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Chapter 2: Comparative Study of Ghazali and Augustine's Shared Views on Philosophy

Introduction

Abu Hamid Muhammad Ghazali (Ghazali or al-Ghazali; Al-Gazel in Latin texts) of Persia, was one of the most influential and greatest Islamic theologian (Audi 2001, p. 21; Blackburn 2005, p. 151; Honderich 2005, p. 339; Nakamura 1998, Macdonald 1953, p. 111), philosopher (Audi 2001, p. 21; Mautner 2005, p. 14; Nofal 1993, p. 519), jurist (Audi 2001, p. 21; Nakamura, 1998) and mystic (Audi 2001, p. 21) or mystical thinker (Nakamura, 1998).

Ghazali's academic thinking had largely been neglected by scholars so far, at least in comparison to the attention that his works on philosophy received (Rahman 1977; Mumisa, 2005), political views (Binder 1955; Laoust, 1970; Hillenbrand 1988), mysticