.</u>
<u>I.D.</u>	<u>Ihyāʾ ʿUlūm ad-Dīn.</u>
<u>I.ʿA.</u>	<u>Iljām al-ʿAwāmʿan ʿIlm al-Kalām.</u>
<u>I.I.</u>	<u>Al-Imlāʾ ʿalā Ishkālāt al-Ihyāʾ in Mulhaq Ihyāʾ ʿUlūm ad-Dīn.</u>
<u>I.ʿI.</u>	<u>Al-Iqtisād fī l-Iʿtiqād.</u>
<u>J.Q.</u>	<u>Jawāhir al-Qurʿān.</u>
<u>K.S.</u>	<u>Kimiyā-i-Saʿādat.</u>
<u>M.F.</u>	<u>Maqāsid al-Falāsifa.</u>
<u>M.A.</u>	<u>Al-Maqṣad al-Asnāʾ<sup>fi</sup> Sharh Asmāʾ Allāh al-Husnā.</u>
<u>M.</u>	<u>Mishkāt al-Anwār.</u>
<u>M.ʿI.</u>	<u>Miʿyār al-ʿIlm fī fann al-Mantiq.</u>
<u>M.ʿA.</u>	<u>Mizān al-ʿAmal.</u>
<u>M.D.</u>	<u>Al-Munqidh min ad-Dalāl.</u>
<u>N.M.</u>	<u>Nasīhat al-Mulūk.</u>
<u>T.F.</u>	<u>Tahāfut al-Falāsifa.</u>

The abbreviations listed below are used for the journals and encyclopaedias referred to in this work:

<u>D.I.</u>	<u>Der Islam.</u>
<u>E.I.</u>	<u>Encyclopaedia of Islam.</u>
<u>E.R.E.</u>	<u>Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.</u>
<u>G.O.S.T.</u>	<u>Glasgow Oriental Society Transactions.</u>
<u>I.C.</u>	<u>Islamic Culture.</u>
<u>I.S.</u>	<u>Islamic Studies.</u>
<u>J.A.O.S.</u>	<u>Journal of the American Oriental Society.</u>
<u>J.R.A.S.</u>	<u>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.</u>
<u>J.S.S.</u>	<u>Journal of Semitic Studies.</u>
<u>M.W.</u>	<u>The Muslim World.</u>
<u>ORIENS.</u>	<u>Journal of the International Society for Oriental Research.</u>
<u>P.F.</u>	<u>The Philosophic Forum.</u>
<u>M.I.D.E.O.</u>	<u>Mélanges de l'Institut dominicane d'études orientales du Cairo.</u>
<u>S.I.</u>	<u>Studia Islamica.</u>
<u>V.B.Q.</u>	<u>The Visra Bharat Quarterly.</u>
<u>Z.D.M.G.</u>	<u>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.</u>

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S ETHICS

The ethical theory which al-Ghazālī set forth in those of his works on which the present study is based was the outcome of thought of his later years when he was living the life of a devout sūfī and an extremely religious man. He had, in that period, a state of mind and an 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 problems of morals and the sources from which he derived his views. Before stating, therefore, the nature of his ethical theory, it seems necessary to discuss, very briefly of course, the state of his mind at that time and the intellectual stages through which he passed to reach that state. It is only then that a precise appreciation of the nature of his ethical theory is possible.

Stages of al-Ghazālī's Intellectual Evolution

(1) The earliest spiritual training which al-Ghazālī received when he was under the guardianship of a pious sūfī friend of his father was through studying the Qur'ān and Traditions, stories of the saints and their spiritual states and committing to memory some poems concerning passionate love and lovers.<sup>1</sup> This was followed by a study mainly of jurisprudence (fiqh) in his native town of Tus under Shaḡkh Aḡmad ar-Rādhkānī at-Tūsī and then at Jurjan under Imām Abū-Naḡḡ al-Isma'īlī of whose lectures he took

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1. M. Ridā, Abū-Hamīd al-Ghazālī, Cairo, 1924, p.52.

notes which he memorized in the three years after his return to Tus.<sup>1</sup> In these three years he seems to have studied Islamic mysticism (sūfism) under Yūsuf an-Nassāj and to have become acquainted with the spiritual 'states' (ahwāl) of the righteous and the 'stations' (maqāmāt) of the gnostics (ʿārifūn) and also to have undertaken some of the exercises as a result of which his character was purified.

Al-Ghazālī then went to Nishapur in 470/1077<sup>2</sup> and studied theology, dialectics, natural science, philosophy and logic under abū l-Maʿālī al-Juwaynī, known as the Imām al-Haramayn, who was the most distinguished Ashʿarite theologian of the day and a renowned professor at the Niẓāmiyya College at Nishapur.<sup>3</sup> It seems probable that under the Imām he studied mysticism too, for the Imām had been a pupil of the famous sūfī abū-Nuʿaym al-Ispahānī (d. 430/1038) and when he himself was dealing with the doctrines of the sūfis and their 'states' he used to bring tears to the eyes of all present.<sup>4</sup> It was the Imām who introduced al-Ghazālī to logic and philosophy. The main subject of his study under Juwaynī, however, was doubtless dogmatic theology (kalām), a subject on which he does not seem to have been instructed by any other of his teachers. In these days as a student at Nishapur he also learnt more about the theory and practice of mysticism

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1. Tāj-ad-Dīn as Subkī, Tabaqāt ash-Shāfiʿiyya l-Kubrā, 1st ed., Egypt, A.H., 1324, 111, 36, ~~37~~, IV, 103; (Hereinafter referred to as Tabaqāt).

2. Margaret Smith, Al-Ghazali, the Mystic, London, 1944, p.15; W. Montgomery Watt, Muslim Intellectual, Edinburgh, 1963, p.21.

3. Subkī, Tabaqāt, IV, 103, 107.

4. Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt al-Aʿyān, tr. Baron McGuckin de Slane, Paris, 1842, 1, 413.

from a professor, probably of jurisprudence, al-Fārmadhī (d. 477/1084), who was a leader of the sufis there. Under his guidance al-Ghazālī practised rigorous ascetic and sūfistic exercises but he did not attain to that stage of mysticism where the mystics begin to receive pure inspiration from on high. So, he neglected mysticism and turned to theology and philosophy.<sup>1</sup> (In his spiritual crisis of 1095 A.D. however, he came back to mysticism, and remained a mystic as well as an Ash'arite theologian until his death.)

(2) During these days as a student, as in the years that immediately followed, al-Ghazālī was greatly concerned with the quest for absolutely certain knowledge, by which he meant such a knowledge as was infallible and left no room for doubt or involved no possibility of error. In his earliest youth he had abandoned naive and second-hand belief (taqlīd) finding it the greatest hindrance in his search for truth.<sup>2</sup> While a disciple of the Imām al-Haramayn he developed the habit of examining theological questions and controversies with the result that a sceptical tendency grew in him which, however, was to be restrained by the influence of his teacher, who was a man of great depth of character. But this sceptical tendency further developed during the time he was in the camp-court (ma'askar) of the vizier Nizām al-Mulk<sup>3</sup> where he came on the Imām's death in 478/1084 and where he spent

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1. Ibid., 11, 122; Subkī, Tabaqāt, IV, 109.

2. M.D., tr. Watt in The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazālī, London, 1953, pp.20-22.

3. Duncan B. Macdonald, "The Life of al-Ghazālī with special reference to his religious experiences and opinions", J.A.O.S., XX, first half (1899), 78, 82.

the following six years in great favour with the vizier. About the time of his move to Baghdad<sup>1</sup> to take over the Chair of jurisprudence at the Nizāmiyya College in 484/1091, an absolute scepticism took hold of him. He investigated the various kinds of knowledge that he now had and found all, except sense perception and necessary truths, lacking the characteristic of infallibility which was his criterion of sure knowledge. On serious reflection, however, he found even these two kinds of knowledge to be unreliable: first he doubted sense perception on the ground that when judged by the intellect it very often proves false. Then he doubted those intellectual truths which are first principles or derived from first principles because perhaps behind intellectual apprehension there is another judge who, if he manifests himself, will show falsity of intellect in its judging, just as when intellect manifested itself it showed the falsity of sense in its perception. The fact that such a supra-intellectual apprehension has not manifested itself is no proof that it is impossible. There might come, he apprehended, a state when the suppositions of intellect will prove to be empty imaginings; that state might be death when things come to appear differently to man from what he beheld before, or the ecstatic state of the *sūfis* in which things appear in a different way from that understood by the intellect. Thus al-Ghazālī had no principle which might enable him to regulate his thought; he even had no faith in religion. Such a state of complete scepticism lasted two months. At length, God, out of mercy, enlightened his mind so that he found himself able to accept the

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1. Watt, Intellectual, p.51; "Al-Ghazālī", EI, new ed., 11, 1039a.

necessary principles of the intellect - he saw intuitively that these principles were true. He now regained his power of ordered thought and resolutely applied himself to a quest for sure truth. He found those engaged in the search for truth divided into four groups - theologians, philosophers, ta'limites and sūfis - and, believing that the truth must have been attained by one of them, began to study their views with extreme care and earnestness.<sup>1</sup>

(3) Al-Ghazālī began with the science of theology (ʿilm al-Kalām), a discipline which was founded by al-Ashʿarī and in which he had been thoroughly trained. He found that the aim of the theologians consisted in defending dogmas against heretical aberrations and innovations and that they fulfilled this aim of theirs very effectively. They also made attempts to meet the students of philosophy on their own grounds, but these failed because they could not meet the demands of Aristotelian logic which was the basis of the teachings of the philosophers. Thus al-Ghazālī was dissatisfied not with the doctrines but with the method of dogmatic theology; the doctrines of the theologians he found to be sound, but their method could not give him the certainty he was trying to achieve.<sup>2</sup>

Al-Ghazālī then turned to study philosophy in order to see whether or not absolute truth lies in this discipline. He was at Baghdad at that time teaching religious sciences (al-ʿulūm ash-sharʿiyya), chiefly jurisprudence, to over three hundred students, writing treatises and giving legal decisions (fatāwā). By reading the works on various branches of philosophy in his

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1. M.D., pp.20-27.

2. Ibid., pp.27-29.

spare time and without any teacher, he mastered the philosophy of his day in less than two years. He spent nearly another year reflecting assiduously on what he had assimilated until he comprehended how far it was true and how far false.<sup>1</sup> He divided the philosophers into three groups, namely, the materialists (dahriyyūn), the naturalists (tabi'īyyūn) and the atheists (ilāhiyyūn). The first group consisting of the earliest philosophers denied the Creator and Disposer of the world and believed that it had been in existence from all eternity of itself. Al-Ghazālī looked upon them as irreligious (zanādiqa). The naturalists, struck by the wonders of creation and aware of continuing purpose and wisdom in the scheme of things, while engaged in their manifold researches into the sciences of phenomena, admitted the existence of a wise Creator but denied the spirituality and immateriality of the human soul. They explained the soul in naturalistic terms as an epiphenomenon of the body and believed that the death of the latter led to the complete non-existence of the former. Belief in Heaven, Hell and Judgment they considered as old wives' tales or pious fictions. Because they denied the future life al-Ghazālī considered them, too, as irreligious. The theists were the more modern philosophers and included Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Although they attacked the materialists and the naturalists and exposed their defects very effectively, they retained, in al-Ghazālī's opinion, a residue of their unbelief and heresy. He, therefore, looked upon them as well as these Muslim philosophers who followed them as unbelievers. Among their followers he

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1. Ibid., pp.29-30.

found al-Fārābī and Avicenna to be the best transmitters of Aristotle's philosophy into the Islamic world. Some parts of all that they had transmitted he reckoned as sheer unbelief, some as gross heresy and others<sup>as</sup> absolutely undeniable.<sup>1</sup>

Being dissatisfied with philosophy, al-Ghazālī came to examine the teachings of the Ṭa'limites, the party of the "authoritative instruction" (ta'lim) also known as Isma'īlites and Bātinītes. His skill in logic exposed many grave inconsistencies and weaknesses of the Ṭa'limites. He saw that though they profess to abandon reasoning and to depend for apprehending the truth about anything on the instruction of a living infallible Imām, they cannot avoid surreptitiously making use of it, and he found that it is practically impossible to consult the Imām or his representative in every case. Besides such grave inconsistencies, he also noticed the shallowness of their thought, for he found nothing beyond their accustomed formulae.<sup>2</sup> At this time of his quest for certain truth, al-Ghazālī did not attack their conception of esoteric meaning (bātin) which is the complement of their doctrine of authoritative instruction.

Lastly, al-Ghazālī turned to the way of mysticism, being convinced that the mystics and they alone, among the seekers for truth, have really attained their purpose. By studying the works of some eminent mystics, he gained a complete understanding of the intellectual aspect of this discipline and realised that what was distinctive of it could not be apprehended by study but only by immediate experience (dhawq), by ecstasy or by moral

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1. Ibid., pp.30-32.

2. Ibid., pp.44-45.

change. He realized very clearly that the mystics are men, not of words (ashāb al-aqwāl), but of real experience (arbāb al-ahwāl) and that what was necessary for him was to live their lives and practise their practices, and to forsake the world.<sup>1</sup>

Just at that time al-Ghazālī, who had already regained a steadfast belief in God, prophethood and the Last Day, was overtaken by an extreme fear. This fear was neither of the assassination by the Bāṭinites as Farid Jabre suggested,<sup>2</sup> nor of ill-treatment by the new Seljūq ruler with whom he had bad relations, as Macdonald is inclined to say,<sup>3</sup> but of the Day of Judgement. He thought that he would certainly be punished in Hell-fire if he did not live a God-fearing life and withdraw from vain desires. What is necessary for living such a life is, he perceived, to sever the attachment of his soul to worldly things by leaving this world and to advance to God; and this could only be achieved by abandoning wealth and position and fleeing from all time-consuming entanglements. He looked at his present life, his writing and his teaching and found that these are of no value in the face of the great facts of Heaven and Hell, that all these were for the sake of vain glory and not for pleasing God. Such a life would, he felt, surely cause him to be in danger of Hell-fire in the hereafter. If he was to hope for the eternal happiness of the life to come, he must serve God completely as a poor ṣūfī. He, therefore, abandoned

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1. Ibid., pp.54-55.

2. "La vie et L'oeuvre de Ghazali reconsidérées à la lumière des Tabaqat de Sobki", MIDEO, 1954, pp.73-102.

3. "Life", pp.88, 98; "Al-Ghazālī", EI<sup>1</sup>, 11, 146b.

his professorship and his whole career as a jurist and theologian, divested himself of all his wealth except what was necessary for his own support and that of his children, and, finding himself unable to live an upright life in the worldly Baghdadian society, left for Damascus in Dhū l-Qa'da 488/1095.<sup>1</sup>

(4) Converted to mysticism, al-Ghazālī now completely devoted himself to ascetic practices in perfect solitude and retirement. He busied himself in purifying his soul from vices, beautifying it with virtues and occupying it with the recollection of God, in accordance with the knowledge he had previously acquired by studying the writings of some eminent mystics. In the ten years of a vigorous moral training which he spent successively in Damascus, Jerusalem, Hebron, the Hijaz, Iraq and Tus,<sup>2</sup> he advanced far along the mystic path. Many unfathomable mysteries were revealed to him during these years and he became fully convinced that the mystic 'way' (tariqa) was the best way of life for man to follow; that it was above all the mystics who walked on the path of God, their life is the best life, their method the soundest method, their character the purest character. The light in which they walk on the path is essentially the light of prophecy; there is no other light to lighten any man in this world.<sup>3</sup> This attitude of al-Ghazālī towards sūfism remained unchanged to the end of his life. He lived a mystical life until his death.

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1. M.D., pp.56-59; cf. Watt, Intellectual, pp.43, 140-143; "The Study of al-Ghazālī", ORIENTS, 13-14 (1960-61), pp.129-130.

2. Watt, Islamic Philosophy and Theology, Edinburgh, 1963, p.116; "Al-Ghazālī", p.1039a.

3. M.D., pp.60-61.

The Nature of the Moral Theory given in the Works of the  
Mystical Period.

During this mystical period of al-Ghazālī's life which lasted from his departure from Baghdad until his death, he composed a number of ethical works most of which are accepted by scholars as authentic; only parts of a few of them are rejected or doubted as spurious.<sup>1</sup> The nature of the moral theory set forth in the works of this period and other related problems can be better apprehended if the central problem discussed in them is first determined. From the preceding section it is plain that throughout his student life al-Ghazālī received some instruction in mystical theory and practice in addition to his study of other subjects; then he neglected mysticism for some time, but in course of his examination of the four groups of seekers after truth, he returned to it and found in it the sure truth he had been searching for so diligently; his thorough study of some eminent ṣūfī's works resulted in producing in his mind an extreme fear of punishment in the hereafter which led him to a life of solitude fully occupied with religious and mystical practices, with purification of the soul and refinement of character. Thus, on the practical side his problem during the mystical period was to prepare himself to escape from punishment in Hell and to achieve happiness in Paradise, or in other words, to avoid abandonment by God and to gain nearness

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1. For the names of the works written during the mystical period, their chronological order and those parts of some of them whose authenticity has been doubted see; Watt; "The Authenticity of the Works attributed to Al-Ghazālī", J.R.A.S., 1952, pp.24-45; George F. Hourāni; "The Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings", J.A.O.S., LXXX (1959), 225-33; 'Abd-ar-Rahmān Badawī, "Mu'allafāt al-Ghazālī", Cairo, 1961.

(gurb) to him. On the intellectual side his problem was to convey his thoughts and experiences to others so that by acting on them they too might reach the same goal; for he believed that most men lived in the lowest depths of moral degradation which, he thought, would certainly cause them misery in the life to come. In the introduction to the Ihya<sup>1</sup> and in the Muhqidh<sup>2</sup> he briefly described this moral degradation with its causes and also expounded his main problem. Speaking of this problem at the time of his going to Nishapur he wrote:

"Now I am calling men to the knowledge whereby worldly success is given up and its low position in the scale of real worth is recognised. This is now my intention, my aim, my desire; God knows that this is so. It is my earnest longing that I may make myself and others better".<sup>3</sup>

Thus the main concern of his life and thought during the sūfī period was well-being in the hereafter.<sup>4</sup> This concern found its fullest expression throughout his whole ethics. It determined various aspects of his moral theory. It made his ethics religious and mystical, as opposed to secular ethics such as that of Aristotle which is exclusively concerned with the human Good in this life.

In keeping with his central problem al-Ghazālī calls his

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1. I, 2-3.      2. pp.71, 74, 76.      3. p.76.

4. This is also recognised by A.J. Wensinck in his Semietische Studien Uit de Nalatenschap, Leiden, 1941, p.167, and by Watt in his "Study", p.128, where he argues against Jabre who holds that the central problem of al-Ghazālī's life and thought was certitude or how to attain certain truth about the main truths of Islam. This, as explained in the preceding section, was certainly his central problem at the time of his first intellectual crisis; in regarding this as the main problem of al-Ghazālī's whole life Jabre seems to have over-emphasised al-Ghazālī's earlier thought and neglected his ideas during the mystical period.

ethics the science of the path of the hereafter (ʿilm tariq al-ākhirā), the path trodden by the prophets and righteous ancestors (as-salf as-sālih). He also calls it the science of devotional practice (ʿilm al-muʿāmalā). In the works composed during the mystical period he does not seem to have used the phrase ʿilm al-akhlāq for ethics. Thus, al-Ghazālī gives two names to his ethics, and in this he seems to have followed the sūfīs.<sup>1</sup> Ethics, in his opinion, is a study of certain religious beliefs (iʿtiqādāt) and of rightness and wrongness of action for the purpose of practice and not for the sake of mere knowledge. Study of action includes the study of actions directed towards God, of actions directed towards one's fellow-men in family and in society, of purification of the soul from vices and of beautifying it with virtues. Thus the scope of al-Ghazālī's ethics is very wide and this is a characteristic of sūfī ethics. This may be made clearer by considering the scope of the Muslim philosophers' ethics which he reproduced in his Maqāsīd.<sup>2</sup> He says that they divided the science of wisdom (al-ʿilm al-hikmī), into two parts. One deals with man's action and is called practical science (ʿilm ʿamali). By it he knows the types of action which are means to his well-being in this life as well as

1. Abū-Tālib al-Makki, Qūt al-Qulūb, Egypt, 1961, I, 8-9 (Hereinafter referred to as Qūt); Al-Hujwiri, Kashf al-Mahjūb, tr. R.A. Nicholson, London, 1911, pp.86, 115 (Hereinafter referred to as Kashf). In the M.ʿA, (p.54) a work composed just before his conversion to sūfism al-Ghazālī used ʿilm al-akhlāq for ethics. Here he seems to have followed a philosopher, Avicenna, since the classification of the practical science given here agrees with Avicenna's division of the practical sciences in his ash-Shifāʾ: Introduction, ed. Ibrāhīm Madkūr (U.A.R. Wazārat al-maʿārif al-ʿUmūmiyya, 1952), pp.12-14 and in his Fi Aqsām al-ʿUlūm al-ʿAqliyya in Tisʿ Rasāʾil fi-Hikma waʿ-Tabīʿiyyat, Cairo, 1908, pp.105,107-8.

2. pp.134-36.

in the next. The other part is that science by which man knows the existences as they really are and is called theoretical science (‘ilm nazari). Practical science is divided into three parts. One is the science which regulates a man's dealings with others in society in such a way that they may cause him well-being in this life and also in the next; it finds its perfection in political science. The second is the science of man's behaviour to the members of his family (ahl al-manzil); by it he knows how he should live with his wife, children, servants and so on. "The third is ethics (‘ilm al-akhlāq) dealing with that which man should achieve so that he may be good and virtuous in his character-traits and qualities." Thus the Muslim philosophers, in al-Ghazālī's view, regarded ethics as a practical study dealing only with the qualities of the soul, i.e. virtues and vices; man's conduct in his family life, in social relationship and in the sphere of politics falls outside the scope of their moral theory. In the Munqidh also he speaks of the narrow scope of their ethics.<sup>1</sup> This view of al-Ghazālī on the subject-matter of their ethics is true so far as Avicenna is concerned, since it is he who divided sciences in this way. Abū-Nasr al-Fārābī's classification of sciences is different; he regarded ethics not as a separate subject but as included in politics.<sup>2</sup>

Al-Ghazālī separates politics from the scope of his ethics, and in this he is following his ṣūfī predecessors and also a

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1. M.D., p.38.

2. Ihsā' al-Ulūm, ed. 'Uthmān Amīn (2nd ed. Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1949), pp.102-103; Al-Milla wa Nusūs Ukhrā, ed. Muhsin Mahdi (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1968), pp.69-70.

philosopher, Avicenna, who differed from the great Greek moralists and from al-Fārābī on this question. Al-Ghazālī gives reasons for his view. He says that ideal government in the Islamic community is based upon the rules of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh); since these rules are derived, through men's reasons ('uqūl), from the four sources (usūl) of the Shari'a,<sup>1</sup> the Islamic state is practically founded upon the Shari'a; in this way an ideal Islamic community has divinely-given character or structure and it is through the membership of such a community that a man attains salvation.<sup>2</sup> Now the rules of jurisprudence are derived from the four sources for the purpose of the good ordering of secular affairs; the jurists are the learned men of this world ('ulamā' ad-dunyā).<sup>3</sup> They supply the ruler with canons with which to govern the people in such a way that justice, peace and harmony prevail in the country; the rules of government have no concern with man's well-being in the life to come, the central problem of ethics. The judgements of the jurists as to the rightness or wrongness of actions directed towards God and towards man are based upon this-worldly considerations only, namely whether these actions have fulfilled

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1. I.D., I, 15.

2. cf. Watt, "Reflections on al-Ghazālī's Political Theory" G.U.O.S.R., XXI, 14, 17, 18, 22.

3. However, those jurists who do not devote themselves exclusively to the science of jurisprudence but are employed in the science of the soul and the observance thereof, are regarded as learned men of the hereafter ('ulamā' al-ākhirā). The leaders of the five well-known schools of Islamic jurisprudence are included among them. Each of these leaders was a worshipper of God, an ascetic, a learned man, versed in the science of the hereafter, a jurist well informed in man's affairs in this world and a devotee to God's face; see I.D., I., 22-26.

the formal requirements of the Shari'a and thereby rendered their doers immune from punishment by the ruler; considering these actions from the viewpoint of other-worldly well-being is outside the domain of jurisprudence and, consequently, of politics but belongs solely to ethics. Thus the canons of politics (qawānīn as-siyāsa) which are the same as the rules of jurisprudence are separate from the moral rules. They are, however, useful to morality in the sense that by the good ordering of worldly affairs and by establishing justice and peace in society they facilitate the cultivation of morality; it is only in a society where life and property are secure that ethico-religious duties can perfectly be performed, and such a society can only be created by the state - the reason why al-Ghazālī often repeats Nizām al-Mulk's dictum, 'religion and state are twins'.<sup>1</sup> In this way politics and jurisprudence have only an indirect connection with ethics. In themselves they are subjects separate from ethics and this is very clearly explained in a passage of the Ihyā'.<sup>2</sup>

Al-Ghazālī's separation of politics from ethics is linked up with the individualistic nature of his ethics. In the Greek period the Greek city state formed the background of the moral life, and the man who performed his duties as a citizen was regarded as a good man; morality was thus a fundamental part of politics. This outlook changed in the mediaeval period; the breaking up of the Greek city states in the fourth century B.C. and the development of spiritual religions such as Christianity,<sup>and</sup>

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1. I.D., I, 16-18; cf. Watt, "Reflections" pp.17, 18, 23.

2. I.D., I, 16.

Islam aided an advance towards an individualistic outlook. These religions emphasised the individual for it is the individual soul which is destined to personal immortality. They taught that man looked on the outward appearance but the Lord looks on the soul. So more attention was to be given to the inner aspect of morality; it was man's inner motive that indicated his true spiritual state and fitted him for the life of Paradise, which was the true aspiration of every man. Influenced by such religious teachings, the *sūfīs*, al-Ghazālī among them, presented individualistic systems of ethics.<sup>1</sup> This kind of ethics encourages personal interest in morality. Moral standards are not accepted in it as parts of the moral atmosphere of society. To be good is taught to be an individual matter and is sometimes actually thought of as being for the advantage merely of the individual himself. Individualism is the assertion by the individual of his own opinions and beliefs, his own independence and interest as over against group standards, authority and interests.

In accordance with the central problem of his ethics al-Ghazālī gives his view of the purpose of ethical study. There are three chief theories about the purpose of studying ethics: (a) Ethics is a purely theoretical study, seeking to understand the nature of morality but with no purpose of affecting the conduct of the man who studies it, (b) The chief purpose of ethics is to influence our actual conduct, (c) While ethics is primarily a theoretical subject which is concerned with discovering the truth about moral matters, there must be in the course of

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1. cf. Watt, Intellectual, pp.132-33.

ethical investigation a constant criticism of existing standards of morality, so that ethics becomes a practical subject almost in spite of itself. Al-Ghazālī agrees with the second theory. He says that the study of 'the science of devotional practice' is meant for practice; the aim of practice should be to improve the state of the soul so that well-being may be achieved in the hereafter.<sup>1</sup> This study has value only because without it good and bad cannot be perfectly sought or avoided.<sup>2</sup> Moral principles are to be learnt with a view to applying them to practical life. As a corollary of this theory, al-Ghazali says that an individual is required to study only those actions and beliefs that are relevant to him; thus, if he is engaged in a particular kind of trade he is required to know its ethics only.<sup>3</sup> Al-Ghazālī even goes so far as to say that knowledge which is not acted upon is no better than ignorance.<sup>4</sup> In so strongly emphasizing practice as the purpose of ethical study, al-Ghazālī is influenced by the Qur'ān and Tradition. He quotes a verse on the strong condemnation of those who have knowledge but fail to act accordingly. He also quotes a Tradition in which the Prophet is related to have described the heavy punishment to be inflicted upon those who do not transform their knowledge into action.<sup>5</sup>

Al-Ghazālī's ethics may also be epitomized as teleological<sup>ie</sup> for they evaluate acts by referring to their consequences. It teaches that man has a supreme end which is happiness in the hereafter; acts are good if they produce such effect on the

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1. I.D., IV, 272, 273, III, 343.

4. Ibid., III, 8.

2. Ibid., III, 334-38, IV, 19-21.

5. Ibid., I, 313.

3. Ibid., I, 14, II, 59.

soul as would lead to that end and bad if they prevent the soul from attaining it. Even devotional acts like ritual prayer, etc. are good because of their good consequences to the soul. (Indeed, al-Ghazālī's ethics may be regarded as an ethics for the soul as it may be called a happiness theory as distinct from hedonism, the view that pleasure is the supreme good). Thus acts are regarded as good or bad if they are conducive or detrimental to an objective end; in themselves they have no autonomous intrinsic moral value. Such a theory is called teleological which is identical with the consequence theory of ethics. Hedonism, eudaimonism or happiness theory and perfectionism all fall under this category. In his view of ethics as teleological al-Ghazālī agrees with <sup>other</sup> philosophers. Aristotle's concept of teleology in ethics is well-known. He was followed by Muslim philosophers like Avicenna, al-Fārābī and Miskawayh for they all judged the goodness or badness of an act in terms of its consequences in promoting or preventing happiness (sa'āda). Al-Ghazālī is against the Mu'tazilites who maintain that goodness (husn) and badness (qubh) are values intrinsic to moral acts and that the Shari'ah commands or prohibits acts because they are in themselves good or bad. Such a doctrine is called deontological theory as against the teleological. Al-Ghazālī agrees with the Ash'arites only in holding that acts have no intrinsic moral value. The latter further say that an act is good simply because God commands it - bad, because He prohibits it; all acts are in themselves morally

neutral.<sup>1</sup> Such a doctrine is called an attitude theory as against a consequence theory of ethics. One aspect of the problem of the moral worth of an act is the manner of knowing its worth and this leads us to the study of the place of reason etc. in ethics, ~~in many of his works.~~

Al-Ghazālī explains his view of the place of reason etc. in ethics in many of his works. In the first 'book' of the Ihyā' he puts it in his division of the sciences. He classifies them into religious (shar'īyya) and non-religious (ghayr shar'īyya) sciences. A religious science is received from the prophets. A non-religious science is learned by reason as in mathematics or by experimentation as in medicine, or by hearing as in language. Non-religious sciences are divided into those commendable, e.g. medicine and mathematics, those condemnable, e.g. magic and talismanic sciences, and those permissible, e.g. history, poetry, etc. The praiseworthy religious sciences are of four kinds, namely the sciences of the sources (uṣūl), sciences of the branches (furū'), sciences of the preludes (muqaddamāt) and sciences of the supplements (mutammimāt). The sources are four - the Qur'ān, The Sunna or the Prophet's standard practice (as enshrined in 'sound' Traditions), the Muslims' consensus (ijmā') and the Companions' Traditions (āḥār as-sahāba). The branches are derived from

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1. For the reason for the Ash'arites' view and for their arguments against the Mu'tazilites' theory, see Michael Marmura, "Ghazali on Ethical Premises". P.F., (New Series), I (1969), 397-394; Hourani, "Two Theories of Value in Mediaeval Islam", M.W., 50 (1960), pp.269-76. Marmura wrongly asserts that al-Ghazālī's ethics is not teleological and so he wrongly says that al-Ghazālī does not agree with Avicenna on this point. Indeed, not only his moral theory but his view of nature is also teleological for he believes that God created every object so that it may serve some end or purpose.

these sources, not literally but by apprehending their meaning through men's reasons (ʿuqūl). Thus their meanings are widened until a meaning differing from the literal is indicated. An example of this is that the Prophet said "The judge should not sit in judgement while angry". Reason says that this Tradition also means that he should not sit in judgement while constipated or hungry or suffering from a painful disease. The sciences of the branches are two, namely, jurisprudence and that which deals with the well-being in the hereafter. This latter is the science of good and evil character-traits and conduct proceeding from them.<sup>1</sup> Thus, ethics is described here again as a religious science derived, through reason, from the sources of the Sharīʿa. The function of reason is only to understand their meaning.

In the third part of the Ihyāʾ, al-Ghazālī again speaks of the sciences in connection with the method of knowing them. He here divides them into the rational (ʿaqliyya) and the religious (sharʿiyya). The former are defined as those learned by reason and are divided into necessary sciences (al-ʿulūm ad-darūriyya) and acquired sciences (al-ʿulūm al-muktasaba). Rational sciences are again divided into this-worldly sciences, e.g. medicine, mathematics, astronomy, etc. and other-worldly sciences dealing with good and evil character-traits and conduct proceeding from them and with the knowledge of God, His attitudes and works. Religious sciences are defined as those derived from the prophets and revealed books accepted as authority (taqlīd). By means of these sciences man can purify his soul from vices and achieve perfection. Thus, ethics is

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1. I.D., I, 15.

described here as a rational science and also as a religious science. Al-Ghazālī reconciles these two views by saying that reason and the Shari'ah are complementary to each other; reason alone is insufficient in moral life and so is revelation; both need to be combined.<sup>1</sup>

"Rational sciences are insufficient for health of the soul although it is in need of them, as reason is insufficient in continuance of the means of health of the body but needs to know the properties of medicines and drugs by learning from physicians, for mere reason does not guide to it, but its apprehension after hearing is not possible except by reason. So hearing is indispensable for reason and reason is indispensable for hearing. One who calls to pure following in complete isolation of reason is ignorant and one satisfied with mere reason independent of the lights of the Qur'an, and the Sunna is deluded. Take care not to be in one of these groups and be a reconciler of the two principles, for rational sciences are like foods and religious sciences are like medicines and a sick man is harmed by food when medicine is absent. Similarly, the care of the diseases of the soul is not possible except by the medicines derived from the Shari'ah... One who .... becomes satisfied with the rational sciences is harmed by them as a sick man is harmed by food. The imagination of the one who imagines that rational sciences are contrary to religious sciences and that reconciliation of them is impossible is an imagination proceeding from blindness occurring in the eye of intelligence ('ayn al-basira)."<sup>2</sup>

Having thus described ethics as a religio-rational science, al-Ghazālī explains the method of knowledge in mysticism and relates ethics to it. He says that the kind of knowledge which is not 'necessary' is achieved sometimes by learning and at times as a gift from God. If it is a gift it may be given through the intermediary of an angel or without any intermediary.

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1. Ibid., III, 14, 15; cf. Hourani, "The Dialogue between al-Ghazali and the Philosophers on the Origin of the World", M.W.,<sup>48</sup> (1968) 310-11; Watt, Intellectual, p.150. For the views of the Mutazilites and the Asha'rites, see Marmura, "Premises", pp.394, 296-97.

2. I.D., III, 15.

The former is called revelation (wahy) which comes to the prophets and the latter is inspiration (ilhām) or mystical intuition (kashf). Divine mercy is open to all, but only these people can attain knowledge by mystical intuition who have completely purified their souls from vices and beautified them with virtues,<sup>1</sup> for at this stage there develops in the soul a power by which it "sees" the truth; it knows the truth directly without any reflection or reliance upon authority. Even before the completion of purification some knowledge of good and bad and of the unseen world is directly achieved. The mystic directly knows sometimes about the rightness or wrongness of individual actions, sometimes about a class of action and at times about some individual moral rule by which to judge actions to be right or wrong. He also knows the reason why an action is good or bad. Intuition does not simply state the moral worth of an action but also elaborates on this matter. Thus mystical ethics does not leave open the possibility of extreme subjectivism.

In the Ihyā', then, al-Ghazālī recognises the place of reason, revelation and mystical intuition in moral life. In the Muḥīdih, too, he approves them all: concerning his realisation of various truths about morals during the period of his retirement he says that he had realised them partly by immediate experience, partly by demonstrative knowledge and partly by acceptance in faith.<sup>2</sup> Regarding the philosophers' ethical teachings he says, "If they are reasonable in themselves and supported by proofs and if they do not contradict the Book and

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1. Ibid.

2. M.D., pp.68-71.

the Sunna, then it is not necessary to abstain from using them."<sup>1</sup> Here he is approving both reason and the Sharī'a. The function of reason in understanding revelation is repeated in this work: the prophets are the healers of spiritual diseases or vices. The way in which ritual prayer and other positive precepts of the revealed Law effect purification of the soul is known to them not by reason but by the light of prophecy which is higher than reason. One must accept their statements as true. The only function of reason is to inform men that the prophets are healers of spiritual diseases, for being unable to apprehend what is knowable by the eye of prophecy, reason entrusts us to prophetic revelation. It cannot proceed further. In what lies beyond, it has no part, save the understanding of what the prophets communicate to it.<sup>2</sup> Regarding knowledge of good and evil by direct experience al-Ghazālī says that the prophets have had the direct vision of the truth, in respect of all that is dealt with in revelations; should any other person walk along their way, he too will come to know something of truth by direct vision.<sup>3</sup>

Thus in a work (i.e. the Ihyā') whose composition started in the beginning of the sūfī period of al-Ghazālī's life and in a book (i.e. the Munqidh) composed one year or two before his death, he speaks of the place of reason, revelation and mystical intuition in morality. A similar view is found in the works of the mid-sūfī period.

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1. Ibid., p.41.

2. Ibid., pp.69, 70, 77-78, 79, 80, 83.

3. Ibid., pp.81, 83.

Composite Character of al-Ghazālī's Moral Theory.

An important feature of al-Ghazālī's moral theory is its composite nature. This can be shown by an investigation into the sources of his ideas. It is true that such an investigation can by no means be exhaustive, yet his own statements about the sources and also the study of his thought enable one clearly to see the composite character of his theory. The chief source of al-Ghazālī's ideas is the writings of his sūfī predecessors which he studied just before his conversion to sūfism. He mentions them as al-Makkī's Qūt, Hārith al-Muhāsibī's works and various scattered statements (mutafarriqāt) of al-Junayd, ash-Shiblī and Abū-Yazīd al-Bistāmī and other discourses of leading mystics. The Qūt seems to be one of the sources through which al-Ghazālī becomes acquainted with these scattered sayings and discourses,<sup>1</sup> for this work contains more sayings of mystics and godly men than any other of the above mentioned books. Although al-Ghazālī does not mention Qushayrī's Risāla and Hujwirī's Kashf as his sources, it is certain<sup>2</sup> that he is influenced by these also. All these books were primarily concerned with well-being in the hereafter. Al-Makkī and al-Muhāsibī aimed at presenting a complete system of ethics dealing with this problem. They sought to bring about a perfect reconciliation between sūfism and the tenets of Islam. Al-Ghazālī is influenced by them in two ways, namely in the main trend of most of his teachings and in the ideas and illustrations of which he makes use in his works - very often their teachings

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1. Ali Hassan Abdul-Kader, The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd, London 1962, p.55.

2. Subkī, Tabaqāt, IV, 126.

form only the basis of his thought and sometimes they are directly borrowed to serve his own purposes. Their ethics, however, was in al-Ghazālī's view, incomplete in scope and defective in exposition.<sup>1</sup> He, therefore, sets out to construct a complete system of morals free from defects but on the lines suggested in the works of his sūfī predecessors. The especial characteristics of his greatest ethical work, the Ihyā', are described as follows:

"It is true that men have written several works on some of these matters, but this one differs from them in five ways: First, by clarifying what they have obscured and elucidating what they have treated casually. Secondly, by arranging what they have disarranged and organising what they have scattered. Third, by condensing what they have elaborated and correcting what they have approved. Fourth, by deleting what they have repeated and verifying what they have set down. Fifth, by determining ambiguous matters which have hitherto been unintelligible and never dealt with in any work. For although all have followed one course, there is no reason why one should not proceed independently and bring to light something unknown ..."<sup>2</sup>

These improvements al-Ghazālī sometimes makes by drawing upon materials from revealed books and the Sunna of the Prophet. The revealed scriptures by which he is influenced are more than one. They are the Qur'an, the Gospel, the Torah, the Psalms and the Leaves of Abraham. Statements quoted from the last

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1. Cf. Smith, "The Forerunner of al-Ghazali", <sup>J.R.A.S. 1936</sup> ~~J.W.~~, pp.65-78 where he discusses al-Ghazālī's indebtedness to al-Muhāsibī; he says that Muhāsibī was the most prolific writer of all the sūfīs whose works al-Ghazālī studied and to him al-Ghazālī owes more of his teachings than has been generally realised; A.J. Arberry, Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam, London 1950, p.68 where he says that al-Makki's Qūt "is of primary importance as being the first and a very successful attempt to construct an overall design of an orthodox sufism." This work "was carefully studied by al-Ghazālī and exercised a considerable influence on his mode of thought and writing."

2. I.D., I, 4.

three are few. References to the Gospel are many. Al-Ghazālī's occasional statement "I saw in the Gospel that ..." proves that he read the Arabic translation of the Gospel text. What version of the Gospel text he read is uncertain but there is little doubt that it was the ~~Matthew's~~ <sup>according to Matthew</sup> Gospel from which he quotes.<sup>1</sup> Of all the revealed books it is the Qur'ān on which he depends most. As for the detailed knowledge of the Sunna he seems to have acquired it from the Sūfīs' works especially the Qūt of al-Makkī which contains a large number of prophetic traditions<sup>2</sup> and also from his study of a few books on Tradition. It is true that al-Ghazālī is not <sup>a great scholar</sup> well-versed in the science of Tradition, but in his days as a student he studied <sup>al-Bukhārī's Ṣaḥīḥ indur abū-Sahl al-Hafṣī,</sup> abū-Dāwūd's Sunan under al-Hākīmī at-Tūsī and also Ahmad Shaybānī's work on the Prophet's birth under the Shaykh al-Khuwārī.<sup>3</sup> There are

1. S.M. Zwemer, "Jesus Christ in the Ihyā' of al-Ghazali", M.W.<sup>7(1917)</sup>, p.144. However, Constance F. Padwick who studied these quotations of al-Ghazālī from the Gospel which Zwemer had collected in his article said, "Although some of them approach the text of Matthew, and two ..... use the actual words of that Gospel, these are not the citations of a scholar with the Gospel before him". She then tried to trace the story of the sources used by al-Ghazālī for references to Christ. See her article "Al-Ghazali and the Arabic Versions of the Gospels.", M.W.<sup>(1939)</sup>, pp.130-40.
2. Since his sūfī predecessors used to support their teachings by Traditions without examining their validity, many Traditions in their works were spurious. Because al-Ghazālī copied from their books many Traditions in his books also are found false. Moreover, he had the habit of writing Traditions from memory (cf. Macdonald, "Life", p.76; Hourani, "Chronology", p.232); in doing this he could not escape from error altogether. The spurious Traditions are collected in Subkī's Tabaqāt, IV, 145-82. Ibn-al-Jawzī, a Hanbalite traditionist and an opponent of the sūfīs, accused al-Ghazālī of writing the Ihyā' for the sūfīs and filling it with false Traditions. See his Ṭabaqāt Iblīs, Cairo, 1928, p.165 also pp.353-55.
3. Subkī, Tabaqāt, IV, 109,<sup>110</sup> III, 127,<sup>105</sup>

also indications in the Ihyā' and the Kimiyā' that, while composing these works, al-Ghazālī consulted the Sahih of al-Bukhārī and the Sahih of Muslim. A systematic study of the two latter works, however, was not undertaken until the closing days of his life.<sup>1a</sup> The ethical ideas derived from the revealed books and the Sunna are sometimes kept intact and at times saturated with mystical colour.

Al-Ghazālī also seems to have derived ethical ideas from philosophical works on morals. In his time two kinds of these works were available in the Islamic world. One was the Arabic translations of Greek works on moral philosophy and the other was the works of the Muslim philosophers and of a few Christian translators and commentators such as Yahyā ibn-ʿAdī and Qusṭā ibn-Lūqā. Al-Ghazālī seems to have had direct acquaintance with the ethical works of Plato and Aristotle for in the Munqidh<sup>1b</sup> he speaks of Aristotle's criticism of Socrates and Plato and his difference from them and this indicates that al-Ghazālī studied their works. There is no proof of his direct acquaintance with the later Greek works on moral philosophy but he might have known them through the Muslim thinkers' works.<sup>2</sup> As for the ethical

<sup>1b</sup> pp. 32, 53.

<sup>1a</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 109, 111

2. Simon van den Bergh in his two articles, "The 'Love of God' in Ghazali's Vivification of Theology", J.S.S., I (1956), 305-21 and "Ghazali on 'Gratitude towards God' and its Greek Sources", S.I., VII-VIII (1957), 77-98, claims to have found the sources of some of al-Ghazālī's mystical thought in the ethical works of the Stoics and the Neoplatonics. He believes ("Gratitude", p. 88) that "Ghazali was acquainted either directly or more probably indirectly with these works". It is true that some of these works in their Arabic translations were available in the Islamic world in al-Ghazālī's time but he never mentioned any of the later Greek moralists in any of his books, so that there is no indication of his being directly acquainted with them. ʿAbd-ar-Rahmān Badawī

works of the Muslim philosophers it seems certain that he studied most of them: He himself said that he thoroughly studied the works of al-Fārābī and Avicenna. He speaks precisely about the content of the Rasā'il of the Ikhwān aş-Şafā.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes he criticises ar-Rāzi's view. Some passages of his works have their parallel in the works of al-Kindī and Miskawayh. All these suggest that he studied the ethical works of these Muslim philosophers.

Many of al-Ghazālī's ethical ideas are similar to those in *other* philosophical works. The similarity is mostly in the meaning and in a few cases textual. Because of these similarities one tends to say that al-Ghazālī derived materials from these works. Some of his contemporaries did in fact maintain this view. He replied to them saying:<sup>2</sup>

"They think that these statements<sup>3</sup> are taken from the works of the ancient philosophers (al-awā'il), whereas the fact is that some of them are the product of reflections which occurred to me independently - it is not improbable that one shoe should fall upon another shoe-mark - while others come from the revealed Scriptures, and in the case of the majority the sense though perhaps not the actual words are found in the works of the şūfis. Suppose, however, that the statements are found only in the philosophers' books. If they are reasonable in themselves and supported by proof, and if they do not

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contd. in his article, "al-Ghazālī wa Masādiruhū al-Yunāniyya", included in Abū-Hāmid al-Ghazālī fi adh-Dhikrā al-Mi'awīyya at-Tāsi'a li Milādih, ed. Zakī Najīb Mahūd, Cairo, 1961, pp. 221-37, tried to relate al-Ghazālī's thought on a mystical virtue with Hermetic wisdom. Here too there is no proof of his direct acquaintance with it.

1. M.D., pp.41, 53.

2. M.D., pp.40-41.

3. These statements are described (M.D., p.40) as "Some of the statements in our published works on the sciences of the secrets of religion (ba'd al-kalimāt fi tasānifinā fi 'ulūm asrār ad-dīn)". The works mentioned here are obviously referring to al-Ghazālī's ethical works. That by these statements he means ethical statements is evident from the fact that he speaks of them when criticizing the philosophers' ethics.

contradict the Book and the Sunna, then it is not necessary to abstain from using them. If we open this door, if we adopt the attitude of abstaining from every truth that the mind of a heretic has apprehended before us, we should be obliged to abstain from much that is true."

In the first half of this passage al-Ghazālī denies that he took any of his statements from the philosophers' works. In the second half he is only expressing his attitude towards their ethics. This attitude he explains in other passages saying that their ethics is an amalgam of true and false principles. The true principles have their sources in the teachings of the prophets and the mystics while the false principles are the philosophers' own, and they mingled these with the true principles from an evil motive, namely, to deceive the men of weak intelligence, to make them readily accept their own false views. All these he puts in the following passage:

"Their whole discussion of ethics consists in defining the characteristics and moral constitutions of the soul and enumerating the various types of soul and the method of moderating and controlling them. This they borrow from the teaching of the mystics .... In their spiritual warfare they have learnt about the virtues and vices of the soul and the defects in its actions, and what they have learnt they have clearly expressed. The philosophers have taken over this teaching and mingled it with their own disquisitions, furtively using this embellishment to sell their rubbishy wares more readily. Assuredly there was in the age of the philosophers, as indeed there is in every age, a group of those godly men of whom God never denudes the world".<sup>1</sup>

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1. M.D., p.38. Al-Ghazālī's belief about the sources of the good elements in the philosophers' ethics seems to be true only partially. Their works doubtless contain citations from godly men's sayings. He mentioned (M.D., p.41) how the Brethren of Purity cited in their treatises a great number of Qur'ānic verses, prophetic traditions, early Muslims' account and mystics' sayings. In his Tahdhīb, Miskawayh, besides citing Qur'ānic verses, quoted or reproduced prophetic traditions in fifteen places, abū-Bakr's saying in two places, and al-Hasan's statement in one place; he mentioned the prophets Abraham and Adam in one place, the

Because of this amalgamation, al-Ghazālī says, the sound elements in philosophic ethics have not become unsound nor have the unsound become sound. There is no harm if one accepts the sound elements rejecting the unsound. But (a) since the general public are incapable of distinguishing them and (b) since the high opinion which they form about the philosophers' ethical books by seeing in them the prophets' maxims and mystics' sayings gradually leads them to slip into the philosophers' false views, the general public must be prevented from reading these books. There is, however, no harm if scholars study them and, separating out the truth from the falsehood, accept the former and convey it to those who need guidance about moral matters. But scholars must refrain from reading them in the common men's presence lest they may imitate them "just as the snake charmer must refrain from touching the snake in front of his small boy because he knows that the boy imagines that he is like his father

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contd. Companion 'Alī in four places; he appealed to the Shari'a in twenty three places and to the Sunna in one. Thus the philosophers took many of their ideas from the prophets and the mystics. But their works contain at least a few ideas which are sound even in al-Ghazālī's opinion (for these are found in his works also) but are not found in the sūfīs' books. Hence his view that all that is good in the philosophers' writings comes from this source is not wholly correct. Since many of the good principles in the philosophers' works are really taken from the prophets and the mystics, it may be said that T.J. de Boer is not wholly correct in his statement in his "Ethics and Morality (Muslim)", E.R.E., IV, 508 that al-Ghazālī is wrong in saying that the philosophers took ethical theories from the prophets and the mystics. Al-Ghazālī's view that the philosophers' motive in incorporating in their books conceptions from the prophets and the mystics is not in agreement with the general opinion. The general belief is that the philosophers' motive was to reconcile the Islamic tenets with the theories they received from the Greeks.

and will imitate him, and must even caution the boy by himself showing caution in front of him".<sup>1</sup>

Thus al-Ghazālī finds no harm in accepting those ideas which are sound in the philosophers' ethical works. A first-rate scholar, he is in a position to distinguish them from false views. The question now arises as to whether he really has taken the sound views from their works. In a passage quoted above he answers in the negative. In that passage he says (a) that the majority of those of his ethical teachings which are similar to philosophers' views come from the sūfīs' works. This statement will be true if such teachings are also present in these works which he thoroughly studied. Now if one carefully studies the works of al-Makki and al-Muḥāsibī, one finds in them the majority of these teachings. The only difference is that in these works these teachings are not as clear, elaborate and systematic as in al-Ghazālī or in the philosophers. (b) Al-Ghazālī also says that some of his views which are similar to the philosophers' ideas he took from the revealed books. There is no doubt about it for the doctrine of the mean, etc. which are philosophic are also taught by the Qur'ān and the Sunna.

There are, however, some teachings of al-Ghazālī which are found, in a more or less similar form, only in the philosophers' works. Examples of these are his conceptions of the faculties of the soul, the basic virtues and their sub-divisions and so forth. (c) He claims that such views are the product of his own reflections and that their similarity to philosophers' ideas is only accidental. To ascertain the truth of this claim it is

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1. M.D., pp. 39-43.

necessary to mention the nature of independent reflections in the case of moral matters.

At the level of reflection moral law is not regarded as something outside man, as beyond his understanding. Morality is not a law imposed upon him by God or His apostle or even by his fellow-men; it is a law that he himself can understand and choose for guidance because he sees that it makes good sense to do so. He himself discovers rightness or wrongness of action by reasoning; he thinks out a right course of action, and only after a careful deliberation does he judge an action to be right. Various factors influence the mind in this task; perhaps indirect supernatural guidance, certainly the customs and ethos of his own society and the sympathy which is a part of man's natural mental equipment. The customs of his own group are the data on which his reason works, for even the most original moralist does not begin a new moral system from the start; he begins by criticism of what is there already. In his reflection he is likely to make discoveries of different kinds. He will discover that certain customs which were formerly useful are now no longer so but may even be detrimental to the welfare of his society. So by his insight and reflection he rejects some of the accepted rules of morality. Even when the individual at the level of reflection does not himself make an active examination of the standards of his group and does not deliberately choose to accept or reject them he still feels that he can, when he chooses, decide for himself in moral matters. If the above is the nature of independent reflections in the case of moral problems, it may be said that while thinking independently

al-Ghazālī made an active and deliberate examination of the customs of his time. Indeed, his works abound with criticisms of the moral rules given by the various groups of intellectuals. The existing moral thoughts and practices formed the data of his reasoning. In his examination of the ethical principles of the philosophers he found that his reasoning agreed with some of them and disagreed with others which were detrimental to man's well-being in the hereafter. So he accepted the former as the product of his own thinking and said that their similarity with philosophers' views was only by chance, and rejected the latter as "rubbishy wares". It can be said, therefore that he took some<sup>1</sup> ideas from the philosophers' works but he took them on the authority of his own reason. Thus his claim that some of his teachings which agreed with philosophic ethics are the outcome of his independent reflections is true.

Thus al-Ghazālī derives his ethics from the three sources mentioned above. There may be some other source or sources from which he takes ideas but these three may be regarded as his main sources known from his own statements and from the contents of his teachings. These materials he adds to his own thoughts

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1. The word 'some' is very significant here, for careful comparison shows that even where al-Ghazālī agrees with the philosophers he does not agree with them on all that they said. The ideas set forth in the second book of the third part of the Ihyā' are in closer agreement with philosophic ethics than those set forth in other places. Agreement is greatest between the tenth section of this book and the tenth section of the second discourse of Miskawayh's Tahdhib, both dealing with children's training in good character. Even here too one finds that al-Ghazālī agrees with Miskawayh only partially. Therefore, the statement of H.A.R. Gibb and Walzer in "Akhlāq", E.I., new ed. I, 336, that "philosophical ethics in the form given to it by Miskawayh was fully accepted by such an influential theologian as al-Ghazali ...." is not accurate.

and experiences. It is not that the ideas taken from various sources exist side by side unorganized; they are not mutually contradictory in their nature (for only those philosophic ideas are accepted which are in harmony with religion; the mystical ideas do not contradict the religious ideas for mysticism is only carrying out further the religious teachings). On the contrary, with his extraordinary genius, al-Ghazālī mingles the various elements and systematizes them into a well-ordered and consistent whole. In the process of systematization every element has undergone changes and modifications and received something of the especial characteristics of every other element. Thus the philosophic element has become more religious and also mystical, the religious element is enriched and enlivened with life-giving mystical spirit; the mystical element has become more rational, conceptual and organized.

On the whole, however, the mystical element remains dominant and hence al-Ghazālī's ethics may be characterized as primarily a religious ethics. In this way his ethics has achieved a composite nature. The study of ethics should result in action not merely in gaining knowledge of moral matters. Action should improve the condition of the soul which will lead to happiness in the hereafter, the central problem of al-Ghazālī's ethics. His ethics may, therefore, be regarded as a happiness theory and also teleological in character. It may also be epitomized as an individualistic theory of morals since it teaches that morality is an individual affair; it is a subject separate from politics and jurisprudence, but needs the help of both for its completion. It recognizes revelation, reason and mystical

intuition as the sources of moral obligation, as the  
authorities in moral life.

## CHAPTER II

### MAN'S NATURE AND HIS AIM

The starting point of al-Ghazālī's ethics, after determining its nature, is neither virtue and vice as dispositions of the soul, nor good and evil acts of the body which proceed from them, but the real man which is the soul.<sup>1</sup> The study of the soul from the moral viewpoint includes the study of its nature, its origin, its return after man's death, the purpose of its creation, the reason for its union with the body, its powers and the nature of its happiness and misery.<sup>2</sup> The problems of man's nature and his moral aim, which are of utmost importance in al-Ghazālī's ethics, are included in his consideration of the aspects of the soul. Some of his views on these subjects form the basis of his theories of character, virtue and vice and good and evil acts, while others give them meaning and significance. Clear understanding of these problems is also indispensable before the commencement of self-training in morals.<sup>3</sup> It is for these reasons that their study is regarded by al-Ghazālī as the beginning of ethics<sup>4</sup> and this study is made in the long introduction to the Kimiyā.<sup>2</sup> In the Ihyā,<sup>2</sup> however, these are discussed not in the beginning but in all its four parts (especially in the last two and more particularly in the third from which starts the treatment of man's inward self

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1. I.D., III, 2-3. 2. K.S., pp.10, 11, 79, 73, 409; N.M., p.31.

3. K.S., pp.10, 13; cf. Aristotle, Ethics, p.14.

4. This view of al-Ghazālī on the starting point of ethics agrees with those of Aristotle, Miskawayh and Ispahānī, for in the beginning of their works they dealt with the problems that form the backgrounds of their conceptions of virtue and vice, etc. Such an approach to ethics is absent in the works of his sūfī predecessors.

(bātin); this method is adopted in this work, despite asserting knowledge of the soul<sup>1</sup> in its different aspects to be the basis of ethics, probably because the learned men for whom it was mainly composed<sup>2</sup> are believed to be capable of gathering together the scattered ideas; but this procedure is abandoned in the Kīmiyā' since the common men to whom it is addressed<sup>3</sup> are unable to do so. Although the ideas scattered in the Ihyā' and a few other works are systematically presented in the introduction to the Kīmiyā' they require rearrangement under some new captions so that they may be briefly ~~stated~~<sup>considered</sup> here and at the same time serve as the background of the subsequent chapters.

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1. I.D., III, 2-3. 2. Ibid., p. 6.

3. K.S., p. 5. Most of the materials used in the Kīmiyā' have their sources in the Ihyā'; some ideas come from a few other works by al-Ghazālī. Since the general aim of this work is to provide the type of moral guidance which the common man may require, these materials are occasionally compressed, modified, rearranged and joined with new materials some of which concern very minor points, while others have considerable ethical importance. Sometimes these are made not only for the common man's sake but because of al-Ghazālī's greater maturity of mind, greater familiarity with the materials set forth in his previous works and greater experience of men and life. Thus the Kīmiyā' marks a development of his thought and must, therefore, constitute a source of any study of his ethics. Such an opinion of this work is also held by Harold Spencer who compared its introduction and the first two 'Pillars' with the Ihyā'. In the final observations of his study he discussed in detail the nature of the modifications, etc. and concludes that although parts of the Kīmiyā' may be described as a translation of the Ihyā' and other parts may justifiably be stated as an abridgment of it, it is certainly not merely a Persian translation nor a summary of the Ihyā' as M. Bouyges maintained; it is a work which indicates the development of al-Ghazālī's thought; see his unpublished Ph.D. thesis, A study of the Dependence upon al-Ghazālī's Ihyā' of the Introduction and the First Two "Pillars" of the Persian Kīmiyā'-i-Sa'adat, Edinburgh, July, 1962, pp. 1-44.

### Soul and Body and their Relations.

Man, al-Ghazālī believes, is created by God as a being composed of body and soul that is knowable by spiritual insight. The soul, which is the real man, is a divine spiritual entity of great subtlety (latīfa rabbāniyya ruhāniyya). The terms used by al-Ghazālī for it are qalb, rūh, nafs and ʿaql. Each term is given two meanings by him of which one is the soul and the other is different for each term.<sup>1</sup> He proves the existence of the soul and condemns the materialists (dahriyyūn) who believe that man is merely a higher type of animal with no lasting spiritual being.<sup>2</sup> The problem of the inmost reality (sirr) of the soul was discussed by philosophers but al-Ghazālī avoids its discussion because this is not permitted by the Sharīʿa on the ground that it is inapprehensible to most people and because its knowledge is not necessary for the practice of morality.<sup>3</sup> He discusses the difference between the soul and the body for this has direct relation to his ethical ideas. The soul, in his view, is a substance (jawhar) so that it exists by itself. It is not an accident (ʿard), i.e. its existence does not depend upon anything other than itself. It is the body which depends upon the soul for its existence and not vice versa. The soul differs from the body in another way. The former belongs to the world of spirit while the latter pertains to the material world. This is indicated in the Qurʾānic verse, "Surely His is the creation and the command; blessed is God, the Lord of the worlds". Since the characteristics of a material object are not to be found in the

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1. I.D., III, 3.

2. M.D., pp.30-31.

3. I.D., III, 3.

soul it cannot be the subject of the question 'how' or 'what'; the answer to the question 'what the soul is like' or 'how does it exist' is that the soul is not subject of howness or whatness. Al-Ghazālī's view that the soul is a substance agrees with that of all the sūfī doctors and most orthodox Muslims.<sup>1</sup> He observes that the muslim philosophers also rightly held this view - rightly because religion lends support to it - but they wrongly claimed that they can know this by reason alone and that therefore religion is not needed in this regard. By exposing the weaknesses in their rational proofs he concludes that these only give problematic, and not certain, knowledge concerning the soul.<sup>2</sup>

The soul, al-Ghazālī believes, is of the same origin as the angels. Its origin and nature are divine. It is not pre-existent (azalī) as Plato and others maintained. Each individual soul is created by God in the upper world, the world of the spirit (ʿālam al-arwāh) at the moment when the human seed enters the womb<sup>3</sup> and the soul is then connected with the embryonic body. This view agrees with that of Avicenna<sup>4</sup> but contradicts the Tradition

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1. Hujwirī, Kashf, p.261. 2. T.F., pp.221-28.

3. A.D., p.28; <sup>ω</sup> <sup>a</sup> Hossain (in his "The self and the soul in Islamic philosophy", V.B.A., Kartic, VII, 1929-30; pp.279-308) quoted (pp.287-92) a few passages from Madnūn and K.S. and concluded (p.292) saying, "with the exception of one reservation, namely, that the soul has beginning, it is in a manner identified with God or the Universal Soul". He also said that according to Al-Ghazālī, the soul "is created because it has a beginning"; what al-Ghazālī "means by saying that it has a beginning seems to imply that individual souls proceed from the Universal; consequently they have a commencement". He, however, admits that al-Ghazālī uses some expressions from which it appears that the soul is created like other natural objects, but he tries to explain these away. All these are Hossain's wrong views on al-Ghazālī. He misunderstood the passages he quoted. Al-Ghazālī does not identify the soul with God or the Universal Soul; nor does he believe that the individual souls proceed from the Universal Soul. He is an upholder of the Qur'ānic theory of creation and combats the philosophers on the theory of emanation or procession. cf. W.R.W. Gardner, "Al-Ghazālī as a sufi" M.W., <sup>7(1972)</sup> p. 133 f.n.; (hereinafter referred to as "Sufi").

4. T.F., p.225.

in which souls are said to have been created long before the formation of bodies. Relying upon this Tradition Hujwiri and others held that though created the souls existed before the body. Al-Ghazali says that the souls and bodies referred to in this Tradition mean, respectively, the angels and the world with all that is in it. Having come into being the soul is everlasting (abadi). After death the body perishes but the soul survives. The concept of the everlasting nature of the soul is vital in al-Ghazali's ethics. To prove that the soul is not affected by death except that it loses that in which it resides he explains the meaning of death and its effect on the body only. The naturalists (tab'iyyun) are condemned by him as atheists for their view that the soul dies and does not return to life and so there is no future life.<sup>1</sup> Muslim philosophers, he observes, rightly believed in the everlasting existence of the soul but they were wrong in asserting that by reason alone they could know this with certainty. By examining their rational proofs<sup>2</sup> he finds that reason can only prove its possibility; sure knowledge of immortality is only given by religion.<sup>3</sup>

The reason for the soul's coming to the world of body is not to suffer punishment. Christianity teaches that Adam fell from Paradise because of his sin and this fall was designed as a punishment for him; owing to his sin there is a taint of sin in every individual whose place on earth is caused by it.<sup>4</sup> Such ideas are not to be found in al-Ghazali. In one place he only states that Adam's disobedience ~~of~~ <sup>towards</sup> God brought to him the misfortune of being

1. M.D., p.31. 2. T.F., pp.221-28. 3. Ibid, pp.225, 235.

4. Claudia Reid Upper, "Ghazali's Thought Concerning the Nature of Man and Union with God", M.W., 42, pp.25-26; (hereinafter referred to as "Nature").

taken out from Paradise.<sup>1</sup> In another place he states that what caused Adam to fall from Paradise was a matter accidental and foreign to his soul, i.e. an act of disobedience; this accidental matter made him unfit for living near to God, i.e. in Paradise which had been most suitable for him in conformity to his essence which was divine. In order to enable him to acquire that fitness or desert (istiḥqāq) through His guidance God sent him down to this world.<sup>2</sup> This is evident, al-Ghazālī says, from the Qur'ānic verse, "We said; Go forth from this (state) all; so surely there will come to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance no fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve". Every individual soul descends against its nature to this world to acquire fitness for Paradise, or provision (zād) for the hereafter.<sup>3</sup> Its lack of this fitness is not owing to Adam's faults but because it is created imperfect. This concept of acquisition of 'provision' and perfection is Qur'ānic and is strongly emphasized by the ṣūfīs. Al-Ghazālī elaborates it by mentioning the basic natural disposition (asl al-fiṭra) or the nature (ṭab'ṭ) of the soul.

Since the soul is divine in nature inclination towards good and aversion from evil are innate in it.<sup>4</sup> At birth it is a clean and pure substance from the genus of the angels' essence.

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1. I.D., IV, 46. 2. Ibid, III, 329; cf. Upper, "Nature", p.24.

3. K.S., p.78.

4. I.D., III, 51. However, there are two passages (ibid. pp.62, 64) where a child's soul is described as devoid of any inclination but able to be inclined to both good and evil. This neutral nature of the soul seems to have been spoken of in order to emphasize the need for child's training in good character. Al-Ghazālī's general position is what is given in the text for it is upon this that he bases many of his ethical ideas.

Inclination towards evil (which is produced in it after the creation of desire) is against its original divine nature. It is devoid of all knowledge but possesses capacity for it; this capacity is the characteristic of every human soul. Since its origin is divine and since it is of angelic nature it has a longing for the upper world and for accompanying the angels and feels this world alien to it; (this inclination is often subdued by an accidental attribute, namely, worldly desire).<sup>1</sup> Thus although the soul is created imperfect in both knowledge and character-traits, it has ability for both and in order to acquire them it descended to this world. Here it prepares for the happiness in the hereafter which is its permanent abode.<sup>2</sup> The question of the instrument of preparation is linked up with the problem of relationship of the soul to the body from a moral viewpoint.<sup>3</sup>

Every soul is given a body so that with its help it may acquire provision for its eternal life. The soul is the real man and the body is merely its instrument for acquiring 'provision' and perfection. The body is very necessary for the soul and its care must be taken of it.

"Man's honour and his excellence ... consist in his ability for knowing God ... which in this world is his beauty, perfection and glory and in the future life is his treasure and equipment, and verily he prepares for this knowledge in his soul, not in any member of his members. It is the soul which knows God, draws near to Him, works for Him, strives towards Him and reveals what is with and before Him, and verily the members are followers, servants, and instruments which the soul employs and uses as a master uses his slave, as a shepherd makes use of his sheep and a workman his tool. The soul is that which is received by

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1. I.D., III, 12-13, 52-53. 2. N.M., pp.12, 32; K.S., p.63.

3. K.S., p.436.

God ... it is that which is veiled from Him ... it is that which is sought, that which is addressed and that which is censured. It is the soul which becomes happy ... and successful ...; it is the soul which is disappointed and miserable ..."

The soul uses the body as its vehicle. Although a separate substance, it is united with the body through the physical heart. The heart is the first channel of the soul's free use of the body; the relation between the heart and the soul need not be discussed for it has no concern with ethics.<sup>2</sup> Besides assisting the soul as its vehicle the body also serves it by containing the means to acquire 'provision' consisting of knowledge and action. All that is in the body is the assistants of the soul. Some of them are visible, e.g. the hands, the legs and all other external and internal parts. Others are invisible and they are three in number. The first is that which is the source of motive and impulse; motive for attaining what is useful is called desire and motive to repel what is harmful is named anger. The second is the power (qudra) which moves the limbs towards the objects of desire or against the objects of aversion. It is diffused in all the limbs particularly in muscles and nerves. The third is that which perceives. It has two divisions. One consists of the five powers located in the five parts of the brain. These powers are imagination (takhayyul), i.e. representation, retention (tahaffuz), reflection (tafakkur), remembrance (tadhakkur) and sensus communis. (al-hiss al-mushtarak). The way these five powers assist the soul in its preparation for the hereafter is explained by al-Ghazali and his description is similar to that of Avicenna<sup>3</sup> and Ispahani.<sup>4</sup> All these senses

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1. I.D., III, 2. A similar passage is to be found in K.S., p.78.

2. I.D., III, 2, 4, 7-8. 3. I.D., III, 5, IV, 95; K.S., pp.14.

4. Dhari'a, pp.14-15.

and powers are also found in the lower animals. However, there is one power which is especial to the human soul, namely, the power of knowledge and wisdom, i.e. reason. It knows the non-sensuous realities related to this world and the next. It also knows the consequences of actions; when the result of an act is perceived as good the will to do this is produced in the mind.<sup>1</sup> In these two ways reason assists the soul. These two functions of reason are almost the same as the functions of philosophers' theoretical and practical reason<sup>2</sup> although al-Ghazālī did not divide it into these two. In his views on the invisible assistants of the soul he is influenced by the philosophers. In the Tahāfāt he summarily discussed their theory of animal, human and vegetative souls and approves it on the ground that these are observable facts which are not contrary to religion.<sup>3</sup> But his own view in his later works as given above reveals some differences. In these works he calls the limbs etc. the soldiers of the soul (junūd al-qalb) implying thereby that his view of their being the assistants of the soul is Qur'ānic for the term 'soldiers' occurs in the Qur'ān; following Ispahānī, he also quotes a Tradition in which uses of the body for the hereafter are stated.<sup>4</sup> His difference from the Muslim philosophers who also regarded the body as an instrument used by the soul<sup>5</sup> lies in his emphasizing its being the instrument of preparation for the hereafter, whereas they emphasized it only to obtain happiness in this world.

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1. I.D., III, 7, 8. 2. T.F., pp.199-200. 3. Ibid, p.200.

4. I.D., III, 4, 9; cf. Dharia, pp.14-15.

5. T.F., p.221; cf. Walzer, "Aspects", pp.224, 224-26 (for the Greek sources of their views).

Besides the above-mentioned relationship between soul and body al-Ghazālī speaks of another relationship which is, in essence, the same as interactionism. He says that although soul and body are distinct entities they affect each other and determine their courses mutually. Applying this idea to ethics he maintains that every act produces an effect in the soul provided it is performed deliberately, and this effect forms its quality. The nature of the quality as good or evil depends upon the nature of the act. After an act is repeated for some time its effect on the soul becomes established. An act performed without conscious deliberation cannot create any effect on the soul because what receives effect is the soul and this soul is unconscious. This is the reason why involuntary action has no relevance to ethics. As bodily action influences the soul, so the soul influences the body: if a quality is established in the soul relevant bodily action necessarily proceeds from it. The difficulty or readiness in the proceeding of an act depends on the weakness or strength of the quality. All this is the traditional interaction theory applied to morals. Al-Ghazālī adds to it something more which is very significant: a deed creates some effect on the soul; this effect causes the body to repeat the same deed; this deed produces some effect on the soul; this effect is added to the previous effect which is now strengthened; this again causes the body to repeat the same deed - the circular (dawr) process goes on indefinitely. The reason for interaction is the same as the reason for the link between the world of sense perception and the unseen world: God created the two worlds in such a way that they influence each other; since body and soul

belong to them respectively they must interact.<sup>1</sup> The circular theory is important in ethics. It was employed by Aristotle in his conception of virtue. Al-Ghazālī applies it to his whole ethics for it underlies all its basic problems, e.g., the need for devotional acts and avoidance of sin, getting rid of vices by means of opposite deeds, acquisition of virtues through habit formation, the reason for the occurrence of good and evil acts, and so on. Al-Ghazālī even goes so far as to say that it is for this interaction that the soul is brought to the lower world so that it may acquire perfection by means of bodily acts. Without taking this theory into consideration one cannot properly appreciate al-Ghazālī's ethical ideas; even some of them will appear self-contradictory to those who are not aware of his view on the circular relationship.<sup>2</sup> The interaction theory also underlies al-Makkī's mystical ethics<sup>3</sup>; he, however, neither explained it nor applied it to his ethics in the manner of al-Ghazālī. Since, according to this theory, all acts and qualities proceed from a few basic elements in man's constitution, al-Ghazālī describes these elements in detail.

#### The Elements in Man's Constitution.

In man's constitution there are certain basic elements which determine his nature and from which proceed all his bodily acts and mental qualities. These elements are blended in his

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1. A.D., p.67; I.D., IV, 29, III, 51-52, 145, I, 107; K.S., p.76.

2. Hava Lazarus-Yafeh also realised the importance of this theory; he rightly called it "a central doctrine of great interest", a "doctrine which underlies al-Ghazālī's whole philosophy"; see his "Place of the Religious Commandments in the Philosophy of al-Ghazālī", M.W. 51, p.184; (hereinafter referred to as "Religious Commandments").

3. Qut, I, 277.

constitution (tarkīb khilqa, tīna) in such a way that freedom from them is absolutely impossible; it is only from their evils that man can be free through moral effort and struggle. Every element has an effect on the constitution, and since the elements are four, the same number of natures is produced in every man. This nature is not the same as his original nature already considered, for the latter refers to the condition of the soul at the time of its creation while the former is its condition after a man's birth. The four elements develop not at once but one after another at different stages of his growth. The element produced first is animality (bahīmiyya) which is desire (shahwa). Its purpose is to seek the means by which the body, the vehicle of the soul, will remain in sound health and the human species will be preserved. It is responsible for the animal qualities of man, e.g. eating, drinking, sleeping and copulating. The second element is bestiality (sab'īyya) which is anger (ghadab). Its purpose is to ward off all that is harmful to the body. Because of this element man possesses the qualities and acts of the ferocious animals, e.g. envy, violence, rebuke etc. If not controlled to a moderate state these two elements cause moral destruction. In some people, however, these are created moderate; this is a gift of God to them. After this, at the age of discrimination (tamīz) which is about seven, a diabolic (shaytāniyya) element is produced. It consists in making use of discrimination in searching out the ways of wickedness and in satisfying anger and desire through guile and deception. This element is responsible for such acts and qualities of man as deception, enmity, guiding people to evil, hypocrisy and so on.<sup>1</sup> It is repressed in those

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1. I.D., III, 9-11, IV, 14.

in whom desire and anger are created in moderation. The Prophet said that the devil in him submitted to him. Besides the diabolic element in man's constitution al-Ghazālī also believes in the devil as a being who is outside man but leads him to evil by exciting desire and anger and by giving him evil suggestions (wasāwis).

Last of all is manifested the lordly (rabbāniyya) element, the source of the qualities of love of praise, domination over others and knowledge of various sciences. This is present in the soul from the time of its creation by virtue of its being a divine entity - the reason why it is called an innate disposition (gharīza) - and now it only becomes manifest (yazharu). The four elements are set forth in two passages of the Ihyā'<sup>1</sup> in one of which there is no mention of reason ('aql)<sup>1</sup> and in another although reason is mentioned in addition to them it appears to be identical with the lordly element,<sup>2</sup> but in the Arba'in<sup>3</sup> it is clear that reason is a separate power which develops after the manifestation of this element. It begins to appear at the age of discrimination, gradually develops at the age of maturity (bulūgh) and becomes perfect at forty when man becomes fully man. It is called the sixth sense existing in the soul. It is the essence of the soul, while desire and anger are its accidental states. Reason is a quality of the angels. That reason is man's essence is proved by following the philosophic tradition: the essence of each species is that which is peculiar to it; what is peculiar in man is reason; so it must be his essential nature. Its task is to apprehend the non-sensuous realities and the consequences of actions. Then the four elements are responsible for four kinds

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1. Ibid, IV, 14. 2. I.D., III, 9-10. 3. pp. 188-89.

of nature in every man. They are the roots of all man's inward qualities and outward behaviour. Al-Ghazālī's concept of the lordly element and the diabolic element is parallel to that of al-Makkī. The other two elements are ~~very~~ implicit in him<sup>1</sup>, but vividly described in the philosophers' works. Two consequences follow from the above-mentioned ideas of al-Ghazālī. One is that man lies between the lower animals and the angels since he possesses the natures of both of them. The more one neglects the angelic nature the closer one becomes to the ranks of the lower animals and the devil; this is indicated in Qur'ānic verses. The more one develops it the more one resembles the angels. To resemble them and thus to be near to God is the goal of moral struggle. This view of al-Ghazālī on man's place agrees with that of Ispahānī.<sup>2</sup> The other consequence is that the principles of good and evil are present in man's very constitution. None is free from sin even though he be a saint; to be free from it is only possible for the angels for they have no desire and anger. This idea al-Ghazālī consistently applies to his ethics.

Closely related to al-Ghazālī's conception of the elements in man's constitution is his theory of the faculties of the soul. The Greek philosophers believed the soul to consist of parts or faculties or powers and they are followed by the Muslim philosophers and by al-Ghazālī. On the question of the number of the faculties, however, the Greeks were not unanimous. Plato conceived of three faculties and most of the muslim philosophers accepted his view.<sup>3</sup> Al-Ghazālī adds to it a fourth faculty so

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1. Qūt., I, 390.

2. Dharī'a, pp.17, 16.

3. Walzer, "Aspect", pp.221-22.

that in his opinion the parts or faculties (quwā) or non-material elements (maʿānī)<sup>1</sup> are four in number. They are the faculty of desire, the faculty of anger, the faculty of knowledge, i.e. reason and the faculty of justice among these three faculties (quwwat al-ʿadl bayna ḥāzihī ath-thalāth).<sup>2</sup> The first two faculties taken jointly are often referred to by al-Ghazālī as passion (hawā), a term frequently used in the Qurʾān and Tradition. Their combination is also called by him the carnal soul (nafs) which also occurs in these not infrequently. Though created in man for his benefit they are also the sources of evil in him; they are regarded by al-Ghazālī as the touch-stone of evil, i.e., everything to which they are inclined will be regarded as evil.<sup>3</sup> That the faculties of the soul are four is very clear in al-Ghazālī's works.<sup>4</sup>

The reason why justice as a fourth faculty of the soul is introduced by al-Ghazālī is also very clear. Plato and the Muslim philosophers regarded justice not as a faculty but as a virtue which is the combination of the virtues of the faculties of reason, desire and anger; al-Ghazālī also calls it a virtue which however is regarded by him not as their combination but as a virtue

1. This term is used in the A.D., p.177, to imply that the parts of the soul are not physically divisible but distinguishable by definition and in thought. cf. R.M. Frank "Al-Maʿnī. Some Reflections on the Technical Meaning of the Term", J.A.O.S., 89, pp.248-53.
2. I.D., III 47. This view is confirmed in the A.D., p.77, and reconfirmed in the K.S., pp.429, 431.
3. K.S., pp.10, 624-25; cf; Al-Makki, Qūt, I, 233, 234 where he calls the carnal soul the treasure of evil (Khizānat ash-sharr) and also the house of the enemy, the devil.
4. ʿAbdul Haqq Ansārī was right when he said that al-Ghazālī believed in four faculties of the soul; see his published Ph.D. thesis, The Ethical Philosophy of Miskawayh, Aligarh, 1964, p.108.

proceeding from a fourth faculty named justice.<sup>1</sup> He is led to postulate this faculty by his conception of the nature of passion or carnal soul i.e. desire and anger. He believes that they serve the good purposes for which they are created only when they are within proper limits (to be described later); but their nature is such that they always tend to exceed the limits; they are very rebellious and are purely irrational;<sup>2</sup> they are often excited by the devil whose business it is to lead man to evil through them - the reason why they are called the devil's agent (hizb ash-shaytān). It is reason which knows the proper limits and the evil consequences of exceeding them; its task is to order the passion to remain within the limits - the reason why it is called God's agent (hizb Allāh) - so that the soul may prepare for the hereafter.<sup>3</sup> But reason has no power to prevent passions from exceeding their limits. When it develops in man at the time of his maturity it finds passions very strong in the soul since they developed much earlier and are strengthened by their repeated satisfaction. Since they are completely <sup>ir</sup>rational they themselves cannot be amenable to reason and the Sharīʿa. There must be a faculty capable of enforcing upon them the dictates of reason and the Sharīʿa and keeping them under control (dabt) and this faculty is justice.<sup>4</sup>

"The faculty of justice is the power; its example is like the example of an executor who passes <sup>on</sup> the indication of reason, and anger is that to which the indication is passed ...". "The faculty of justice lies in controlling desire and anger under the indication of reason and the Sharīʿa".<sup>5</sup>

1. I.D., III, 47-48.

2. K.S., pp.15, 64, 771.

3. Ibid, pp.16, 64.

4. Ibid, pp.64, 647.

5. I.D., III, 47.



This controlling function of justice and purely cognitive task of reason are more clearly stated in the Kīmiyā'.<sup>1</sup> Thus al-Ghazālī believes that man is given by God a separate faculty of justice with the power of keeping passions under control. The lower animals are deprived of it as of reason and hence they are always guided by their passions. Justice as the faculty of power is sometimes called by al-Ghazālī the motive of religion (bā'ith ad-dīn) while the demands of desire and anger he terms the motives of passions (bā'ith al-hawā). The two motives are at war with each other in the soul of every sane adult human being.<sup>2</sup> The latter motive can only be weakened by self-training. The reason why Aristotle did not formulate a faculty like that of justice is also linked with his conception of the nature of the appetitive soul. Unlike al-Ghazālī, he believed that although distinct from and often opposed to the rational soul, it has an inner urge to be amenable to reason; hence there was no need of assuming any such faculty as would force it to obey reason.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the same line of thought concerning the natures of

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1. pp. 629-30.

2. In the A.D., pp.211-12, where these two motives are discussed very briefly the motive of religion appears at first sight to be identical with reason, but careful reading of the passages makes it clear that it is something different. In the I.D., IV, 56 and the K.S., pp.667-68 where the two motives are discussed in great detail it is very clear that motive of religion is not the same as reason: reason is described as the source of guidance and motive of religion as power, and guidance is regarded as superior to power. Clearly, then, they are two different faculties. Further, it is said that guidance, the function of reason, is given by the angel placed at man's right side (sāhib al-yamīn) and the power of motive of religion is given by the angel at his left side (sāhib ash-shimāl). This also clearly shows that reason and motive of religion are two different faculties. That they are not identical is further evident from al-Ghazālī's statement "The two angels are entrusted with the two soldiers (jundayn)".

3. Aristotle, Ethics, pp.39-40.

appetitive and irascible souls was the cause of Plato's postulating no fourth faculty. The introduction of the faculty of justice by al-Ghazālī is important for it has bearing upon his theories of root virtues, of mortification and of moral responsibility. Since the faculties of justice and reason are not present in children and the insane, they do not know good and evil and also cannot control their passions; so they are incapable of refraining from evil, and those who are incapable fall outside the domain of ethics. Even at the age of discrimination which is about seven children are not morally responsible to God because their faculty of guidance has just begun to appear and has not yet become capable of telling them what is harmful in the next life; it can only tell them what is harmful in this life - a reason why they feel ashamed of wrong-doing - and hence even at this age they are morally responsible to men.<sup>1</sup>

Besides these four faculties al-Ghazālī also speaks of another which is higher than reason and whose effect is immediate experience (dhawq). Its chief concern is with the non-sensuous matters of this world and the next and especially with divine affairs; it also has to do with the deeper meaning of ethical matters. By it man experiences these i.e. knows these directly and without reason. This faculty, unlike reason which is present in all adult, sane human beings, develops only in the prophets and those saints who have completely purified their souls.

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1. I.D., IV, 57.

This is the highest power in man.<sup>1</sup> True, it is not mentioned in any of the passages on the four faculties. The reason is that the four faculties are mentioned as the basis of the root virtues in man, as that from which the virtues proceed, whereas the faculty of immediate experience is not a basis of any virtue; rather it develops after acquiring all the virtues and getting rid of all vices. Al-Ghazālī's recognition of this faculty is like that of al-Makki,<sup>2</sup> while his views on the other four faculties, especially the first three is in line with that of the philosophers.

### Conception of Happiness.

Al-Ghazālī's conception of happiness has two aspects, negative and positive. The negative part deals with what is not happiness and its discussion logically comes first for it prepares the ground for the positive part which concerns the real nature of happiness. He first attacks the general hedonistic view that the aim (maqṣūd) of human life is to enjoy the pleasure (ladhdha) and delight (na'im) of this world. He considers this view as wrong for two reasons. (a) The pleasure of this world lasts for a limited

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1. Al-Ghazālī's students are not unanimous on the question whether he really believes in a faculty higher than reason. Jabre denies any such faculty; he holds that where it is said that prophets and saints know through immediate experience the meaning is that they know by reason in its original purity and not by any higher faculty; see Certitude, pp.147, 263, 185. Watt (Intellectual, pp.164-66, 85; "Study", pp.125-28 where Jabre is criticized), Upper ("Nature", pp.27, 24), Smith ("Al-Ghazali on the Presence of God", M.W.<sup>23(1932)</sup>, p.17) and others maintain that al-Ghazālī believes in a faculty higher than reason. This dispute is a part of the controversy on the question of essential unity or modification of the thought which is presented in his authentic works. A study of the arguments of both groups and of the relevant passages in al-Ghazālī's works convinces the present writer that the truth lies in the view of the latter group. Since this highest faculty is not directly related to al-Ghazālī's ethics its further discussion in the present study is irrelevant.
  2. Qūt, I, 509 where he speaks of intuitive (kashfī) knowledge and supports it by a Tradition.

period of time i.e. until man's death. The duration of this world is not a thousandth part of that of the next and is indeed incommensurable with it for it is eternal; eternity is such that if the world is full of grains and a bird picks up one every million years, the grains will all be gone at last but eternity will suffer no diminution. The life of one hundred years in this world is even less than three days in comparison to the life in the next. The delight in so short a time cannot be man's aim in life.<sup>1</sup> (b) The pleasure of this world is impure; every form of it is imperfect and mixed with pain. Such has been its nature up to the present time and the same will be its nature until Doomsday. Pleasure, therefore, cannot be the goal of life.<sup>2</sup> This, however, does not mean that all forms of pleasure are to be condemned in al-Ghazālī's view. On the contrary, he values the pleasures of knowledge,<sup>3</sup> of converse with God, of intimacy with Him produced from constant remembrance of Him, and of the performance of other good deeds. He also approves the pleasures of lawful sexual intercourse, of the necessary amount of food, clothing and shelter. What he condemns is seeking the pleasures of this world, physical or intellectual, as the goal of life.<sup>4</sup>

Al-Ghazālī also rejects five other views each of which regards some particular worldly thing as the goal of life. The first is the view of those peasants and artisans who lack firm rooting in religion. They believe that man's object is only to live in this world for some time; so they work hard to acquire

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1. I.D., III, 4-5, 175, 180, 190-91, 214, IV, 52, 109, 8, 187, 348, 357.

2. Ibid., IV, 52, 107; cf. Aristotle, Ethics, p.5.

3. K.S., pp.70, 839-41.

4. Ibid., p.70.

food which they take so that they may get strength to work for it again; this goes on as a routine until their death. (2) The sensualists maintain that man's goal is happiness and this happiness consists in the gratification of desires for food and sex; the more these are satisfied the greater is the happiness. This view is wrong because it reduces man to the rank of the lower animals and even below it for some of them can eat and copulate more than man. (3) Some people say that happiness, the aim of life, lies in possessing enormous wealth and affluence; the wealthier one is the happier one becomes. (4) Some people believe that happiness consists in widespread fame. This they acquire by such means as beautiful dress and splendid vehicles and by embellishing the external walls of their houses and other measures which easily attract attention. (5) Others opine that happiness lies in respect and influence; so efforts should be made to gain political power for this is the greatest means of commanding respect and creating influence.<sup>1</sup> In rejecting these views as false al-Ghazālī may have been influenced by al-Fārābī to a certain extent, but Aristotle's influence upon him is more apparent. Aristotle discarded wealth, fame etc. as happiness but retained them as aids to it unconditionally;<sup>2</sup> al-Ghazālī holds the same opinion with the only difference that in regarding them as aids he sets a condition to them, namely, in the case of most people that should not be more than is necessary.

While in the above views happiness is regarded as something obtainable in this life, there are two opinions in which it is believed to be otherworldly. Although al-Ghazālī also looks upon

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1. I.D., III, 198, IV, 366-67. 2. Ethics, pp. 5, 7, 8.

it as otherworldly, there are reasons for which he rejects them as wrong. One of these views is that this world is a place of affliction and toil while the hereafter is the abode of happiness for everyone whether or not he prepares for it in this life; so the right thing for man is to kill himself in order to escape from the toil of this world. This belief is ascribed by al-Ghazālī to certain worshippers (ʿubbād) of India who destroy themselves by fire. This is rejected by him because it contradicts the teaching of the Shariʿa that without the relevant works happiness is impossible to attain; destroying oneself, moreover, is a grave sin which bars man from happiness. The other view is that it is not enough for man just to kill himself; rather first he should completely get rid of his human qualities (sifāt bashariyya). With a view to uprooting their faculties of desire and anger they engage in so vigorous a mortification that as a result of it some of them die, some become insane and others fall ill so that worship becomes impossible for them. This view is also wrong according to al-Ghazālī because uprooting of desire and anger is neither necessary nor possible - a concept which will be discussed later. Besides the above-mentioned views on happiness there are, he says, many others the total number of which is seventy-odd of which only one is true<sup>1</sup>, and this true view forms the positive aspect of his theory of happiness.

The true view is that the human end is otherworldly happiness (as-saʿādat al-ukhrawiyya) which can be obtained if the necessary preparation for it is made in this life by controlling the human qualities and not by uprooting them.<sup>2</sup> There are some this-worldly

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1. I.D., III, 199. 2. Ibid, pp.17, 45, 202, 89, IV, 139, 86; cf. Aristotle, Ethics, p. 7.

goods which serve as means to otherworldly happiness and al-Ghazālī says that these can be called forms of happiness (sa'ādāt) only metaphorically. Man's conduct, he says, will be considered good if it is conducive to happiness in the hereafter.<sup>1</sup> This happiness was the central theme of all prophets' teachings, and it is to encourage people to it that all the Scriptures were revealed; this is known from the Sharī'a and also from the spiritual insight of the ṣūfīs.<sup>2</sup> Greatness in God's sight lies in achieving otherworldly happiness; those who will fail to attain it are worse than the lower animals for the latter will perish while the former will suffer misery.

Otherworldly happiness has four characteristics, namely, continuity without end, joy without sorrow, knowledge without ignorance and sufficiency (ghinā) after which nothing more is needed for perfect satisfaction.<sup>3</sup> This view al-Ghazālī takes from Ispahānī with slight modification. Influenced by the Qur'ān and Tradition he believes that the abode of such happiness is Paradise while that of misery is Hell. Men's fates will be declared on the day of resurrection but the effect of happiness and misery begins immediately after their death. When the deceased is laid in the grave his soul is returned to his body so that he may answer interrogation concerning God's unity and prophethood; on the day of resurrection it will again be returned to a body; the resurrected man will thus have both body and soul and be immortal in this form.<sup>4</sup> Bodily resurrection is advocated in al-Ghazālī's

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1. Ibid., IV, 139.

2. Ibid., 17, 45; N.M., p.45; cf. Al-Makkī, Qūt, I, 175, 210, 218, 224, 113, 156 where he held the same view.

3. I.D., IV, 89; cf. Ispahānī, Dharī'a, pp.35, 37. 4. I.D., IV, 422.

works composed after his conversion to sūfism<sup>1</sup> as well as in his Tahāfāt where the philosophers are condemned as atheists<sup>2</sup> for their denial of it and their rational arguments for its impossibility have been refuted.<sup>3</sup> Happiness and misery are, according to him, both physical and spiritual. The physical will not begin until man enters Paradise and Hell;<sup>4</sup> from that time onwards physical and spiritual happiness or misery will be united.

Bodily punishment in the grave in the form of bites of snakes and scorpions as spoken of in Tradition he explains as mental pain caused by evil qualities of the soul whose spiritual form (mathal rūhānī) appears to the deceased's mind.<sup>5</sup> Bodily happiness and misery al-Ghazālī discusses following the Qur'ān and Tradition for he believes that these can only be known <sup>from</sup> for the Shari'ā.

Spiritual happiness and misery he regards as superior to the physical and says that the Shari'ā did not describe them in detail because most people fail to understand them.<sup>6</sup> Religious scholars did not speak of them for the same reason or because they themselves could not apprehend them.<sup>7</sup> The philosophers denied bodily happiness and misery and their rational proofs have been

1. K.S., p.80. 2. pp.245, 229. 3. Ibid, pp.236-48.

4. Ibid, p.241; A.D., pp.293-94, 365.

5. A.D., pp.284, 289; K.S., pp.84, 88. In this latter work (p.83) punishment of the grave is said to be both mental and physical, but in page 85 the physical pain is explained away as mental.

6. K.S., p.53. In I.D., bodily pleasures and pain are discussed elaborately. In K.S. these are mentioned briefly because everyone can easily understand them; spiritual states are elaborately dealt with in this work because only few people who know the soul can apprehend these by themselves (p.83). For these same reasons, in A.D. which is an abridgement of I.D. bodily pleasure and pain are omitted and the spiritual states are described in detail.

7. Ibid., p. 7.

refuted by him.<sup>1</sup> They only affirmed these spiritual states and most of their views he accepts as true; he only opposes their claim that mere reason gives them final knowledge of these things; to him these are known with certainty from the Sharī'ah.<sup>2</sup> In the works composed during the sūfī period of his life he appeals mainly to the spiritual insight (mushāhada-i-bāṭini, basīra) of himself and of the sūfīs in general<sup>3</sup> - an insight which is higher than reason.<sup>4</sup> A true sūfī, he says, sees the conditions of the hereafter in his experience of seeing (dhawq-i-mushāhada); this view he discusses in a separate section entitled "Seeing Paradise and Hell in this World."<sup>5</sup>

The cause of happiness is not God's pleasure in the virtuous, nor is misery caused by His anger towards the vicious. Al-Ghazālī believes that God is free from change; He is not angry with man's disobedience to Him or pleased with his act of obedience;<sup>6</sup> God's anger, pleasure and His capture of man (mākhūdh) are all spoken of in the Sharī'ah in keeping with men's capacity of understanding; the fact is that happiness and misery are caused by the conditions of the soul. If at the time of a man's death there exist in his soul unbelief or vicious qualities these bring in misery as necessarily as poison causes death or magnets attract iron. This is the reason for al-Ghazālī's great emphasis upon the improvement of the soul; all virtuous actions are done for the good of the soul; no act is done in order to please God.<sup>7</sup>

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1. T.F., pp.229-36. 2. Ibid, p.235.

3. A.D., pp.293, 286; K.S., pp.95, 97, 99-101.

4. K.S., pp.99-101. 5. K.S., pp.82-83, 88.

6. A.D., pp.301-03, 190; K.S., pp.748-49. 7. I.D., IV, 19.

In accordance with the states of their souls people in the hereafter will, as men of insight know, be split into four groups.<sup>1</sup> A group, the destroyed, will suffer everlasting misery in Hell. This is the technical meaning of destruction (halāk) in al-Ghazālī's ethics. But this term is usually used in it in a loose sense of great suffering for a long time. Al-Mukki used it for any suffering in Hell, temporary or permanent.<sup>2</sup> The use of destruction to mean the annihilation of being - an anti-Islamic idea - is absent in al-Ghazālī but present in al-Fārābī who believed that the souls of the ignorant (bulha) will perish. Another group, 'The punished', will suffer misery in Hell but will later be transferred to Paradise. Happiness or salvation (najāt) does not refer to these people's attaining to Paradise. A third group consisting of infidels, children, the insane and those unaware of religion will be neither in Hell nor in Paradise but in A'rāf, a place between them, where there will be no reward or punishment. They are 'the saved'. Salvation technically refers to their condition i.e. absolute escape from Hell but entitlement to no reward. Al-Ghazālī's concept of A'rāf is Qur'ānic. In philosophers like Avicenna and al-Fārābī this concept is absent. However, a state of neither happiness nor misery but of ease (rāha) through God's mercy is recognized by Avicenna for the souls of those ignorant people who are not wicked in this life. Even such a state was not recognized by al-Fārābī; he believed that

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1. Ibid., pp.20-28. In T.F. pp.229-34 al-Ghazālī reproduces the philosophers' three-fold classification of man in the hereafter and their views on men's happiness and misery. His own classification of men accords with Qur'ānic teaching; only his conception of men's spiritual happiness and misery and their causes bears the influence of philosophy.

2. Qūt, I, 220.

these souls will perish. A fourth group 'the successful', will pass into Paradise without first entering Hell. Thus success (fawz) consists of two elements, namely, absolute escape from suffering in Hell (this does not negate suffering, on the day of resurrection, of delay in account) and getting reward in Paradise. Success is identical with happiness.<sup>1</sup> The term 'success' (falāh) is also used as synonymous with them. The term salvation in its strict sense as given above is different from all these. Al-Ghazālī makes it clear when he says, "Salvation is just safety (salāma) and not happiness or success".<sup>2</sup> But he loosely uses salvation to mean what the other terms mean, and in this he agrees with al-Makkī.<sup>3</sup>

Happiness in Paradise has two major grades, lower and higher. The former consists in the sensual pleasures of foods, drinks, company of houris, beautiful dress, palaces and so on. This grade is appropriate to the lower class of the virtuous referred to as the pious (abrār, sālihūn), the god-fearers (muttaqūn) and the people of <sup>the</sup> right (ashāb al-yamīn). The sensual pleasures will perfectly satisfy them for it is for these that they prepare in this life. The higher grade of happiness consists in nearness to God and gazing upon His glorious face for evermore. The vision (ru'ya) of God or encounter (liqā') with Him is the highest happiness, the ultimate good and the last of all forms of God's bounty. Nothing in Paradise will be as pleasure-giving as this vision. The sensual pleasures are worthless when compared to the pleasure of contemplating the divine beauty. The former resemble the

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1. I.D., IV, 110, 111, 214, 89, 124. 2. A.D., pp.23-24.

3. Qūt, I, 219-20, 364. For the meaning of salvation cf. Gardner, "Sufi", p.131.

pleasures enjoyed by grazing animals while the latter is the spiritual pleasure referred to in the Qudsi Tradition, "I reserved for my virtuous servants what no eye ever saw, no ear ever heard and which never occurred to any man's mind." and in the Qur'ānic verse "So no soul knows what is in store for them of that which will refresh the eyes: a reward for what they did." This grade is appropriate to the higher class of the virtuous consisting of prophets and those who are near to them. These latter are usually mentioned as the saints (awliyā'), the most truthful (siddiqūn), those brought near to God (muqarrabūn), the lovers (muhibbūn) and the sincere (mukhḥḥisūn). The higher happiness will be granted to them because it is for this that they work in this life. Each grade of happiness has innumerable sub-grades; the lowest sub-grade of the higher grade touches the highest sub-grade of the lower grade.<sup>1</sup> Most of al-Ghazālī's ideas on the grades of happiness have their source in the Qur'ān and Tradition; in linking them with sūfīsm, however, he is indebted to al-Makkī.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Means to Happiness.

Happiness is attainable in the hereafter should the necessary preparation for it be made in this life. Making this preparation is equivalent to the acquisition of the 'provision' for which the soul descended to this world of water and clay. There are several forms of good by which man can prepare for happiness and these are

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1. I.D., IV, 406-9, 22, 238, 286-87, 24, 25, 320-32, 226-27, 238, 340, 28, 195-96, 465-71, III, 11.
  2. cf. Qūt, I, 175, 210, 218, 220, 224, 113, 156. The Qur'ānic verse and the qudsi Tradition which al-Ghazālī quotes to support his ideas of spiritual happiness were also quoted by the Muslim philosophers; in T.F., pp.275-76 he criticizes them saying that these never imply the non-existence of physical happiness.

called the means (wasā'il). These means are divided by al-Ghazālī into four categories each of which includes four forms of good; the total number of the means thus amounts to sixteen. All the means are not of equal importance for happiness: some of them are absolutely necessary and others are only useful; some are very near to happiness while the relation of others to it is comparatively remote.<sup>1</sup> The four groups of means are

The 'goods' of the soul (al-fadā'il an-nafsiyya)

The bodily 'goods' (al-fadā'il al-jismiyya)

The external 'goods' (al-fadā'il al-Khārijīyya)

The 'goods' of divine grace (al-fadā'il al-fawfiyya)

The means included in each group are called (fadā'il, the plural of fadīla). This term is not used here in its technical sense in which it refers particularly to the four root virtues of the soul together with their sub-divisions and generally to any quality of the soul, for this term is applied to the last three categories of means which are not virtues of the soul. The term is used in its ordinary sense expressible by such words as merit, worth, goodness and the like. Fadā'il, then, here simply means good things, worthy things by which man can attain to happiness; it does not mean virtues. Nor is fadīla used here as synonymous with fadl which means free gift or gratuity, bounty or grace,<sup>2</sup> although both terms have the same verb-root; the

1. I.D., IV, 89-90, III, 202; cf. Dhārī'a, pp.37-38, 35, 65; Aristotle, Ethics, p.8. In the number of means, in their classification into four groups, in their description and in the determination of their mutual relationship al-Ghazālī is strongly influenced by Ispahānī who discussed these all in his Dhārī'a, pp.35-45. Ispahānī was, in turn, influenced by Aristotle (Ethics, pp.8, 28-31), Stoics (van den Bergh, "Ghazali on 'Gratitude towards God' and its Greek Sources", S.I., VII, 96) and Miskawayh (Tahdhīb, pp.44-4). Al-Ghazālī only elaborates Ispahānī's views and makes them more religious and sūfistic.

2. Lane, Lexicon, I(6), 2412.

reason is that this meaning of fadila though correct for the last group, is incorrect for the others (for these are not free gifts; they are gifts only in the sense that these are ultimately from God) whereas the term is also used for these groups. So it cannot be said that this term is used here in order to imply that the means to happiness, especially the last group, are free gifts (fadl) from God. The fact of their being gifts, however, is expressed by using for them another word, ni'am (gifts) and by discussing them in the 'Book of Gratitude to God'. The first three categories are gifts of God in the sense that they come ultimately from Him; the last group is a free gift inasmuch as in three of its four forms it is not in man's control. The view that the means to happiness are gifts is very significant for it makes happiness in part a divine gift. This point will be clear from the discussion of all the classes of means.

The 'goods' of the soul are, according to al-Ghazālī, faith (imān) and good character (ḥusn al-khuluq). Faith is divided by him into 'knowledge of revelation' (ʿilm al-mukāshafa) and practical knowledge (ʿilm al-muʿāmalā). Thus faith is regarded here as a synonym of knowledge. Good character is divided into temperance and justice. The former is repression of desire and anger and the latter is their repression to the extent that neither all their demands are shunned nor are all fulfilled but moderation is observed. This is a loose description of good character as against its strict sense in which it consists of four qualities of the soul - wisdom, courage, temperance and justice - together with their sub-divisions. It is described here as consisting of the last two qualities in order to keep the number of the soul's

'goods' four, but by it is meant here not only all these four qualities and their sub-divisions but also all other qualities of the soul. The description of good character as temperance and justice includes all the qualities of the soul for these two concern the repression of desire and anger, and it is upon this repression that acquisition of all the good qualities depends. The four 'goods' of the soul, then, are reducible to (a) faith or knowledge and (b) all the good qualities of the soul. These two are the nearest means to happiness.<sup>1</sup> Since improvement of the soul through good qualities is achieved by means of action (ʿamal), the nearest means to happiness emerge as knowledge and action. Indeed, this is what al-Ghazālī emphasizes in all his ethical works. Even when discussing the last three groups of means he refers to the 'goods' of the soul sometimes as knowledge, good character and action and at other times as knowledge and action. The meaning of these two in his ethics will be explained later.

The bodily 'goods' too are regarded as essential means to happiness for without them the 'goods' of the soul cannot be acquired perfectly. Although both groups are essential, the rank of the latter is below that of the former. The bodily 'goods' are health, strength, long life and beauty. The way the first three serve as means to happiness is obvious: what are most needed for happiness are the 'goods' of the soul which, in final analysis, are found to be knowledge and action, and these two cannot be pursued without sound health and adequate physical strength. Long life enables man to take better preparation for happiness through these two - the reason why the Prophet once described happiness as long

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1. I.D., III, 202; cf. Dharīʿa, p.35.

life spent in obedience to God. The need for beauty for happiness, however, is little but not entirely nil: a handsome man, who is naturally liked by others, can pursue his worldly affairs more easily than a man ugly to look at and thus can have more time and opportunity to acquire knowledge and to do good deeds. By beauty al-Ghazālī means not that which excites sexual urge but a tall figure with harmoniously developed limbs and such facial appearance as creates a good impression on others.<sup>1</sup>

The goods exterior to the body are wealth, influence, family and noble birth. These are not essential for happiness but only useful to it. Their status is below the status of bodily goods. Wealth serves as useful means in many ways: it makes its possessor free from the care of the necessities of life and thus enables him to devote more time and attention to knowledge and action. By wealth various kinds of obstacles to them can easily be removed. Influence is a useful means in the sense that he who lacks it is always humiliated and insecure from enemies who disturb his acquisition of knowledge and doing good deeds and keep him constantly worried, but one who has some influence can repel them and prepare for happiness safely and securely. Wife, children, friends and relatives are all useful inasmuch as they help man in his worldly affairs in various ways and thus give him better opportunity to prepare for happiness. Children in particular are like his hands, legs and other limbs with which he performs good actions. In the case of most people external goods are useful only when these are of moderate amount; more than this is an impediment to happiness for them and hence desires for it are

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1. Ibid. pp.245, 295, IV, 91, 137, 71, 72. cf. Dhari'ra, pp.35, 40-41; Aristotle, Ethics, pp.7, 9.

regarded by al-Ghazālī as 'destructive qualities of the soul' to be described in a later chapter. This conception of wealth, etc. is not inconsistent with what has earlier been said concerning them, for there it is denied that these are happiness themselves and here these are only regarded as means to happiness. By noble birth al-Ghazālī means a birth not in a rich family but in a religious family cultivating knowledge and piety. One born in such a family inherits traits of good character from his ancestors, and in this way noble birth constitutes a means to happiness.<sup>1</sup>

The 'goods' of divine grace (tawfīq) are divine guidance (hidāya), divine direction (rushd), divine leading (tasdīd) and divine strengthening (ta'yīd).<sup>2</sup> Grace here means concordance between God's decree and man's will on what is right. The function of these 'goods' is to combine bodily 'goods' and the exterior goods with those of the soul. Indeed, without these the former two groups are of no use in producing the latter - the reason why 'goods' of grace are regarded as essential means to happiness. On guidance every one is dependent since without it no one can know the path to happiness. It has three grades. The first is general guidance which enables man to distinguish between good and bad. It is called general because it is given to all people: to some (ba'dahum, ba'di-rā) through reason and to others through prophets and the books revealed to them.<sup>3</sup> Despite this guidance

1. Ibid, III, 246, IV, 90-91, 202; cf. Dharī'a, pp.35, 38-39; Aristotle, Ethics, p.8.

2. For the English translation of these terms see Lane, Lexicon, I (3), 1089, I(8) 3057, I(1) 136; van den Bergh, "Sources", p.96.

3. I.D., III, 93-94; K.S., p.690. This view that some people know through reason and others through revelation agrees with Ispahānī in his Dharī'a, p.44, but contradicts al-Ghazālī's general position that the sources of knowledge of good and evil are both reason and revelation.

people sometimes do not do good because the desire for worldly pleasure is dominant in them. The second is especial guidance given to those who are practising mortification in accordance with the general guidance; to such people the path of wisdom (rāh-i-hikmat) is gradually opened. The most especial guidance is given to the prophets and also to the saints and sufis who have completed their mortification. Thus one 'good' of grace, guidance in its three forms, is concerned with one half of the soul's 'goods', namely, knowledge. The other three 'goods' of grace have to do with the other half - action.

While through guidance man knows good and evil, direction is a divine providence (al-ḥināyat al-ilāhiyya) for which an urge or will to proceed towards the good is produced in the mind. Those who have not been given direction cannot proceed to the good although they know it as such. Divine leading is a grace by which the limbs move towards the good in such a way that the man reaches it easily and in a short time. Thus the result of guidance is knowledge of good and evil; that of direction is will or inner urge for proceeding towards the good; that of leading is power (qudra) and movements of the limbs to reach the goal in a short time. Divine strengthening is an aid from the unseen world by which the inward insight of the good becomes clear and the outward power of grasping with the hands, etc. and of movement with the organs is increased. Similar to this aid is divine protection (ḥisma) which is an aid to prevent man from evil and whose source is also unknown.<sup>1</sup>

Then, divine grace is associated with both knowledge and

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1. Ibid.

action which are the nearest means to happiness. The question now arises as to whether there is any means of obtaining divine grace. It is clear from the above that there is no means of securing the first form of guidance. The method of the other forms of guidance is purification of the soul. Since devotional acts, among other things, effect purification,<sup>1</sup> they may be said to be a means of only these forms of guidance. Divine direction, etc. have no direct or indirect causes; these are bestowed upon those whom God wills - a view consistent with the Qur'ānic verse, "That is the free gift of God; He gives it to whom He wills". Their results are will, power, etc. for good actions and there are explicit statements in al-Ghazālī's works that this will, etc. are given to some people as free gifts (fatāyā), as something for which they did nothing, and that God gives - and He gives with justice - to other people will, etc. for evil although they did not commit any crime for which they are given these and are deprived of will, etc. for good actions. Especial favour to a man is "without any preceding desert (istihqāq)", "without any means of it" and deprivation of another is without any previous crime".<sup>3</sup> A passage from the Kīmiyā<sup>2</sup> on this view runs thus:

"Your act is by your power; rather your act is impossible without power, will and knowledge. So the key of your act is these three and all these three are free gifts of God most high ... Then be astonished at His bounty, for He gave you the key of the treasure of the act of obedience (tā'at) and deprived all the wicked of it. (He gave) the key of disobedience (ma'siyat) to others' hands and closed to them the door of the treasures of acts of obedience, without any crime of theirs; rather with His justice He did this. (He favoured you) without any service from you; rather he did this of His bounty. This will never be (a matter

1. See infra, pp. 250-53.

2. K.S., p. 621.

3. A.D., p. 159; K.S., p. 520.

of) conceit to one who knows the reality of divine unity (tawhīd)".<sup>1</sup>

It is wrong to suppose that devotional acts ('ibādāt) are the indirect means of these goods of grace. The reason is that these forms of grace are prior to the acts (for, as shown above, it is these goods from which proceed will, etc. for the acts) so that they are means of acts and not vice versa. Indeed a devotional act is said by al-Ghazālī himself to be dependent upon grace.<sup>2</sup> In the above passage too will, etc. for good acts are asserted to be created without any prior devotional act. It is the layman, and not al-Ghazālī, who believes that the function of devotional acts is to please God and thereby to draw forth His assistance. In al-Ghazālī's view their function is to purify the soul and beautify it so that love of God and the hereafter may be produced in it and love of this world may be removed. This point will be elaborated later. Since good acts are only performed through the 'goods' of grace they cannot be the means of the latter. That 'goods' of grace are bestowed without any means is also suggested by their genesis: Aristotle was the first man to have spoken of goods of fortune as an element of happiness; he, however, did not relate them to any divine being. Miskawayh followed him almost in toto. Ispahānī accepted their view that goods of fortune are also means of happiness and linked it with the Islamic idea by calling them "the 'goods' of divine grace" and describing them as four forms of God's aid to man mentioned in the Qur'ān. Al-Ghazālī accepts most of his ideas, elaborates them

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1. K.S., p. 621.

2. <sup>Ibid</sup> K.S., p. 620.

and makes them more Islamic and sufistic.<sup>1</sup> Now neither Aristotle, nor Miskawayh nor Ispahānī believed that this group of 'goods' had any means. It suggests that al-Ghazālī also has the same belief. This suggestion is confirmed by his explicit statements that will, etc. for good actions, which result from the 'goods' of grace are free gifts and that devotional acts are prescribed for the improvement of the soul and not for pleasing God and thereby for drawing grace from Him.

By including goods of grace in the means of happiness al-Ghazālī points to the Islamic idea that otherworldly happiness is partially a mercy of God. The same was also the view of Ispahānī which he made explicit by quoting the relevant Qur'ānic verses and prophetic traditions.<sup>2</sup> He declared that no one was independent of grace in any condition, that happiness was not attainable without the 'goods' of the soul and that there was no way of achieving these without God's grace.<sup>3</sup> Al-Ghazālī says almost the same: the primary means of happiness are the 'goods' of the soul and man can only acquire them with the help of bodily 'goods' and external goods should<sup>h</sup> be given the 'goods' of grace. He will acquire them through effort and action, i.e. through constant practice and habituation and also through association with the virtuous - two methods to be described later - but the element of divine grace will be mingled with these. 'Goods' of grace are neither opposed

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1. Clearly, al-Ghazālī's conception of 'goods' of grace as a means of happiness has its source in philosophy; it is, however, developed by him and by Ispahānī in such a way that it has become a religious concept. Van den Bergh's statement ("Sources", p. 96), "The fourth category (i.e. the 'goods' of grace) is of course, wholly beyond the scope of stoicism" does not mean that it is not philosophic (in its origin); he means only that this category is absent in stoic philosophy.

2. Dhārī'a, p. 35.

3. Ibid, pp.44, 38, 35.

to the 'goods' of the soul in which all virtues are included nor independent of them, but are complementary to them; they help the acquisition of 'goods' of the soul through effort and habituation. True, however, while explaining habituation and association as the methods of acquiring virtues al-Ghazālī does not mention divine grace; but he does mention it while explaining training in individual virtues and good acts. Since the means nearest to happiness are knowledge and action it is necessary to explain their meaning and the effect they produce in the soul.

Knowledge and Action as the Two Primary Means to Happiness.

Since the 'goods' of the soul are, according to al-Ghazālī, the primary means to happiness and since these are reducible to knowledge (ʿilm) and action (ʿamal) these constitute the primary requirements of happiness. Without knowledge and action happiness cannot be attained. This view is maintained by al-Ghazālī throughout his whole life: it is set forth in his works composed both before<sup>1</sup> and after<sup>2</sup> his conversion to sūfīsm. Since this opinion is found in the Iljām, a work completed a few days before his death, it is plain that he retains it until his death. It cannot, therefore, be said that this view was held by him under the influence of philosophy before his conversion and rejected after it. The philosophers, he complains, did not emphasize action; they believe that knowledge alone is the means to their salvation and that action is not needed; he calls them deluded in this belief.<sup>3</sup> He also criticizes a class of religious scholars who

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1. M.ʿI., p. 295; M.ʿA., p. 3.      3. A.W., p.54.

2. I.D., IV, 309; K.S., pp.631, 632, 268, 70; A.D., pp.2, 293, M.D., p.34; B.H., pp.88, 113; A.W., p.58; J.Q., p.117; I.ʿA., p.45.

are busy acquiring knowledge but fall short of action and do not avoid sins; they think that in knowledge they have reached a stage when they will not be punished for neglecting action. The need for knowledge and action al-Ghazālī thinks to be a fundamental teaching of the Qur'ān for both are mentioned in most of the verses containing references to Paradise; in a few of such verses only knowledge or 'faith' is mentioned, but he says that action also is implicit in them. In the Jawāhir<sup>1</sup> he classifies Qur'ānic verses into those concerned with knowledge and those concerning action. He believes that by means of knowledge and action man ascends from the rank of lower animals to that of those who behold the beauty of God's glorious face.<sup>2</sup>

The meaning of knowledge and action is clear in al-Ghazālī's ethics. The ordinary man in the Islamic community understands by actions only the specific devotional acts prescribed by the Shari'ā. In the Qur'ān and Tradition action means any kind of good deed whether related to man's outward (zahir) or inward (bātin) self; the latter, however, is less elaborately described because all people cannot accomplish it; the former is regarded as very comprehensive since it includes the devotional acts as well as all the good deeds done in different walks of life - domestic, social and political. Muslim jurists (fuqahā') emphasize the acts of the outward self in all the walks of life with total disregard of the inward. The sufis equally emphasize both kinds of action with the only exception of that concerned with politics; they elaborate the action of the inward self/briefly treated in the Shari'ā and give it the shape of a compact theory

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1. pp. 6, 52.

2. A.D., p. 293.

linking it with their conception of otherworldly happiness. The word action in al-Ghazālī's sufi ethics, therefore, has a very wide connotation: it includes actions of the outward self (al-a'māl az-zāhira) and actions of the inward self (al-a'māl al-bātina). Each of them has two sub-divisions. The two divisions of the former are devotional acts (ʿibādāt) exclusively directed towards God and the good acts to be performed in one's life in the family and society but not in politics for politics is outside the domain of al-Ghazālī's ethics. The two sub-divisions of the latter are the action of purifying the soul (tazkiyat al-qalb) from evil character-traits and the action of beautifying (tahallī) it with good qualities. These four kinds of actions form the whole of the practical aspect of al-Ghazālī's ethics<sup>1</sup> and these will be treated separately in the present study.

Each kind of action is sometimes described by al-Ghazālī in terms of grades whose number at times rises even up to five but is reducible to two, lower and higher. The lower grade of teachings is intended for the lower category of the virtuous who will attain the lower grade of happiness. The higher grade is meant for the few who will achieve the higher grade of happiness. A great difference exists between the two grades of actions and between their motives: sometimes good actions of the lower class of the virtuous are evil actions for the few (hasanāt al-abrār sayyi'āt al-muqarrabin). The former group's motive is the attainment of the sensual pleasures of Paradise and that of the latter is the vision of the Lord of Paradise. This division of good people by al-Ghazālī is in line with that of his sufi predecessors.

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1. A.D., p.6. Sometimes, however, the term action is used in a restricted sense of devotional act (ʿibāda) only; see I.D., II, 144.

Inspired by Qur'ānic teaching they made this distinction which began from as early as the time of a<sup>4</sup>-Sarrāj who categorized mankind into the worldlings, the religious and the elect.<sup>1</sup>

As for knowledge it is knowledge of God and knowledge of the path to Him. The former concerns the divine essence, attributes and works.<sup>2</sup> This is 'knowledge of revelation' usually called the science of gnosis (ʿilm al-maʿrifa).<sup>3</sup> God's works include all existences save Him; some of them form the world of sense perception and others, e.g. angels, souls etc. the unseen world.<sup>4</sup> Knowledge of God, His attributes and His works is the highest form of knowledge. Below this in excellence is knowledge of the world to come. 'Knowledge of revelation' falls outside the domain of al-Ghazālī's ethics and hence its discussion is irrelevant to the present study. Knowledge of the path to God concerns all the four kinds of action mentioned above and is set forth in some of his works. Without this knowledge actions cannot properly be performed. Although knowledge of revelation and knowledge of the path are both necessary for happiness, the former is fundamental; it is sometimes called the seed of happiness in the hereafter or happiness itself. One type of this knowledge is faith (īmān) which is sufficient for happiness<sup>5</sup> and is included in al-Ghazālī's ethics. The valid faith is that of the people of truth and sunna (ahl al-haqq waʿs-sunna); the faith of any other sect is heretical. Matters of faith are God's unity, sanctification, power, knowledge, will, hearing and seeing, speech and works. Faith in

1. Hujwirī, Kashf, p. 341.

2. J.Q., p. 5.

3. I.D., III, 334-35, IV, 258-59.

4. Ibid, pp.11-12.

5. Ibid, IV, 343.

divine unity is incomplete without the belief that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the last prophet sent to mankind and to jinns and that all the previous religions are nullified by him. Faith must also include belief in the Last Day and all that will happen on it as described in the Qur'ān and Tradition.<sup>1</sup> These beliefs form the basis of action. They also remain in the soul after man's death and will bring him happiness.

As there are grades in actions so too are there grades in faith. The lowest grade of faith is that which common men acquire from their parents, teachers and others without knowing any proof. This faith is of the lowest grade because it is usually mingled with minor errors which occur in its transmission. If the errors are in ~~the~~<sup>such</sup> fundamentals as God's oneness and Muhammad's prophethood the faith is completely wrong. The articles of faith are set forth in all al-Ghazālī's works dealing with his complete system of ethics. A higher grade of faith is that which is combined with knowledge of its simple proofs given in ar-Risālat al-Qudsiyya which is included in the Ihyā' as a chapter of its 'Book of Articles of Faith'. This grade of faith is stronger. At the highest grade of faith one knows its secret reality and complex proofs with deeper investigation, subtle questions and difficulties. These are discussed in al-Iqtisād fi'l-I'tiqād. This grade of faith is the strongest. The lowest grade ensures the lower grade of happiness and the two higher

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1. Ibid, I, 43, 81.

grades are required for the higher grade of happiness.<sup>1</sup>

The concept of knowledge and action as the primary means to happiness is linked with the concept of man's perfection (kamāl) and of his provision (zād) for the next life. It is for knowledge and action that the soul is brought to the world of body<sup>2</sup> and it is their highest grade which forms its perfection ensuring the higher happiness.<sup>3</sup> This is the logical consequence of al-Ghazālī's views on the nature of the soul as immortal and as having an especial characteristic. Man's differentia or the especial quality by which he is distinguished from the rest of creation lies in his capacity to know the realities of affairs; acquisition of knowledge, therefore, is the purpose of his creation; it is what makes him a human being and its neglect degrades him to the rank of the lower animals. Since the most excellent of all forms of knowledge is the knowledge of God, this must be regarded as man's perfection and provision for his future life.<sup>4</sup> Because the view that acquiring knowledge is the purpose of creation appears to contradict the Qur'ānic verse, "I only created the jinns and mankind that they might serve Me", al-Ghazālī, like Ḥujwirī,<sup>5</sup> explains the verse saying that knowledge also is included in it for service of God is impossible without knowing Him. In thus determining perfection by considering man's differentia al-Ghazālī

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1. A.D., pp.23-25. In the I. I., al-Ghazālī gives the gist of the science of mutakallimūn. He is satisfied with his exposition so that he regards it as deeper in investigation and nearer to knocking at the door of gnosis (ma'rifa) than the traditional kalām described in the works of mutakallimūn; see A.D., p.24. Jabre wrongly asserts (Certitude, p.88) that al-Ghazālī in this work "finds himself the prisoner of a terminology and of a complex of ideas which do not satisfy him".

2. I.D., III, 54.

3. Ibid, p. 311.

4. Ibid, pp.7-8; IV, 261.

5. Kashf, p.267.

is following the philosophic tradition. But, unlike the philosophers, he asserts that knowledge alone is not perfection in its entirety; action by which character is corrected and love of God is produced in the soul is also a part of perfection. It is true, however, that in some passages<sup>1</sup> knowledge alone is called perfection and 'provision'; this is because in these passages perfection and provision are determined by considering the soul's especial attribute and this attribute is knowledge.

The other method of determining 'provision' and perfection is by considering the eternal nature of the soul. Al-Ghazālī argues that since the soul is eternal and its permanent abode is the hereafter, that which will be useful to it there is to be reckoned as its 'provision' and the highest degree of that as its perfection. This concept of usefulness in the life to come is stressed more than that of man's differentia. This is evident from the fact that in the section entitled 'Real Perfection and Imaginary Perfection' knowledge is declared to be perfection only by making use of the former concept although in other places its being perfection is decided by the latter. Moreover, it is by applying the concept of usefulness in the hereafter that wealth, influence etc. are declared as false perfection. Emphasis upon this concept is laid in all al-Ghazālī's works dealing with perfection. Usefulness in the next life is also set forth as the criterion of goodness and value.<sup>2</sup>

By applying this concept al-Ghazālī shows that knowledge constitutes provision for the hereafter. He discusses this in

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1. I.D., III, 7-8, 2.

2. N.M., p.3; B.H., p.113; A.D., p.137; I.D., III, 244-46.

detail and concludes that knowledge of eternal entities (azaliyyāt) such as God, His attribute and His wisdom in His works and in the ordering of this world and the next is the real perfection for it remains perfect in the soul and will be useful in the future life in various ways. The same is also true of 'faith'.<sup>1</sup> By means of the concept of usefulness al-Ghazālī also shows that freedom from being enslaved to carnal desires (hurriyya) is also perfection for this is not affected by death. To call this freedom perfection is the same as calling action perfection for all the four kinds of action mentioned above concern this freedom; indeed this concern is sometimes made explicit by referring action to freedom.<sup>2</sup>

(There is however a place where repression of desire is said to concern only one kind of action, namely, purification from vices; this is the restricted function of repression). By the persistence of freedom i.e. action in the soul al-Ghazālī means their everlasting effect in it i.e. the qualities produced in it. This is why the existence of knowledge and action in the soul is sometimes described as the existence of three qualities. The first is purity of the soul from vices. This is the effect of the action of purification. The second is intimacy with God produced from continuous remembrance of Him. This is the effect of devotional acts. The third is love of God. Its theoretical cause is knowledge of Him and its practical cause is the action of beautifying the soul with good character-traits. These three qualities of the soul are those which cause happiness (mus'īdāt) in the life to come.<sup>3</sup>

Thus knowledge and good action are man's provision and

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1. Ibid, . 2. I.D., III, 311. 3. Ibid, pp.190-91.

perfection for it is these two which exist in the soul eternally. These are the good things mentioned in the Qur'ānic verse, "...and the ever-abiding, the good works, are better with your Lord in reward and better in expectation." All except knowledge (including 'faith') and action is left behind at death and must therefore be regarded as false perfection.<sup>1</sup> Faith and action, as already stated, have two grades, lower and higher. Any/one of these grades forms provision for the next life. Perfection, however, only refers to their higher grade which will cause higher happiness. To seek perfection is not required (wājib) of every individual; only the few can seek it. Seeking the lower grade is required of the majority of people. Their inability to ascend to the higher grade is the predestined will of God, for should all aspire after perfection and the world-order would be paralysed in which case perfection itself would vanish.<sup>2</sup> This idea is also found in al-Makkī's ethics;<sup>3</sup> he however did not apply it to the whole of his system.

Perfection is the same as nearness (qurb) to God and resemblance to the angels.<sup>4</sup> This nearness is qualitative and not spatial and is attainable in this life. There is, however, another meaning of nearness in al-Ghazālī: that which is attainable in the hereafter and which consists in closeness to God in Paradise gazing upon His glorious face forevermore.<sup>5</sup> Nearness is attainable in this life by acquiring the attributes of God and the angels. Since knowledge is one of their attributes by acquiring

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1. Ibid, 190, 311, 245-46; A.D., p.137; B.H., p.113; N.M., p.3.

2. I.D., III, 197.

3. Qūt, I, 5<sup>16</sup>

4. I.D., III, 244-45; A.D., p.138. 5. I.D., III, 245-56.

its highest form, which is knowledge of God, man draws near to Him and is included in the group of angels nearest to Him. Freedom from carnal desires is another attribute of God and the angels; this freedom in its complete form is impossible for man to attain, but by controlling these desires he can resemble God and the angels and be far from resembling the lower animals.<sup>1</sup> This freedom is in a sense identical with good action for by this control man can cling to the right path. By employing all his powers and organs in knowledge and action man resembles the angels.<sup>2</sup> Thus by the higher degree of knowledge and action nearness to God is achieved.<sup>3</sup> This nearness is regarded by al-Ghazālī as the goal of the sūfī path.<sup>4</sup> It is identical with reaching God (wāṣūl). By reaching he does not mean identification with God (ittisāl) or entrance into Him (hulūl) or the mingling of human nature (nāsūt) with divine nature (lāhūt) as the Christians believe; all these are erroneous views.<sup>5</sup> The truth is that one who attains to God approaches Him in quality.

The concept of knowledge and action as the primary means to happiness is also linked with that of the love of God since the latter is produced by the former.<sup>6</sup> The way the love of God is produced by them is mentioned by al-Ghazālī. He says that God possesses such qualities that one who knows Him cannot but love Him; love necessarily follows from knowledge<sup>7</sup> provided love of the world is not strong in the soul. The strength of love depends

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1. Ibid, pp.244-45, IV, 374; A.D., p.44. 2. I.D., III, 7-8.

3. Ibid, II, 144.

4. M.D., pp.60-61.

5. I.D., III, 350; IV, 263.

6. Ibid, IV, 145.

7. Ibid, 272, 273, 54, III, 190-91.

upon the strength of knowledge, the weakness of love of the world and the degree of intimacy with God produced from remembrance of Him.<sup>1</sup> Love of the lower class of the virtuous is weak because of weakness in their knowledge of God. They know Him as benefactor and love Him for His benefits like an 'evil slave' and hence their love increases and decreases according to the benefits they receive. The higher class of the virtuous apprehend God's majesty, perfection and beauty and love Him for these as do the angels. They are perfect. This view agrees with that of al-Junayd. Difference between the two classes of people in faith also causes difference in love.<sup>2</sup>

Action in its four forms results in love in the following way. The evil qualities of the soul are but its various aspects of its love of the world; so purification clears the soul from this love and thus makes it fit for the love of God.<sup>3</sup> As a result<sup>of</sup> beautification with good qualities the soul is inclined towards God and is removed from the world. Continuity in devotional acts is in effect continuity in remembrance of God and reflection on Him from which results strengthening of 'faith' and intimacy with and love of God and also indifference to the world.<sup>4</sup> Since there are two grades of action there are two grades of love. Difference in love will cause difference in happiness in the life to come.<sup>5</sup>

Love of God and the Prophet, al-Ghazālī says, is emphasized in the Qur'ān and Tradition. The ṣūfīs from al-Ḥasan's time were stressing this teaching of the Shari'ah. Muslim philosophers spoke

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1. Ibid, 145, 248-59, 272, 273.      2. Ibid, IV, 274-75.

3. Ibid, 19-20, III, 190-91.

4. Ibid, IV, 151, III, 190-91.

5. Ibid, IV, 274-75.

of love of God but did not emphasize it; influenced by Greek thought they called perfection in knowledge the ideal of life. Some theologians even denied the possibility of love of God and interpreted the Sharīf'a's teaching on this subject as meaning obedience to God. Al-Ghazālī refutes them more successfully than al-Makki did and, like his sūfī predecessors, declares the love of God to be the ideal of life.<sup>1</sup> He urges men not to die without loving God for it is to Him that everyone goes back after death and the more beloved he makes Him in this life the greater will be his joy in the next in meeting Him.<sup>2</sup> The soul is created to acquire the love of God.<sup>3</sup> The more an act promotes this love the greater is its moral worth. To love God more than any other is enough, but perfect love is very intense and is called passionate love (‘ishq) i.e. the extreme love. This is equivalent to the highest perfection and to nearness to God. At this highest stage of love visions and mystic intuitions occur. Intense love, the ideal of the sūfīs, was possessed by the Prophet before he received prophethood so that, seeing him mostly alone in worship in the cave of Hira, the beduins used to say - Muḥammad passionately loved his Lord.<sup>4</sup> By knowledge and action man acquires passionate love by which he ascends to the rank of the passionate lovers among the angels who have always been engaged in studying the beauty of God's face glorifying Him and sanctifying Him.<sup>5</sup>

When such a relationship between man and God develops he experiences the state of annihilation (fana') and hence this state

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1. Ibid, 252, 156. 2. Ibid, 145; A.D., p.284. 3. I.D., p.54.

4. Ibid, II, 247; M.D., p.62; Arberry, Sufism, pp.37, 42, 45.

5. A.D., pp.293-303.

is also called by al-Ghazālī the goal of the mystic path.<sup>1</sup> The gist of his concept of annihilation is that at this stage a lover of God is sometimes so much engrossed in the contemplation of his beloved that he forgets everything except Him; he is even unconscious of himself and his own conditions; "I mean that he forgets them ... and I do not mean by his annihilation the annihilation of his body but the annihilation of his mind."<sup>2</sup> Annihilation of the mind is the cessation of its awareness of all else but God; so everything else is nothing (nistī, fanā') for him; since God alone is subsistent (bāqī) in his awareness he says, 'All are God'; this is divine unity (tawhīd). Thus the highest stage is called annihilation or nothingness when it is related to existences other than God, and oneness when related to God.<sup>3</sup> This state al-Ghazālī says as Hujwirī does,<sup>4</sup> passes away like a flash of lightning; it does not persist because man cannot tolerate it; visions and mystical intuitions occur in this state. It is expressed by such phrases as complete annihilation (fanā' kullī) and annihilation in divine unity (fanā' fī at-tawhīd). This does not mean 'entrance', 'mingling', 'identification', 'incarnation', etc.; all these are wrong.<sup>5</sup> There is no pantheism in al-Ghazālī. God is other than His creature and must remain so. Annihilation does not mean loss of identity; rather identity is perfected by it. Subsistence does not indicate subsistence of God in man.

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1. M.D., pp.60-61; K.S., pp.382, 640. 2. I.D., II, 256, 257.

3. K.S., pp.382-83.

4. Kashf, pp.226-27.

5. K.S., p.383; I.D., II, 257. In many of his works al-Ghazālī exposes the errors in these views. The same has also been done by Hujwirī in his Kashf pp.37, 243, 244, 254. For pantheism cf. Upper, "Nature", pp.28-30, 31, 32.

Nature of Character

The problem of good character (husn al-khuluq) is a central topic of moral philosophy. Proper appreciation of this problem and many others related to it depends on an understanding of what character itself is. Some of the moralists who preceded al-Ghazālī realised this dependence and accordingly in their ethical works dealt elaborately with the real nature (ḥaqīqa) of character and the possibility or otherwise of change in it; others either did not discuss these problems at all or discussed them in a manner not satisfactory. Aristotle treated the problem of character but his treatment is not considered to be satisfactory.<sup>1</sup> In Plato's dialogues no explicit theory of character is to be found. Hellenistic philosophers, however, were convinced that Plato had built up a close and complete philosophical system and had been aware of every problem touched on by later Greek philosophers. They expected him to have answered questions which had not existed for him and succeeded in discovering passages in the dialogues to provide the necessary answers. They deduced a theory of character (as they did some other theories) from numerous passages of the dialogues and this was done from the first century B.C. and taken over by later Platonizing moralists like Galen (d.199 A.D.). Galen presented a coherent theory of character in the four books of his De Moribus. The first book of this work deals with the nature of character and the problem of the change in it. The Stoic philosophers also took some interest in these problems.<sup>2</sup> Among the Muslim philosophers who flourished before al-Ghazālī, Miskawayh was perhaps the only thinker to discuss these subjects fairly elaborately. He mentioned the Greek philosophers' views on them and set forth his own opinion in the form of a syllogism.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, among al-Ghazālī's predecessors from the ṣūfīs ar-Rāghib al-

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1. Walzer, "New Light on Galen's Moral Philosophy", CQ, XLIII (1949) included in his Greek, p. 146. 2. Ibid, pp. 143-145, 150.  
3. Tahdhib, pp.31-34.

Ispahānī was the only man to take <sup>an</sup> interest in these problems. In his Dharī'a he tried to explain the differences among such words as character (khuluq), habit ('āda), nature (tab'ā') and natural disposition (saiyya) and also to reconcile two opposing views on the question of change in character.1 Al-Ghazālī complains that 'Alī ibn-abū-Tālib, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Sahl at-Tustarī, Wāsītī, Shāh al-Kirmānī, abū-'Uthmān, Ḥusayn ibn-Mansūr, abū-Sa'īd al-Kharrāj and others talked about the nature of good character, but what in reality they spoke of was the result of good character and not the nature of good character or the nature of character itself.2 So he proceeds to discuss at length what is meant by character before explaining what he understands by good character.

Al-Ghazālī defines character as "an established (rāsikha) state in the soul (ḥay'ā fi n-nafs) from which actions proceed easily (bi saḥūla was yusr), without any need of reflection (fikr) and deliberation (rawi'ya)".3 If this state is such that praiseworthy actions proceed from it, it is called good character; if blameworthy actions arise from it, it is termed as evil character. Character, then, does not refer to one's external behaviour; it is something internal; it is a state of the soul. But any state of the soul cannot be called character; a state, in order to be character, must be established and settled in the soul. A transient condition of the soul cannot be called character, because a person who gives wealth to the poor occasionally or for some accidental cause is not said to possess the character trait of generosity (khuluq as-sakhā'); he is said to possess it if the quality of giving wealth has become a relatively permanent disposition of his soul as a result of his constant practice of it in various situations.4 This aspect of relative permanence was also emphasized in Miskawayh's definition of character. It is true that he did not qualify the phrase "state" of the soul" (ḥāl an-nafs) with the word rāsikha as al-Ghazālī

1. Dharī'a, pp.28-30. 2. I.D., III, 46; K.S., pp.28-29.  
 3. I.D., III, 46; cf. Miskawayh, Tahdhīb, p.31; Naṣir ad-Dīn Ṭūsī, Akhlāq-i-Nāsiri, Lahore, 1923, p.60; Jalāl ad-Dīn Dawwānī, Akhlāq-i-Jalālī, Lahore, 1923, p.41. 4. Ibid. 5. Tahdhīb, p.31.

does, but from his explanation<sup>5</sup> of the term "state" it is clear that he meant by it a state that becomes stable by habit and self-discipline; instead of using the word hāl he sometimes used words like hayʿa,<sup>1</sup> sajjiyya,<sup>2</sup> and malaka<sup>3</sup> - terms which have in them some sense of permanence. This aspect of permanence has also been emphasized in later times by at-Ṭūsī and ad-Dawwānī. In their definitions they have preferred the use of the phrase malaka fi n-nafs to Miskawayh's phrase hāl an-nafs, because the word malaka means a hayʿa (state) of the soul which has a tendency to persist, whereas hāl stands for a condition of the soul that is easy to change. An established state of the soul to which the term character refers should, al-Ghazālī says, be such that actions proceed from it easily and spontaneously. Actions arising from it are spontaneous reactions to environmental situations. The act of generosity, for instance, is the spontaneous outflow of sympathy from the mind of a benevolent person; it is an inner urge that manifests itself automatically in a relevant situation; it needs no constraining consciousness of duty nor any mathematical calculation of consequences. If actions proceed from a state of the soul, not easily, but with difficulty and after reflection and deliberation, the state cannot be character, for a man who experiences difficulty in spending money in good causes is not regarded as one possessing the character trait of generosity; one who feels difficulty in keeping silent when angry is not called clement.<sup>4</sup> The condition that actions must proceed easily has also been mentioned in the definitions of character given by Miskawayh, at-Ṭūsī and ad-Dawwānī.

As to the reason why character should refer to a state of the soul and not to outward action or to any other thing, al-Ghazālī states that should one wish to determine what character really is, four possible meanings of it come to the mind.<sup>5</sup> They are (1) action (fiʿl), good and bad, (2) power (qudra) for doing

1. As-Saʿāda, Egypt, 1928, p.46; Al-Hawāmil wa sh-Shawāmil, ed. Ahmad Amin and Sayyid Ahmad Saqar, Cairo, 1951, p.86.

2. Saʿāda, p.44. 3. Ṭuhf, p.31; Hawāmil, p.86.

4. I.D., III, 46; cf. Aristotle, Ethics, pp.48-49. 5. Ibid 46-47; cf. ibid.

what is good and what is evil, (3) knowledge (ma'rifa) of good and evil, and (4) a state (hay'a) of the soul which makes one inclined to good or to evil and by which one's doing it becomes easy and interesting. Now action cannot be character; it is identical with conduct or what is called behaviour in modern psychology; it is the outward expression of character and not character itself. A man who spends money for a good cause, when he has money, is regarded by all to have a generous character even when he becomes unable to spend money either because he has no money now or because of some other obstacle. If action is the same as character, he cannot be called generous for the reason that he is not performing the act of giving money, whereas no one hesitates to call him generous; if a generous man fails to do a generous deed in a particular situation, no one says that he has thereby become miserly. Again, a person who has the character-trait of miserliness sometimes spends money in order to make a show or to fulfil some other motive. If action is character, he should be called generous when he is spending money for these reasons, whereas no one calls him a generous man. From these two cases it is clear that action itself is not character. Nor can character be the same as the power for performing good and bad actions, because the relation of this power to good and bad - two contradictory phenomena - is the same. One who has the power to do good has the power to do evil also, but one who possesses one character-trait cannot simultaneously possess the opposite of it. By nature all men possess the power of doing good and evil; power is innate, whereas character is acquired by effort and appropriate discipline. Character is either good or bad, whereas power is neither; power is amoral and not moral. Nor can character be identical with the knowledge of good and evil, for this is knowledge, like power, is related to good and bad in the same manner. The reasons for which power cannot be character are the reasons for which knowledge cannot be so. If neither action ~~nor~~ <sup>nor power</sup> knowledge is the same as character, what is left of the four possible meanings of it + i.e. a state of the soul - must be its true meaning. Character then is a state of the soul from which actions arise easily; if actions proceeding from it are praiseworthy to reason and to the Shari'a, character is to be considered

as good; if they are blameworthy, character should be reckoned as evil. Character is man's internal form (as-sūra al-bātina), while his external form (as-sūra al-zāhira) is what is constituted by his various organs.<sup>1</sup>

#### Can Character be Changed?

Al-Ghazali maintains that character can be changed by effort and appropriate discipline. In all his ethical works he lays stress upon the need for improving character, and in some of them he discusses in detail the ways in which a complete change in it can be effected. He believes that the main function of morality and religion lies in guiding people in such a manner that they may refine their character and be able to attain happiness in this world as well as in the next. Following Ispahānī, he argues that if character is regarded as something that is not subject to change, all commandments and admonitions, encouragement and threatening would be useless. The Prophet said, "Beautify your character"; if it really were not possible surely it would not have been commanded. Besides, all admit that change of disposition among animals is possible; a beast of prey is changed from wildness to domesticity; a dog is changed from a devourer to a being of good manner (ta'addub); a horse is changed from refractoriness to gentleness. Each one of these is a change in disposition. If change of character among animals is possible, the correction of man, with his predominance of reason, should obviously be easier and more possible.<sup>2</sup>

Some people deny that there can be any change in disposition. The arguments that they put forward rest, al-Ghazali says, upon their assumption that what is natural (tab'ī) cannot be changed by any means.<sup>3</sup> Their arguments are two in number which he reproduces and endeavours to refute. He, however, does not say who

1. Ibid; K.S., p.429.

2. I.D., III, 48; K.S., p.432; cf. Ispahānī, Dharī'a, p.29; Miskawayh, Tahdhīb, pp.32,34; Hawāmīl, p. 119.

3. I.D., III,48.

these deniers of change are. <sup>o</sup>One of those who are in his mind might be Galen whose view Miskawayh discussed in his Tahdhīb. Galen believed that <sup>a</sup>few persons are good by nature and they later do not become bad; many are bad by nature and they later do not become good; some people are neither good nor bad by nature and they later become good or bad by moral education. He expressed this view after refuting the opinions of the Stoics and of some philosophers who preceded them. The Stoics maintained that all men are by nature good but are afterwards corrupted by bad surroundings and dominated by wicked passions which cannot be tamed by discipline. Some philosophers before the Stoics taught that men are by nature bad but they become good later; however, those among them who are extremely bad cannot be reformed.<sup>1</sup>

The first argument of those who have denied the possibility of change in character is that man has an external form constituted by his various organs, and an internal form which is the same as his character. The external form is incapable of change; one who is tall cannot be made short and vice versa; one who is ugly to look at cannot be made beautiful. The internal form is like the external form and is, therefore, incapable of change. They have referred to the saying, "God ceased from creation" (faragha Allāhu min al-khalq). Consequently they say that the desire for a change in character is equivalent to the desire for a change in what God has created. Their second argument is that if change in evil character be possible it has to be effected by completely suppressing man's appetites, anger and love for the world. But experience has shown that complete suppression of these is an impossibility so long as man is alive, for they are rooted in his nature and temperament (māzāj). To make efforts for bringing about a change in disposition, then, is only to waste time.<sup>2</sup>

To al-Ghazālī these two arguments are erroneous. All existences (mawjūdāt), he points out, are of two kinds. "The first kind includes that which has a created nature that requires no action on our part; as for example the heavens, the stars, the members of our bodies and their separate parts and so many things

1. Miskawayh, Tahdhīb, pp.32-33; cf. Walzer, "Aspects", pp.160-61

2. I.D., III, 48; K.S., p.429

that take place around us. The second kind includes what God has created with a capacity to take on perfection whenever it finds the proper condition for development. But in the process of this development there is an act of choice. In the case of the date-stone, it is neither an apple nor a date, but it does have the capacity to become a date. As a matter of experience, however, it becomes a date only when human choice is exercised. Now in their first argument, the deniers of change are, al-Ghazālī observes, right in saying that man's external form cannot be changed, for it certainly belongs to that kind of existences which are created perfect. But they are wrong in taking the internal form, character, to be analogous to the external form and thereby concluding that the former, like the latter, cannot be altered. The truth is that the internal form is included in that kind of existences which are created imperfect but are provided with the capacity to take on perfection whenever they find the proper condition for development. Every individual is created with certain potentialities some of which are manifested even in the early years of his childhood, but these are not his character or settled ways of his behaviour. They are raw materials, so to say, and not finished products; they are potentialities and not actualities. They can be developed, moulded and cast into set or definite patterns by subsequent education and habituation. But these cannot be changed into completely other traits, however much effort may be made to do so, as a date stone may be developed into a date but never into an apple. Character, then, is susceptible to change in the sense that capacities created by God can be realised and developed and not that they can be made into other dispositions by effort and discipline.<sup>1</sup>

In their second argument, the deniers of change have, al-Ghazālī says, rightly held that the appetites, etc., are natural to man and are quite incapable of complete suppression,

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1. I.D., III; 48; K.S., p. 432; cf. Ispahānī, Dhari'g, pp.29-30 Miskawayh, Tahdhib, pp.31; Aristotle, Ethics, pp. 41-42.

but they made a mistake in maintaining that the change in character necessitates uprooting them completely.<sup>1</sup> The fact is that change demands not their complete uprooting, but their subjection to the extent of moderation (i'tidāl) and the taming of these by earnest effort and discipline, and men are able to accomplish this. It is to this task that men are commanded and it is this that has come to be a condition of their happiness. The appetites and anger are necessary for man's survival and this is why they are created in him. So their complete suppression can never be necessary in the modification of character. How can their total annihilation be necessary when they were present in prophets who were men of the highest form of character? While describing the believers' attributes God said in the Qur'ān, "Those who restrain their anger" and not "Those who lack anger"; if the uprooting of anger were needed God would have said, "Those who lack anger". All these prove that the total suppression of man's lower nature is not necessary. What is needed is to suppress it to the state of moderation. That to subdue it to this state is possible is evident from experience and observation.<sup>2</sup>

Although all men are capable of changing their character, everyone cannot do so in equal time and in equal measure. Some are rapid in accepting the change, while others are slow. This is a plain fact and this was admitted by all those who believe in the possibility of change in character, like Aristotle,<sup>3</sup> Iskawayh<sup>4</sup> and Isfahānī.<sup>5</sup> Keeping in view people's differences in this regard, al-Shazālī, following Isfahānī in toto, has grouped mankind in four stages.<sup>6</sup> The first are headless people (al-insān al-shufī) who do not distinguish truth from falsehood or good from evil. They lack conviction as they were lacking it at their birth. Their appetites are not strengthened for they have not indulged in them. Thus the character of any one of this kind of men may become good in but a short time. "The men who are at the second stage are those who know well enough the baseness of what is base, but they do not become habituated in good conduct because they consider that their evil conduct is something enjoy-

1. I.D., III, 49; A.S., p.432. 2. I.D. III, 443. 3. Iskawayh, Tahdhib, p.33  
4. Ibid, p.34-35. 5. Dhari'ā, p.48. 6. I.D., III, p. 49-53

able. As a consequence they engage in it submissively, in accordance with their desires, but contrary to their better judgement. As a result the situation of those in this stage is much more difficult than that of those in the first stage, for they are more at fault... On the whole they may be said to be capable of exercising this discipline, but it requires strenuous effort. Those in the third stage actually approve of base dispositions, maintaining that they are necessary, right and beautiful. So they pursue them wholeheartedly. It is almost impossible for men in this third stage to be cured. In fact there is no hope for them, except in the rarest instances, for their opportunities for error are being constantly increased. The fourth kind are those who, along with what accompanies corrupt belief and practice, see also a sort of virtue in their very excess of evil and destruction of lives. In this they vie with one another, and they think they gain fame by the amount of evil they accomplish. It will be seen that they are the most difficult of the four stages, and it is of them that it has been said, 'It is a real torture for anyone to have to train a wolf to be well-bred, or to wash blackhair-cloth to make it white'.<sup>1</sup>

#### Good Character

As noted above, man has two forms - one is external and the other internal - and his character, according to al-Ghazālī, refers to the latter, or to an established state of the soul from which actions easily proceed. Each of these two forms may be in good or bad condition. The external form is considered to be completely good when all the organs of the body which constitute it are good (ḥasīn) and harmoniously developed. If some of them, for example the ears only, are good the external form is regarded good only in respect of the organ which is good. In exactly the same manner, the internal form of character cannot be completely good unless all the parts (arkān) or faculties or powers (quwā) of the soul are good and sound (sālih). If one or more, but not

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1. Ibid. cf. Ispahānī, Dharīʿa, p.48

all, of these faculties are good, character will be said to be good only in respect of the appropriate faculty or faculties. To al-Ghazālī, then goodness in character depends on one's inner faculties being good, sound, straight (istiwā') moderate (i'tidāl) and mutually harmonious (tanāsub).<sup>1</sup>

Man's inner faculties are, according to al-Ghazālī, four, namely, the cognitive which is reason, the appetitive, the irascible and "the faculty of maintaining justice among these three faculties".<sup>2</sup> Each of these faculties may be in good or bad state. The cognitive faculty is in a sound state if it can easily distinguish between true and false in speeches (aqwāl), between right and wrong in belief (i'tiqād) and between good and evil in works (af'āl). From this state of this faculty wisdom (hikma) is achieved. The irascible faculty is in a sound condition if it obeys the dictates of reason and the Shari'ah, if it spreads or contracts according as they order it to do. From this state of this faculty the quality of courage (shīā'a) is achieved. Likewise, the appetitive faculty is in a good condition if it yields to reason and the Shari'ah. From this state of this faculty temperance (ṣiffa) is achieved.<sup>3</sup> The faculty of justice is in a sound condition if it is able to control the faculties of anger and appetite according to the dictates of reason and the Shari'ah; it is a power (qudra) which, like an officer, enforces ~~JS~~ their orders on the other faculties. From this state of this faculty the virtue of justice (ʿadl) is achieved. Thus justice is the name of a faculty as well as of the virtue of that faculty.<sup>4</sup> No thinkers before al-Ghazālī seem to have thought of it in this way; they regarded it not as a faculty but as a virtue of the entire soul, which comes about when all the three faculties function in moderation and in mutual harmony, surrendering themselves willingly to reason.<sup>5</sup> If all the four faculties, al-Ghazālī/ says, are in a

1. I.D., III, 47; K.S., p. 429. 2. See supra, # 47-53  
 3. I.D., III, 47; K.S., p. 429; cf. Miskawayh, Tahdhib, p. 16; Avicenna, Akhlāq, pp. 152-53; Sa'āda, p. 19; Isbahānī, Dhari'ah pp. 27, 22. 4. I.D., III, 49; K.S., pp. 429-30.  
 5. Miskawayh, Tahdhib, p. 16; Akhlāq, p. 153; Sa'āda, p. 19. Avicenna,

good and sound state<sup>1</sup>, character is absolutely good; if all of them are in<sup>a</sup> bad condition<sup>2</sup>, character is absolutely bad; if some of them function soundly character will be good in proportion to the faculties which function in a proper manner<sup>1</sup>.

If a faculty of the soul is not in a sound state its working either exceeds the proper limit or falls short of it.<sup>2</sup> "What is the proper limit? Each faculty, save that of justice, has, for al-Ghazālī, two extremes (atrāf) - one of excess (ifrāt) and the other of deficiency (tafrīt) - and a state between these two. This middle state is called the mean (al-wast). It is farthest removed from the two extremes; it is at equal distance from them both.<sup>3</sup> It is identical with moderation.<sup>34</sup> The mean is the proper state in which every faculty of the soul should remain. It is what is praiseworthy in character and necessary for all to observe, while the two extremes are blameworthy and should be avoided. The mean is virtue (al-fadīla), while the two extremes are two vices (radhīlatān).<sup>4</sup> Virtue occurs as a result of the sound functioning of the soul's faculty; its sound functioning consists in its working with the mean or moderation. So one can define virtue as that quality of the soul which disposes it to work on the mean. Mean is the essence of virtue; deviation from it to any one of the two extremes is the essence of vice. If the cognitive faculty surpasses the mean, i.e. it is used in fulfilling the wrong ends (al-aghṛāḍ al-fāsīda), the vice of wickedness (khubṭh) occurs; if it falls short of the mean, the vice of folly (bulḥa) is found; if it is on the mean the virtue of wisdom is achieved. If the irascible faculty crosses the mean over, the vice of rashness (tahawwur) is generated; if it falls short of the mean, the vice of cowardice (jubn) comes about; if it is at the state of the mean the virtue of courage occurs. If the appetitive faculty is at its excess it begets the vice of greed (sharāḥ); if it is deficient the vice of the

<sup>1</sup>2. K.S., p.430; I.D., III, 47. <sup>2</sup>3. I.D., III, 55 line 4; cf. Miskawayh, Tahdhīb, p. 25. <sup>3</sup>34. Ibid, III, 47; cf. Kindī, Rasā'il I, 179. <sup>4</sup>5. I.D., III, <sup>47</sup>line 18; K.S., p.430; cf. Miskawayh, Tahdhīb, p.25; Avicenna, Akhtāq, pp.153-159; Sa'āda, p.19; Kindī, Rasā'il, I, 178-179.

complete absence of appetite (jumūd) is found; if it is at the mean state the virtue of temperance is attained. The faculty of justice does not have two extremes; it has only one opposite which is oppression (jawr). Should this faculty fail to work soundly the vice of oppression occurs; should it function well the virtue of justice is achieved.<sup>1</sup> Thus justice is not a mean between two extremes. For Miskawayh, however, it was a mean between oppressing others (zulm) and being oppressed by others (inzilām).<sup>2</sup>

Then, good character results from the observance of the mean or moderation. But why should the mean be observed? Aristotle and Muslim philosophers found the prescribing authority of the mean in man's faculty of reason; to them the working of the soul keeping to the position of the mean and its functioning in accordance with the dictates of reason are the same thing; <sup>the</sup> mean is the quality of any action that is in accord with reason. Al-Ghazālī does not deny that reason prescribes the mean; but he relies for this theory mainly upon the Shari'ā. He states that in the Qur'ān and Traditions it is the mean which is recommended.<sup>3</sup> Those who observe it in spending money are praised in the verse, "And they, who when they spend are neither extravagant nor parsimonious, and (keep) between these the just mean". In another verse God commanded men to be moderate in spending - "And do not make your hand to be shackled to your neck nor stretch it forth to the utmost (limit) of its stretching forth". In the following verse men are prohibited to exceed the limit in satisfying their appetites for food; "And eat and drink and be not extravagant; surely He does not love the extravagant". In regard to anger God said the believers are "Firm of hearts against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves". The Prophet said, "Goodness of things is their mean". Men are thus commanded by the Shari'ā to create and maintain in themselves an attitude between two vicious

1. Ibid, cf. Miskawayh, Tahdhīb, pp.26-28; Kindi, Rasā'il, I, 178; Ispahānī, Dhari'ā, p.22.

2. Tahdhīb, p.28. 3. I.D., III, 49-50; R.S., p.431.

extremes. The idea of the mean is central in the teachings of the Qur'an and Tradition.<sup>1</sup>

But why does the Shari'a prescribe the mean in character? There is, al-Ghazali replies, a secret and real reason (sirr wa tahqiq) for this. The reason is that man's attainment of salvation in the next world is dependent upon his possessing the angelic attributes, for his substance is the same as that of the angels and the place of his origin is the angelic world; in this world of water and clay he is merely a stranger. During his temporary sojourn in this world his soul acquires some qualities which, on its going back to God, keep it from being one with the angels in respect of quality and deprive it of salvation. It is necessary, therefore, that it should go back to God with the angelic attributes and bear no attribute other than this. What is the angelic attribute? The angels have no attachment to anything of this world; they are deep in their love for God and concentrate on nothing other than God. If one goes back with a soul not free from attachment to the world, one will not be entitled to salvation, as God said, "...except him who came to God with heart free". This freedom from attachment is attained by observing the mean. To take an example, if a man is a miser he busies himself with not spending money; if he is extravagant he remains busy with spending it; in either case his soul is attached to money, a thing of this world, whereas what is demanded of him is that his soul should not be attached to it. So, the soul should be free from both the qualities - spending and not spending. But since this is a thing utterly impossible for it to realise in this world, it has to do what is the nearest and most resembling to it and the remotest from the two qualities. This is the mean. Observance of the mean in spending money is, in a sense, equivalent to complete freedom from both qualities - the way the water which is neither too hot nor too cold, but is between the two, is said to be free from both heat and cold. Then if man is on the mean in spending money his soul remains free from

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1. Cf. Fazlur Rahman, "The Quranic Conception of God, the Universe and Man", Is, VI (1967), p.12.

attachment to money. If he follows the mean always and in all his affairs, his soul will be free from all the things of this world. Such a pure soul will be able to attain salvation. This is the reason why the Shari'a asked people to observe the mean.<sup>1</sup>

To observe the real mean (al-wast al-haqiqi), however, is not an easy task. The difficulty involved in it was recognised<sup>2</sup> by many of those who propounded this theory. Al-Ghazali says that the real mean is extremely obscure (ghayab al-ghāib). It is one in every disposition and action, while deviation from it may take many forms which are different vices. The mean is, as it were, sharper than the edge of a sword and thinner than a hair. It is the same as the right path (al-ṣirāt al-mustaqīm) which should be followed by all. Without help from God none can follow it, and this is the reason why the Shari'a made it obligatory on every sane adult person to seek help from God for it seventeen times a day - once in each rak'a of the obligatory part of ritual prayer. So difficult it is to keep to the right path that even the Prophet himself was afraid of deviating from it. This fear of his found its expression in his assertion that the sūra Hūd caused his hair to grow white, for in this sūra he was commanded to be firm on the right way (istiqāma) and not to exceed the limit. Those who follow the right path, the mean, will be able to cross the Bridge (al-ṣirāt) in the next world which is also sharper than the edge of a sword and thinner than a hair. It is because of their deviation from the mean that most people will fall from the Bridge into the gulf of Hell-fire; those who are believers amongst them will, however, be later delivered from Hell after they have suffered punishment in proportion to their deviation from the mean.<sup>3</sup>

Then, each faculty of the soul has its own virtue which appears if the faculty functions keep to the position of the mean. Wisdom is the virtue of the rational soul, courage of the spirited, temperance of the appetitive and justice of the justice.

1. I.D., III, 50, 55; R.S., p.437. 2. Miskawayh, Tahdhib, p.25; Aristotle, Ethics, pp.52,59. 3. I.D., III, 55; R.S., pp.430-31.

Wisdom is the highest of all virtues; God said in the Qur'an, "Whoever is granted wisdom he indeed is given a great good". These four virtues are, as it were, the four pillars of good character.<sup>1</sup> Following Isḥāhānī, al-Ghazālī tries to show that the fact of their being what forms good character is hinted at in the Qur'an. Describing the believers' attributes God said, "The believers are only those who believe in God and His Apostle; then they doubt not and struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in the way of God; they are the truthful ones". Belief in God and His Apostle as mentioned here is a consequence of reason; this is the highest form of the virtue of wisdom. To fight in God's way with wealth is possible when the appetitive faculty is brought under the subjection of reason; so fighting with wealth as mentioned in this verse hints at the virtue of temperance. To fight in God's path with life is clearly the virtue of courage. Praising the prophet and his companions God said, "Firm of heart against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves". It is clear in this verse that for firmness is a place and for compassion also is a place; one should not be firm in all conditions nor should one be compassionate in all. This indicates the virtue of justice.<sup>2</sup>

These four virtues are conceived of as ~~very~~ comprehensive. They are considered to be the root (asūl) virtues from which stem a number of virtues which may be called minor or subordinate or secondary virtues. The relation between the minor and the major virtues is thought by al-Ghazālī to be like the one between the root and the branches (furū', shākh).<sup>3</sup> Minor virtues are the manifestations of major virtues. This same relation exists between the root vices which are the opposites of the root virtues and the minor vices which are the manifestations of the root vices in various situations. Miskawayh, however, conceived of the relation as the one between genus (ajnās) and species (aswāf).<sup>4</sup>

1. I.D., III, 47,48; K.S., p.431; cf. Rāḍī, Maḥṣū'īl, I, 177-78; Miskawayh, Tahdhīb, pp.16-17.

2. I.D., III, 48; cf. Isḥāhānī, Ḍharī'ā, p.27.

3. Ibid; K.S., p.431. 4. Tahdhīb, pp.16-17,18,191-193.

Wisdom, al-Ghazālī says, manifests itself in the form of the following virtues; good management which includes the management of oneself, one's family and one's society, acute intelligence (adh-dhihn), sagacious judgement, right conjecture, apprehending the subtleties of actions and the hidden evil qualities of the soul. From the vice of folly result vices like stupidity, insanity and little experience in affairs despite the soundness of the faculty of imagination. The difference between stupidity and insanity is that a stupid person's object of desire is right but his way of reaching it is wrong; an insane person desires to do what he should not do and so his desired object and his way of reaching it are both wrong. The manifestations of the vice of wickedness are deceit, deception and the like. Courage manifests itself in the form of the following virtues: liberty, self-reliance in the face of danger, chivalry in leading to a striving after higher ends, considering oneself insignificant, physical exertion for achieving moral ideals, forbearance, firmness in meeting fear-inspiring situations, restraining the anger, soberness and acquiring the love of equals or elders by pleasing manner and good action. From rashness follow vices like boasting, haughtiness, self-admiration, extravagance and arrogance. The manifestations of the vice of cowardice are despair, humiliation, grief, lowness, considering oneself mean and aversion from receiving obligatory right. The manifestations of temperance are the following virtues: generosity, modesty, patience, forgiveness, to be content with moderate amounts of necessary things, piety, mutual help and absence of greed. From the vices of greed and complete absence of desire proceed vices like covetousness, impudence, wickedness, prodigality, stinginess, hypocrisy, defamation, excessive boldness, uselessness, flattery, envy, rancour, rejoicing at others' misfortune, making oneself humble to the rich and

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hating the poor.<sup>1</sup> The manifestations of the virtue of justice and the vice of oppression have not been mentioned by al-Ghazālī. A number of virtues have been mentioned under justice by Miskawayh and Avicenna.<sup>2</sup>

To sum up, perfectly good character depends on the good functioning of all the faculties of the soul. Good working of a faculty consists in its working with moderation or mean. What<sup>3</sup> should be the right mean in a particular situation is to be ascertained by reason and the Sharīʿa. In consequence of the functioning of the four faculties of the soul with moderation four virtues - wisdom, temperance, courage and justice - are achieved. Therefore, the essence of virtue is the mean, and the essence of vice is deviation from it. The four virtues and their opposites - eight vices - manifest themselves in various forms in various situations. The four virtues are the "roots (usūl) and mothers (ummahāt)"<sup>3</sup> of good character. In acquiring these virtues people differ and consequently their characters differ in respect of goodness. The Prophet alone had these four virtues in their fullest form and his character was absolutely good as the prophet Joseph had an absolutely good appearance.<sup>4</sup> Few people are completely devoid of these four virtues with the result that theirs is an absolutely evil character; they resemble the devil whose character is completely bad. The majority of people neither possess these virtues in their fullest degree nor lack them completely, but they are between the two. No human being, save the Prophet, could acquire absolutely good character; but they can achieve a character which is very near to it if they make earnest effort and follow appropriate methods. The question now arises - what is the proper way of achieving good character?

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1. I.D., III, 47; K.S., p. 430; cf. Ibid., pp. 19-24; Kindī, Rasā'il, I, 173; Avicenna, Akhlāq, pp. 153-54. In Plato the sub-virtues are absent. In later Greek ethics they are present

to some extent; see Walzer, "Aspects" pp. 221-23.

2. Tahdhīb, pp. 23-24; Akhlāq, pp. 98-101. 3. I.D. III, 47 lines 20f, 48 lines 1f; K.S., p. 431. 4. I.D., III, 48; K.S., p. 431

The Methods of Achieving Good Character.

In the Kimiyā, al-Ghazālī enumerates three ways in which good character may come about.<sup>1</sup> But in the Ihyā, he, following Isḥāqī, enumerates two ways of acquiring good character.<sup>2</sup> In the conclusion of the section of the Ihyā dealing with this problem, however, he adds a third method<sup>3</sup> which is the same as the third of the ways described in the Kimiyā.<sup>4</sup> To him, then, there are three ways in which one can attain good character.

(a) In some people good character is natural (tab'ī). It is a divine grace to them. God has created them with perfect intellect so that they are learned without acquiring knowledge by effort and virtuous without acquiring virtues by moral training. Character becomes good when the faculties of the soul are in moderation, when desire and anger obey the reason and the Shari'ah. God has restrained some people's faculties of desire and anger at the time of creating them; he created them in such a way that they are always in moderation or mean, and are obedient to their reason and the Shari'ah. Examples of these people are Jesus Christ, Yahyā ibn-Zakariyā and all other prophets. Besides the prophets, there are people who possess good character as something natural. None can deny it, for we observe that some children are by nature truthful, generous and courageous.<sup>4</sup>

(b) Good character may be acquired by mortification (mu-jāhada) and self-training (riyāda), i.e. by taking pains to engage in those actions that usually proceed from good character.<sup>5</sup> Although with difficulty one has to repeatedly<sup>to</sup> perform good actions until they become habitual and a part of one's nature. As a result of one's frequent repetition of them the state that has been produced in the mind will be constant. Thus the desired actions will have become a natural habit, and their performance which was difficult at first will prove to be easy and lightsome. For example, if anyone wishes to acquire for his mind the virtue of generosity he should take pains to engage in

1. p. 414      2. III, 50; cf. Shari'ah, p. 33.      3. Ibid., 52  
4. Ibid. 50; K.S., p. 434; cf. Isḥāqī.      5. I.D., III, 50; K.S., pp. 434, 433; cf. Aristotle, Ethics, pp. 41-42

action that is generous, such as giving away some particular thing that he possesses. And he should not cease to be interested in this giving until he has fully entered into the spirit of it, until this giving has become habitual to him and a part of his nature and a task quite easy for him to accomplish. Likewise, if anyone wishes to acquire for his mind the virtue of humility when perhaps at present pride has been getting the better of him, he should pay special attention to occupying himself with actions that are deferential and humble. And he should not cease to pay <sup>such</sup> ~~special~~ attention until humility becomes a part of his nature. All the qualities that are laudable to the Shari'ah have to be acquired in this way.<sup>1</sup>

Actions become habitual and natural when their agent experiences pleasure in performing them.<sup>2</sup> So, to feel pleasure in doing virtuous deeds is the sign that one has acquired virtues. A generous man is he who finds pleasure in giving away his wealth and not he who feels pain. A humble man is he who feels pleasure in his being humble. The qualities that the Shari'ah commanded men to acquire become established in the soul after men have formed such a strong habit in doing good ~~uses~~ <sup>actions</sup> and in avoiding bad deeds as it produces in their minds eagerness for the former and aversion from the latter, pleasure in the former and pain in the latter. Truly virtuous men do feel pleasure and pain. The Prophet used to experience so intense a pleasure in performing his ritual prayer that he called it the delight of his eye. To perform the devotional acts and to leave undone the forbidden acts reluctantly and with painful sensations are one's following religion imperfectly, and this cannot ensure happiness in the next life. True, performing devotional acts reluctantly is far better than not to perform them at all - a reason for which God said in the Qur'an, "And that (ritual prayer) is difficult except for the submitted".

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1. Ibid. 2. I.D., III, 50-51; K.B., p. 431; cf. Ibid., pp. 48, 47; Ispahani, Dhari'ah, pp. 31-32.

For attaining the happiness promised to the men of good character it is not enough to do good deeds with pleasure occasionally; on the contrary, men are commanded to do them gladly throughout their whole lives.<sup>1</sup> They have to cultivate virtue until their death. The reason why this is to be done is that the purpose of devotional acts is to produce on the soul the effect of removing from it its love for the world and of establishing in it so intense a love for God as would arouse in him eagerness to meet him, and this effect cannot be produced unless they are performed throughout one's whole life.<sup>2</sup>

As to the reason why an action is difficult to perform at first but becomes natural and easy after one repeats it, al-Ghazālī points out that this is because of a peculiar relationship between the soul and the body. A quality of the soul influences the actions of the body, and an act of the body also produces an effect on the soul. The relation thus is circular, (dawr). How this relation is responsible for moral progress, i.e. for ~~the~~ becoming ~~of~~ an action natural and easy after it is repeated for a time, can be better illustrated by the progress in the art of calligraphy. If anyone wishes to acquire skill in calligraphy he must exercise the necessary mental perseverance. He must engage in reproducing and imitating the beautiful handwriting of a skilful writer. He must not cease to give his attention to making this beautiful writing until his aptitude (malaka) in doing so is established and his skill becomes actually a mental quality. In the end he will do naturally and easily what was at first an arduous effort. At first his imitating was an act of his hand; in his mind there existed no quality of writing beautifully, and this was the reason for his finding it a difficult task. Then the effect (ta'thir) of the act of his hand i.e. writing fell on his mind and, as a result of frequent<sup>nt</sup> repetition, became an established quality of the mind. This quality of the soul now influences the action of his hand with the result that he can now write beautifully easily. This process, al-Ghazālī says, is involved in one's acquiring any virtue.

1. Ibid; cf. Aristotle, Ethics, p.31

2. I.D., III; I.S., pp.435, 436-7; cf. Isfahānī, Dharī'a, pp.33-34

Generosity, for instance, is absent in a miser. Should he wish to be generous and to begin to do what generous men do, he finds it an arduous effort because the act of giving away his wealth is at this stage only an act of his bodily members. But this bodily act produces its effect on his soul and becomes a settled quality of it. Then this mental quality exerts its influence upon his body, and he now performs the acts of giving away his wealth quite easily. Although it is apparently an act of his body, it is really the act of his soul for it now proceeds from the soul. This same process is at work in the case of all other virtuous qualities.<sup>1</sup>

(c) The third way of acquiring good character is the association (suhba) with good people for a considerable period of time.<sup>2</sup> Human nature is essentially imitative; it imitates good and bad alike both consciously and unconsciously. If a man associates himself with virtuous people for some time he does pick up many of their good qualities in such a way that he may not even be aware of it. This is why the association with the good is often recommended to the persons desirous of forming praiseworthy character. Good companionship is usually considered to be especially important in training children in virtue, for they are more imitative than grown-ups. If they are prevented from mixing with evil persons and kept in the company of the good, there is a great probability of their character being good when they grow into adults. Details about their training will be described in a later section.

Good character, then, may be achieved in the three ways mentioned above. People who have acquired it in all these three ways - i.e. by nature, by association with the virtuous, and by constantly repeating good deeds - have the highest form of good character. Persons deprived of all these three ways, that is, those who are vicious by nature, have formed a habit in vices by repeatedly committing them, and by associating themselves

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1. I.D., III, 51-52; K.S., pp.435-36; cf. Aristotle, Ethics, pp.47-8

2. I.D., III, 52; K.S., p.434; cf. Miskawayh, Tahdhib, p. 177

with wrong-doers, have the worst form of character. Between these two forms lies the character of most people. There are great differences among them in respect of character and these are caused by the differences in the ways in which they have acquired it.<sup>1</sup>

#### Signs of the Diseases of the Soul.

When the soul comes to this world it is immune from any spiritual disease (marād al-qalb), i.e. vice; it gradually becomes afflicted with disease owing to its entanglement with the world.<sup>2</sup> Al-Ghazālī mentions some signs which will tell that the soul is diseased and needs treatment. These signs he determines by following the method employed in ascertaining the disease of the body. A certain bodily organ is considered to be attacked with disease if it fails completely or partially to serve the function for which it is created. One's ear, for instance, is thought to be in unsound condition if one does not hear sound at all or hears it with difficulty. In like manner, the soul, is to be regarded as afflicted with disease if it does not perform the function for which God created it or performs it, not readily with pleasure, but with reluctance and painful sensation.<sup>3</sup>

The especial function of the soul is, as already explained, to acquire knowledge and wisdom; God created it so that it may know Him, love Him, worship Him, feel pleasure in remembering Him, prefer His remembrance to anything else and take assistance for remembering Him from the bodily members. Knowledge of God is, as it were, the food of the soul, just as bread and water is the food of the body. Since the soul which has acquired this knowledge loves Him necessarily, the sign of its knowledge is its love for God. The mark of this love is that the soul loves God more than any of its beloved things of this world. God said in the Qur'ān, "Say: if your fathers and your sons and your brethren and your mates and your kinsfolk and property... and trade... are dearer to you than God and His Apostle and striving in His way, then wait till God brings about His command". One whose love for

1. I.D., III, 52; K.S., pp.434-35.

2. I.D., III, 66 line 14,62.

3. Ibid, 54; K.S., pp.438-39.

a thing other than God is stronger than his love for God has a diseased soul, as one who likes clay more than bread and water has a diseased stomach. Then to love any other-than-God-thing more than God is the sign of the soul's disease. Most people's love for the world is more than their love for God; this indicates that their souls are not in a healthy state. They are not aware of it because some diseases are such that the persons attacked by them do not know them, and the soul's diseases or vices are among these diseases.<sup>1</sup>

Those whose love for God is more than their love for things other than Him follow all His commandments and leave undone all that He prohibited them to do. They follow the Shari'a fully, and in following it, they do not have to give strain upon them; they feel pleasure in doing the duties of religion. Then, one's complete or partial failure to follow the Shari'a or one's failure to follow it with ease and pleasure, is the sign that one's love for God is not more than one's love for other-than-God-things. Such a man's soul should be regarded as attacked with disease.<sup>2</sup>

The soul that loves God more than anything save Him is free from its attachment to the world, for the love of God and the love of the world, two diametrically opposed things, cannot exist together. That soul, as already explained, is free from being attached to the world whose faculties work in moderation or mean. Observance of the mean, therefore, is a thing that indicates that one's love for God is more than one's love for the world, and that one's life is in accord with the Shari'a. Observance of the mean is a sign of the health of the soul, while the deviation from it to any of the two faulty extremes is a sign of the soul's disease. The conduct of one whose soul is diseased is not balanced, moderate and free from excess and deficiency. The presence of moderation in temperament (ḥizāj) indicates the health of the body and the absence of its disease. The same is true of the soul.<sup>3</sup>

Thus the absence in a man of such a love for God as is more than any of his beloved things of this world is the sign that his soul is diseased or vicious. The absence of this love results in

1. Ibid.

2. K.S., pp.438-9

3. I.D. III, 52, 54, 55

two things - (a) he does not carry out God's order or carries it out with reluctance and painful sensation, (b) he deviates from the mean or moderation in his affairs. If any of these signs is seen in a man he should hasten to cure ('ilāj) his disease, to refine (tahdhīb) his character.

Method of Refining Character.

The diseases that afflict the soul are these traits of character which are blameworthy to reason and the Shari'a. Refinement of character (tahdhīb al-akhlāq), or the treatment of the soul's diseases (ma'ālāj) means the removal from the soul of these vices by following the appropriate method and bringing to it virtues or praiseworthy qualities.<sup>1</sup> Before proceeding to take measures for effecting these, one has to know which vices are present in the soul and which virtues are absent. The first thing in refining one's character is to know the defects that are in oneself. People possessed of keen insight clearly see their own faults, but most people lack this insight and are ignorant of the vicious qualities of their souls. Some people see others' faults but fail to see those in themselves.<sup>2</sup> Al-Chagālī therefore describes some ways in which man can know his own spiritual defects.

How to know one's own spiritual defects: The first way of man's knowing his own defects is by his keeping company with a spiritual guide (shaykh, pīr) who clearly sees the hidden defects of the soul. He will make the guide a judge for him and have full trust in him. The guide will observe him closely and tell him about his defects, hidden and manifest. Because a true guide is not available nowadays, this way of knowing defects is not useful.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, a man can know his own defects from those friends of his who are truthful, religious and have insight. He will request such friends to watch him closely and to tell him what they dislike in him. If they call his attention to any of his faults, he should be thankful to them and hasten to get rid

1. Ibid., 52. -1-

2. Ibid., 55; K.S., pp.439-40

3. Ibid.

of it. It is in this way that great leaders in Islam tried to know their own faults. This way was suggested by Miskawayh who took this idea from Galen's work Man's Understanding of His Own Defects. Like Miskawayh, al-Ghazali observes that this way, too, is not useful nowadays for the reason that an honest friend is rare to find.<sup>1</sup> Thirdly, man can know his spiritual defects from what his enemy says about him. His enemy is perhaps more useful to him than his friend in this matter, for the former sees his defects more clearly than the latter and is not diffident of him in showing them. By nature man thinks his enemy's assertion to be false, but men of insight say that what their enemies spread about them might be exaggeration but not absolutely baseless. This way of knowing defects was also suggested by Miskawayh ~~tee~~ who took it from Galen's treatise Good People Derive Benefits from their Enemies.<sup>2</sup> The last way is by seeing the blameworthy qualities in others and ascribing them to himself. On perceiving any fault in others an individual should suspect that it is present in him also, for a believer (mu'min) is a mirror for another believer. He will realise that since men's dispositions are alike in following passions it is not unlikely that what is present in one is present in another in its essence or in a greater or less degree. He will then try to free himself from all that he dislikes in others. This is sufficient for a man desirous of rectifying himself; if he shuns every vice that he sees in others he needs none to help him in his character-refining. Jesus Christ said that he was not taught courtesy by anyone; he learnt it by perceiving the ignorant's misbehaviour and keeping himself from it.<sup>3</sup> This way, too, has its parallel in Miskawayh's Fahdhīb which has its source in al-Kindī's work.

**Spiritual physician:** Being aware of the evil qualities in himself, man will proceed to remove them. The task of curing the soul's diseases is extremely difficult, but it becomes easy to a

1. I.D., III, 55-56; K.S., pp. 439; cf. Miskawayh, Fahdhīb, p. 189

2. I.D., III, 56; K.S., p. 439; cf. Ibid., pp. 189-90.

3. Ibid.; cf. Ibid. pp. 190-191.

great extent if he submits himself to a skilled and competent spiritual physician. True guides are those religious scholars ('ulamā') who are gnostics, intelligent, seers of the soul's defects, kind-hearted, advise people in religious matters, have already purified their souls from vices and are eager to help others in their effort to purify their soul. Of course, it is difficult to find such guides, for most of the religious scholars are corrupt, immoral and worldly; their souls are afflicted with diseases, their character is full of evils; how can they cure the diseases in others' soul? Because of the lack of the true spiritual physician, the medical science of the soul (tibb al-qalb) is now dead and the diseases in people's soul have become so serious that their ruin is inevitable. As the treatment of the bodily disease is not possible without the advice of those who have studied the science of medicine, so the common men cannot cure the diseases of their soul without seeking advice from spiritual physicians. The soul's vices, their hidden causes, the specific way of getting rid of each particular vice and all other things related to mortification and moral discipline are clearly known to a true guide. The ordinary men do not know these and hence they need a guide. The path of religion is obscure while the devil's paths are many and manifest. A person who has no shaykh to guide him in his travel on the path to God is often led by the devil to his own path. He is like one who walks through a dangerous desert without a guide; such a man endangers himself and ultimately ruins himself. One who is dependent upon himself in refining his character is comparable to a tree which grows by itself and dries up very soon, or to a self-grown tree which, though it survives for a time and grows leaves, bears no fruit.1 He who has resolved to refine his character, therefore, needs a guide and should cling to him, the way a blind man on the bank of a river clings to his guide; he should surrender to the guide all the matters related to his

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1. I.D., III, 54, 55, 64-65, 56, 28; A.S., p. 438.

~~2. (see over) I.D., III, 65, 56.~~

spiritual development. Should a thing which the guide asks him to do appear absolutely unreasonable, he should not object to it or ask him about the reason for his prescribing it to him. He should have conviction that even if the shaykh makes mistakes in guiding him, his benefit will be greater than the benefit he will derive by walking, though rightly, on the path without a guide.<sup>2</sup> If a man does not find a true guide his task of <sup>2</sup>refining character becomes difficult; nevertheless, he should make effort to improve his character by himself.

Principle of refining character: The principle that al-Ghazālī suggests for the treatment of the soul's disease is analogous to the one usually employed in curing the bodily diseases. The medical science of the soul should in <sup>1</sup>this view, follow the medical science of the body.<sup>1</sup> A certain bodily disease is cured by applying a medicine whose effect is the opposite (didd) of that which is the cause of the disease. The same is true of the cure of the soul's diseases or vices: ignorance can be cured by acquiring knowledge, miserliness by spending money, and so forth.

A certain kind of medicine can cure a bodily disease provided that it is of the required power and of the required amount and is applied for the required period of time; if it is not of the required amount etc., it does harm to the patient. For this reason a physician has to determine, before prescribing a certain medicine the necessary amount etc., of it, and he determines these considering the present state of the disease, the magnitude of its cause, the physical strength of the patient, his occupation, his age and so on. Similarly, in curing a disciple's spiritual disease, the guide should not ask him to begin to practise what is the opposite of it unless he knows all about him and his disease. As a physician kills many of his patients if he prescribes the same medicine to all his patients who are suffering from different types of diseases, so a guide invites spiritual death to many of his disciples if he engages all of them in the same form of training. He must consider, before recommending remedial measures for a disease of a disciple's soul, the seriousness of his disease, his body's health, his age, his temperament, and then think as to what

1. Ibid, 52-53; K.S., pp. 440-1, 433-4; cf. Miskawayh, Tahdhīb, pp. 175-6

form of self-training he will be able to undergo with good intention. If a disciple is found to be ignorant of the major requirements of the Sahri'a what the guide should ask him first is to know about ablution, ritual prayer and other external acts of devotion (zawāhir al-'ibādāt). If he is found to be engaged in acquiring wealth by unlawful means or committing any other sin the guide should ask him to shun it first. When his outer self (zāhir) is beautified by devotional acts and his bodily members are purified from committing manifest sins (al-ma'āsī az-zāhira) the guide should proceed to correct his inner self (bātin) by engaging him in doing the opposites of the evil traits of his character. Should the disciple possess surplus wealth the guide will take it from him and spend it in good causes thereby removing his soul's attachment to it. If self-esteem and pride are dominating in him, the guide will send him to the market to beg from people, because the tendency to dominate others cannot be lessened except by dishonour and there is no dishonour greater than begging. The guide will cure all other evil qualities of his disciple's soul by engaging him in/doing the opposites of them.<sup>1</sup>

If a disciple is found unable to shun any evil quality immediately by practising the opposite of it, his guide should adopt a technique which consists in his effort to shift the disciple's habit in that quality to another quality less blameworthy than that. For instance, if he is unwilling or unable to shun his love of honour at once by practising its opposite, his guide will engage him in doing such deeds as would earn for him only a little degree of fame. Gluttony is a quality which cannot be got rid of immediately; a gluttonous disciple will be asked first to eat a few mouthfuls less than his usual quantity of food; then he will be engaged in preparing tasteful food and giving it to others without himself taking any part of it; this he will be doing until his power to resist temptation for food becomes strong and his gluttony is removed.<sup>2</sup> This technique

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1. Ibid; cf. Ibid.

2. I.D., III, 53-54

will be adopted in regard to all other qualities which a disciple is unable to get rid of at once.<sup>2</sup>

Practice in the opposite of a soul's vice, however, has a limit to it. When the soul comes back to the state of the mean in respect of the opposite quality which one is practising one must stop practising it. The attainment of the mean is the aim to be achieved in character-training. It is the mean where the health of the soul lies. If practice in the opposite of an evil quality is continued to the extent that the opposite quality has crossed its mean point, the soul has again become diseased, has acquired a new vice and, therefore, needs to be cured again. In curing, for instance, the disease of miserliness by frequently performing the act of spending money in good causes, if one comes to a state between prodigality and miserliness, practice in it must be stopped, for the soul has recovered its health. If the soul has come to a state that spending money has exceeded the mean, the soul has got rid of miserliness, but acquired prodigality which is to be cured by its opposite, i.e. not spending money. What is necessary, then, is that a disciple should stop his practice in the opposite of a vice as soon as the mean is achieved. With the regaining of the mean he has regained the health of his soul, and his duty now is to preserve it.<sup>1</sup> As to how he is to maintain it, al-Ghasālī does not say anything. Miskawayh gave several suggestions for preserving the soul's health if it is already present.<sup>2</sup>

But practically how to know that the soul is at the state of the mean in regard to a particular <sup>quality?</sup> al-Ghasālī suggests a way in which one can easily know it. He says that if a certain action which generally proceeds from evil character is easier and more pleasurable to a person than its opposite action which usually issues from good character, his soul will be considered to be in a state deviating from the mean. For example, to deprive of money those who have the right (haqq) to it is an act that arises from evil character; if this is more pleasure-giving to an individual than his spending money on them, it is a mark that his soul has fallen short of the mean in spending money. But if his spending

1. Ibid., 95; K.S., p.436. 2. Tahdhīb, pp.177-191.

money ~~to~~<sup>on</sup> those who have no right to it is easier and more pleasure-giving to him than his not spending money rightly, it is an indication that his soul has crossed the mean ever. In this way one can know whether or not his soul is in moderation in respect of a particular trait of character.<sup>1</sup>

Then, practising the opposites of the evil qualities of the soul until the attainment of moderation is the general principle (al-aql al-kullī)<sup>2</sup> to be used in refining character. What the opposite of each specific vice is and how to practise it al-Ghazālī discusses separately and we will speak of them in the next chapter. That the rule in getting rid of vices is to do the opposite of what the carnal soul (nafā) desires is expressed in its entirety by God in a single verse of the Qur'ān, "and as for him who fears to stand in the presence of his Lord and forbids the soul from low desires, then surely Paradise - that is the abode". The Prophet taught his companions about how and to what extent the lower soul is to be opposed. He is the only physician of the soul's diseases: the religious scholars are his heirs. To oppose passions is extremely difficult; it needs a strong determination. There are people who, having shunned the grave sins think that their character has become completely good and stop mortification considering it as a thing now unnecessary. This is a mistake of theirs. Man should continue self-training until he sees in himself all the marks of good character.<sup>3</sup>

Marks of Good Character.

According to al-Ghazālī, the attributes of the believers (sifāt al-mu'miniñ) are the marks of good character, and the attributes of the hypocrites (sifāt al-munāfiqīn) are the signs of evil character. In the Qur'ān God stated many qualities of the believers; the Prophet also ascribed many attributes to them and regarded these attributes as what forms good character. These qualities al-Ghazālī looks upon as the result and also the signs of good character. He says that if an individual possesses

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1. Ibid, 59-61; K.3., pp.441-42      2. Ibid.

all these qualities he has completely good character; if he possesses none of them he has completely evil character; if he possesses some of them his character is good to the extent he has them. That the qualities of the believers are the marks of good character al-Ghazālī proves by quoting the Prophet's statement, "The most perfect of the believers in respect of belief is the best of them in respect of character".<sup>1</sup>

The attributes of the believers described by God in the Qur'<sup>ān</sup> al-Ghazālī states<sup>2</sup> by quoting the verses in which they have been mentioned. These verses are the following:

"Successful indeed are the believers who are humble in their prayers, and who keep aloof from what is vain, and who act aiming at purification, and who guard their private parts except before their mates and those whom their right hands possess for they surely are not blameable, but whoever seeks to go beyond that, those are they that exceed the limits; and those who are keepers of their trusts and their covenant, and those who keep a guard on their prayers; these are they who are the heirs who shall inherit the Paradise". "They who turn (to God), who serve (Him), who praise (Him), who fast, who bow down, who prostrate themselves, who enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and who keep the limits of God: and give good news to the believers". "And the servants of the Beneficent God are they who walk on the earth in humbleness, and when the ignorant address them they say, peace. And they who pass the night prostrating themselves before their Lord and standing. And they who say: O our Lord, turn away from us the chastisement of Hell, surely the chastisement thereof is a lasting evil: surely it is an evil abode and (evil) place to stay. And they who, when they spend are neither extravagant nor parsimonious, and (keep) between these the just mean. And they who do not call upon<sup>α</sup> god with God and do not slay the soul which God has forbidden except in the requirements of justice, and (who) do not commit fornication. And they who do not bear witness to what is false, when they pass by what is vain they ~~are~~<sup>pass</sup> by nobly. And they who, when reminded of the communications of

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1. Ibid., 59-61; R.S., pp.441-42. 2. Ibid.

their Lord, do not fall down thereat deaf and blind. And they who say: O our Lord, grant us in our wives and our offspring the joy of our eyes and make us guides to those who guard (against evil)".

Some of the attributes which the Prophet mentioned as the attributes of the believers and which he considered to be the traits of good character al-Ghazālī states by quoting the Traditions containing them. Some of these Traditions are the following: "The believer likes for his brother what he likes for himself" "Whoever believes in God and in the Last Day should respect his guest". "Whoever believes in God and in the Last Day should respect his neighbour". "Whoever believes in God and in the Last Day should speak good or keep silent". "If you see a believer silent and sober come close to him for these are indications of his wisdom". "Whoever feels pleasure in doing good and pain in doing evil is a believer". "It is unlawful for a believer to look at his brother in <sup>an</sup> hurtful manner". "It is unlawful for a Muslim to frighten another Muslim". "The believers aspire after prayer, fasting and worship, while the hypocrites aspire after food and drink as do the lower animals". Ḥātim al-Aṣamm said - the believer busies himself with reflecting on good things and acquiring good morals, while the hypocrite with greed and hope; the believer does not fear anyone but God and the hypocrite fears all save God; the believer seeks help only from God and the hypocrite seeks help from all except God; the believer spends money in religious activities, while the hypocrite sacrifices religion for wealth; the believer obeys God and fears Him, and the hypocrite disobeys Him and rejoices; the believer likes solitude and the hypocrite likes association with wrong doers; the believer cultivates for the future life but fears that he may not reap the harvest, while the hypocrite does not cultivate but hopes for harvesting.<sup>1</sup>

A certain scholar, al-Ghazālī points out, has collected the marks of good character and described them as follows: a man of good character is <sup>humble</sup> ~~modest~~, takes suffering to be easy, prays to God for the good of all, tells the truth, speaks little,

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1. I.D., III, 60; K.S., p.442

performs many good actions, commits only few vices and seldom does what is vain; he is virtuous, patient, thankful, satisfied, persever<sup>ing</sup>, temperate and kind-hearted; he neither curses people, nor rebukes them, nor hates them, nor backbites, nor makes haste in any matter; he is not a miser or envious; he is not gloomy but cheerful; if he loves others he loves them for God and if he hates them he hates them for God; if he is satisfied or dissatisfied with anyone he is so only for God. Yūsuf ibn-Asbāt said - Good character combines in itself ten qualities, namely, <sup>to</sup> fulfil ~~promises~~ promises, <sup>to</sup> do ~~justice~~ justice, not to take revenge, to repay <sup>evil</sup> evil by good, to seek excuses for misdeeds, to endure suffering caused by others, to reproach oneself, to search for faults, not of others but of oneself, to behave well with both children and grown-ups and to speak gently to others whether superior or inferior. Sahīl at-Tustarī said that the <sup>ultimate</sup> ~~sign~~ sign of good character is to endure hardship, to be merciful to the oppressor, to pray for his forgiveness and to be kind to him.<sup>1</sup>

The most obvious sign of good character is, according to al-Ghazālī, one's patience over suffering and forbearance of harshness received from others, for one can endure suffering when one has purified his soul from rancour, spite, etc. Al-Ghazālī cites some examples of the endurance of suffering and maltreatment. He relates the Traditions on the Prophet's forgiveness of those who oppressed him and insulted him in various ways. He also narrates several stories in order to show how great a patience was shown by Ibrāhīm ibn-Ad'ham, 'Alī ibn-Mūsā, abū-'Abd-Allāh, Qays ibn-'Āsim, Companion 'Alī, Mālik ibn-Dīnār, Yahyā' ibn-Ziyād and other saints and ṣūfīs on the injustice and maltreatment they received from the ignorant on different occasions. They were able to endure harsh behaviour because they were satisfied with all that God allotted to them. To achieve such a satisfaction is indeed the end of good character. Dissatisfaction with what God does is the worst form of character.<sup>2</sup>

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1. I.D., III, 60; K.S., p.442    2. I.D., III, 59,62

To al-Ghazālī, then, the qualities mentioned above are the marks of good character. He urges people who have some of these to strive to preserve those qualities which they already possess and, at the same time, to acquire those which they lack. They should not stop mortification and self-training unless all the signs of good character are seen in them.<sup>1</sup> To acquire most of the traits of good character becomes possible for those who have been properly trained in their childhood.

#### Training Children<sup>in</sup> Good Character.

Like Miskawayh and Bryson, al-Ghazālī is fully aware of the importance of childhood for the development of character. At the time of their birth children are not inclined to evil but have the potentiality to be inclined to it. Their souls are pure, clean like precious jewels and devoid of ideas, but are capable of receiving any idea that may be presented to them later. If children are trained in good morals in a proper manner, they can become men of character when they grow into adults and become able to attain happiness in this world as well as in the next. If they are trained in bad morals or are not trained at all but left to grow up by themselves like the lower animals, they possess evil character when they are grown-ups. Should parents and school teachers guide them to the right path, they get a share in the good actions that they perform; if they train them in evil, they get a share in the evil deeds which they do as a result of their training. The Shari'ah made it obligatory on the parents' part to train their children in such a way that they may get salvation, from Hell-fire in the hereafter. In the Qur'an God said, "O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones...."

Al-Ghazālī lays emphasis upon three principles which parents and teachers should follow in training children in good character. The first is to directly<sup>to</sup> order them to do what is good and to avoid what is bad from a religio-moral viewpoint. This direct instruction is to be imparted both at home and in

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1. I.D., III, 59, 62    2. Ibid. 62; K.S., pp. 444-45; cf. Miskawayh, Tahdhib, p. 56

the school. Reward for their doing good and punishment for doing evil should also be given. The second principle is to keep them away from evil companions. Children, more than grown-ups, imitate others; most of what they learn is by imitation. If they are allowed to mix with the vicious, they pick up the bad qualities that are in them. The third thing that their training should be such that they cannot become accustomed to an easy and luxurious life, for if they develop the habit of living in luxury from the very beginning of their lives most of their time, when they are grown-ups, will be spent in seeking the means of luxury and they will have little time for working for the attainment of happiness in the next world. These three principles are what govern al-Ghazālī's teachings on children's training in virtue.<sup>1</sup>

A child's training in praiseworthy character should, al-Ghazali says, begin from the start of their lives. He should be nursed and suckled by a woman who is virtuous and who eats lawful food. Such a woman's character, manner and habit exert good influence upon the child. The milk whose source is lawful food has blessing in it, and if the child is nourished by it his nature (tabz') becomes inclined to all that is good. But if he is nourished by milk whose source is unlawful food his clay (ṭina) is kneaded from impurity and wickedness and his nature is inclined to all that is evil.<sup>2</sup>

When the child begins to speak he should be taught to utter the name of God. When the power of discernment (tamyiz) is manifested in him special care needs to be taken of him. His feeling of shyness is the sign of the manifestation of this power. He is now bashful in his manner and less spontaneous in his behaviour; he distinguishes between good and evil and dislikes the latter and shrinks from it. Shyness in a child is not bad at all; it is God's gift to him; it indicates that he will be able to observe moderation in his affairs, that his soul is pure and that his intellect at its maturity will be perfect to a great extent. A bashful child, then, must not be neglected or left to association with people of evil character.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid. 2. Ibid. 3. Ibid; cf. Tahdhīb, p.56

The desire for food is what appears first in a child. He should be taught the proper manner of taking it. He should be asked to begin with God's name, to use his right hand, and to start with that part of it which is adjacent to him. He should not be the first to go to the dining table, should not gaze at different dishes or at others eating, should chew his mouthful well, not smear his hands and clothes with food and should not overeat. He should occasionally be compelled to eat bread without condiments. That gluttony is a vice should be impressed upon him by comparing the glutton with the lower animals, by rebuking gluttonous children in his presence, and by speaking highly of those who are content with little quantities of food.<sup>1</sup>

Interest in appropriate dress should be created in children. A male child should like white and coarse dress and hate coloured silken clothes. He should be told that people most fit for wearing clothes of gaudy colour are women and effeminate. Those children who wear splendid dress should be rebuked in his presence so that a sense of hatred for it may be produced in him. He must not be allowed to associate with them. So completely should he be kept away from them that he should not even be given a chance to see them, for if he sees them the desire for proud dress and other things of luxury will be created in him. If he is not guarded against his association with the vicious, he will become a liar, jealous, a thief, calumnious, importunate, meddling, spiteful and malicious.<sup>2</sup>

In the school the boy should be taught the Qur'ān, Traditions, stories about the pious and the biographies of the Prophet's companions so that the love for them may be implanted in his mind. Nothing evil and indecent should be imparted to him through the media of poems, stories and life histories. Like Miskawayh, al-Shazālī condemns reading and reciting love poetry and mixing with those teachers who maintain that love

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1. Ibid; cf. Ibid., pp.55,58-59. 2. Ibid, III, 63; K.S. p.445; cf. Ibid, p.57

poetry sharpens a child's brain and makes him clever. The evil influence of love poetry on the child's tender mind is tremendous. The teachers who like it are not really teachers; they are devils in men's guise; they sow the seeds of evil and corruption in children's immature minds.<sup>1</sup>

Virtuous acts should be praised before the child, and vicious acts should be condemned. If he does any laudable deed he should be rewarded with what pleases him and praised in the presence of others. If he does any evil deed for the first time, it is better to ignore it, particularly when he tries to hide it. On repeating it, however, he should be reproached secretly and be warned not to do it again. The parents should deal well with him lest his respect for them may be impaired. When he tends to do any evil his mother should threaten him by mentioning to him the fear of his father. He must not be allowed to do anything secretly, for one does in secret only what one thinks blameworthy; if he openly does all that he does he can hardly get the chance of doing evil.<sup>2</sup>

The boy should be habituated in rough and hard living. His hours of eating, sleeping, playing etc. should be regulated. He will not be allowed to sleep during the day, nor too much at night, for these make one lazy and physically weak. His bed should not be soft until his limbs become strong. Every day on returning from school he should take physical exercise for an hour. The desire for comfort in regard to food, bed and dress must not be allowed to develop in a child. His play should not involve intense fatigue. If his superiors pass by him he should stop playing, for this is a sign of regard for them. He should be taught to develop a male attitude and capacity to endure hardship; if he is beaten by his teachers he should not cry, for this is the conduct of slaves and women.<sup>3</sup>

The child should be forbidden to boast to his companions of anything that his parents possess, or of his food, dress etc.

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1. I.D., III, 63; K.S., p.445; cf. Ibid. p.57

2. I.D., III, 63; K.S., pp.445-46; cf. Ibid., pp.56-57, 58, 60.

3. I.D., III, 63; K.S., p.446; cf. Ibid., pp.59, 60-62.

He should be taught how to be modest to all, to show respect for them, and to use sweet words while talking to them. If his parents are rich he should be told that credit lies in giving things to others and not in taking them from them; if he comes of a poor family he should be taught that greed for others' things is a sign of meanness and disgrace and that this is the dog's habit. That greed for money, gold and silver is bad will be told<sup>to</sup> him clearly; he should be cautioned against these much more than he should be cautioned against snakes and scorpions.<sup>1</sup>

The boy should be taught, when in the company of others, not to spit, blow his nose, yawn, cross his legs, beat his chin with his forearm or support his head with his hand for this is a sign of laziness. He should be taught to sit properly. He should be forbidden from talking too much for this is a sign of meanness, from swearing truthfully or falsely, from being the first to speak; he should not speak except in giving answer of what is asked of him; he should only listen to his superiors. He should stand up when those who are older than him come in and make room for them and sit beside them. He should not utter vile speech nor curse or scold or mix with those who have these bad habits. Children usually learn these from evil associates, and to keep them away from them is most needed in training them in good character.<sup>2</sup>

At the age of seven the child should be asked to follow the rules of religion. He should be asked to clean his body, to perform his ritual prayer (ṣalā) and to fast on some days of the month of Ramaḍān. If he omits his ritual prayer when he is ten years of age, corporal punishment should be inflicted upon him. He should be cautioned against those deeds for which the Sharī'a prescribed penalty (ḥadd). When he approaches maturity (bulūgh) the reality behind all that in which he has hitherto been trained should be clearly explained to him. He should be told that the purpose of taking food is to get strength for worshipping God.<sup>3</sup> The reason for the soul's coming to this

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1. I.D., III, 63; cf. Ibid, pp60-61, 62.

2. Ibid.; K.S., p.446; cf. Ibid. p.61

3. Ibid; cf. Ibid. pp.58, 133-35.

world is to acquire 'provision' for the next. This is transitory, while the life after death is eternal. Intelligent, therefore is he whose aim is to enjoy the eternal delights of the hereafter. The nature of the happiness of the world-to-come, delights of Paradise, torments of Hell, reward of good actions and punishment of evil ones in the life after death - all have to be explained to him clearly. All these will be inscribed on the plate of his mind provided that he was properly trained in his childhood. In fact one's training in childhood has much to do with the development of character in one's youth. The good training that Saḥl at-Tustarī received when he was a boy al-Ghazālī states, in order to show how this made the rest of his life thoroughly pious and virtuous.<sup>1</sup>

Conditions for Verification and the Disciple's Gradual Advance on the Path to God.

Men, al-Ghazālī says, have to walk on the path of the hereafter (sabil- al-ākhirā) should they wish to attain the supreme happiness, but they do not come to walk on the path because they have no will to do so, and they have no will because they have no faith (īmān) in God and in the next world. One who has faith cannot but devote the greater part of his time to work for attaining the eternal delights of Paradise and escaping from everlasting torments of Hell. This faith is not merely the verbal utterance of the two sentences of the confession of faith (kalimatay ash-shahāda), but a belief in what is contained in them with all truthfulness and sincerity. The reason why people lack this faith is the non-existence of God-fearing religious scholars ('ulama') who know about God, can guide others to the path leading them to Him, remind them of the insignificance and transitoriness of this world and the permanence and eternal character of the next. Because such scholars who are true guides on the path of religion are almost absent, people have become totally indifferent to the hereafter. There are few religious scholars in society; they seek this world as much as do the worldlings; so they themselves are deviated from the path to God and are not in a position to guide others to it. The path of this world and that of the next are

1. I.D., III, 63-64; K.S., p.446; cf. Ibid. p.62

opposed to each other; as the more one advances to the east the remoter one is from the west, so the more engrossed one is in this world the remoter is one from the next. Then, the cause of God's path being devoid of walkers (sālikūn) comes in the final analysis, to be the lack of God-fearing religious scholars.<sup>1</sup>

Should an individual somehow become mindful ~~to~~<sup>of</sup> the world-to-come and intend to walk on its path, he finds himself unable to do so because of the lack of sufficient knowledge of the path. Al-Ghazālī, therefore, feels it obligatory on his part to describe the way in which one has to traverse the path. He says that a disciple or murīd (one who intends to walk on the path) has to advance on the path gradually stage after stage. (a) At the outset he has to fulfill four conditions. (b) Then he should submit himself to a spiritual guide (shaykh). (c) After this he should have a sort of fortress in which he will take shelter from the enemies who will try to cut him off from the path. (d) Lastly he will walk along the path by continuously practising a certain form of the mention of God (dhikr Allāh).<sup>2</sup>

(a) There are some obstacles ('awa'iq) existing between man and God. To remove these obstacles is the first task of the disciple. One who does not remove these is among those about whom God said in the Qur'an, "And We have made before them a barrier and a barrier behind them, then We have covered them over so that they do not see". These barriers are four, namely, wealth, influence (jāh), blindly following (taqlīd) a particular school of thought (madhāb), and sin (ma'siya). The removal of these four things by the disciple is his fulfilling the four conditions in the beginning of his walking along the path. By wealth al-Ghazālī means that wealth which is more than one needs for oneself and one's family. Superfluous wealth is an obstacle because the mind remains attached to it, whereas the disciple's mind should be free from attachment to the world. So he should

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1. I.D., III, 64; K.S., pp.447-48. 2. I.D., III, 65; K.S., p.448

divest himself of all his superfluous wealth. By influence also Al-Ghazālī means excessive influence. This is an obstacle because the man who has too much of it has to remain busy with worldly things all the time. The disciple can remove this barrier by living in a place where there is no chance of his acquiring it, by avoiding the actions that make one famous and by doing those deeds that produce in others' minds a hatred for their agents. Blindly following a particular school of thought is a barrier, for the man who does so becomes obstinate to such an extent that he is unwilling to accept any useful advice of others and because such a man seldom craves for the purification of the soul. The disciple need not follow any madhhab. He should develop a liberal attitude and believe firmly that there is no God <sup>but God</sup> and Muhammad is His apostle. If he truly holds this belief he cannot follow his passions for to follow them is to worship them and not God; if he does not worship anything but God the reality of the things he hitherto blindly believed in will be intuitive to him. He should therefore shun his interest in sectarian controversies (mujādala) and his obstinacy for the madhhab he follows. Sin is a barrier inasmuch as the soul of the one who repeatedly commits it becomes dark owing to which truth cannot be reflected on it. Taking unlawful food makes the soul completely dark. To remove the veil of sin the disciple should resort to 'repentance' and should determine not to take unlawful food. In addition to his completely doing the external duties of the Shari'a (zawāhir ash-Shar'), the disciple should shun all the manifest sins (al-ma'āsī az-zāhira).<sup>1</sup>

(b) By removing the barriers of wealth, influence, blindly following a madhhab and sin the disciple has fulfilled the four conditions that lie in the beginning of the path. He is now like a man who has purified his body by taking a bath and making ablution and is ready to perform his ritual prayer and is in need of one to lead it. He is now prepared to walk on the path and needs a guide, a teacher. The need of a guide has already been explained to us in a previous section. If he is lucky to

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1. I.D., III, 65; K.S., pp.448-9; B.H., p.90.

find a true guide he should completely submit himself to him, so completely that he will not even ask the guide for the reason of any of his advice to him, not to speak of objecting to it.

(c) The guide will put him into a sort of fortress (hiṣṇ) in order to save him from what might harm his spiritual progress. The fortress has four walls, namely, solitude, silence, hunger and wakefulness. The disciple's motive in traversing the path has been to improve his character with a view to beholding his Lord and attaining nearness to Him, and the fulfilment of this motive is greatly assisted by these four things. Hunger is useful in ten ways.<sup>1</sup> The necessary degree of hunger will be described in the following chapter. Wakefulness will soften his soul and make it pure like a pearl and a brilliant mirror. The light of truth will be reflected in such a soul, and he will clearly see the <sup>po</sup>importance of the world-to-come and the insignificance of this world and its evils. Consequently he will be helpful to him in his effort to be pious and godfearing. By being solitary he will be free from his entanglements with the world and able to control his eyes, ears and other senses which are the passages to the soul. His control over these will stop the entering of new evil ideas into the soul, and this will enable him to easily <sup>to</sup>purge the soul from the vices that are in it. Complete control over the senses cannot be achieved unless one's solitude is in a dark room. If the disciple has no dark room, he should cover his head with a blanket; in such a condition the voice of truth is heard and God's majesty is seen.<sup>2</sup>

(d) Then the disciple will begin to walk along the path. First he will have to remove the obstacles ('aṣabāt) existing on the path. These obstacles are the same as the vices that are generated in the soul owing to its attachment to the world. After resolving to walk along the path he removed four obstacles - wealth, influence, sin and blindly following a particular

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1. I.D., III, 72-76; K.S. p.450. 2. I.D., III, 65-66; L.I., p.450

school of thought; the obstacles he will now remove are the traces in the soul of these four things. At that time he purified his outer self (zāhir); now he will purify his inner self (bātin) from blameworthy qualities. In removing these qualities he will begin with the easiest of these and the principle that he will follow is, as already explained, one of opposite.✕

When the disciple has purified the soul from all the vices he has become fit to mention (dhikr) God in an especial way. He will be asked by his guide to do only those religious duties which are obligatory (farā'id wa rawātib), for remembrance of God which he is going to do continuously, is the gist and the fruit of all the religious activities. He should not be engaged in remembrance before his soul has completely been freed from attachment to other-than-God-things. The sign of this freedom is to feel in himself such an intense love for God that he becomes like a lover who has no thought save the thought of his beloved. When his mind is in this state, the guide will put him into a nook (gāwiya) and ~~fix~~<sup>appoint</sup> a man to provide him with a small quantity of lawful food. He will ask him to constantly repeat the word Allāh (God) or the phrase subhān Allāh (glory be to God) or any other form of mention of God which he may consider suitable to him. This he will repeat until his tongue will cease to move and the word or the phrase will begin to flow on the tongue without moving it. This will go on until the trace of the flowing of the word or the phrase on the tongue will be lost and the image of the word will be fixed in the soul. Then the image will also be lost and only the meaning of the word or the phrase will so completely occupy the soul that nothing other than it will find any place in it. So firmly will the meaning be established in the soul that he will not be able to separate it from the soul even if he tries his best to do so. The attainment of this state of mind is indeed the end of mortification through strenuous effort. After this, nothing remains in the disciple's choice. All that he has now to do is to wait for

the descent of God's mercy in the form of a light that will illumine his soul and enable him to see directly what he cannot apprehend by the intellect. Through mystical intuition he will know many subtle affairs of the divine world which are unlawful and indeed impossible to describe.<sup>1</sup>

1. I.D., III, 66-68; K.S., pp.45<sup>o</sup>-51.

## CHAPTER IV

## VICES

Preliminaries

An attempt has been made in the preceding chapter to consider al-Ghazālī's thought concerning the meaning of character, the possibility of its changeability and the process of bringing about this change the various aspects of which are dealt with under several captions. The meaning of virtues and vices as constituents of good and evil character is pointed out in connection with the first problem, and in relation to the last<sup>1</sup> method in which they can be acquired or removed from the soul is stated in a general way. The present chapter deals mainly with the nature of individual vices and the way in which each vice can be banished by following the general method already considered. These are called by al-Ghazālī (riyāda) the details of self-training in the removal of every vice.<sup>1</sup> In effect, however, these are discussed by him not for every vice but only for those vices which constitute the roots (usūl) from which others stem; self-training in the removal of the latter which are very many in number need not be discussed because, he says, with the vanishing of the root vices there would be nothing to proceed from them.<sup>2</sup> Since vice and virtues are terms related to each other, dealing with a vice involves its correlative; virtues also are therefore treated in this chapter.

The root vices in the removal of which self-training is needed are enumerated by al-Ghazālī as greed in food, excess in sexual desire, desire for excessive speech, anger, envy and rancour, love of the world, love of wealth and miserliness, love of influence and hypocrisy, pride and conceit and delusion. Strictly speaking, delusion is not a root vice, but misconception about many moral matters particularly about one's possessing good character-traits<sup>3</sup> and hence it constitutes a part of the method of refining character. This is plain from the Arba'īn where it is included not in the list of root vices but in the method of self-

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1. I.D., III, 68. 2. A.D., pp.100,175. 3. Ibid, p.175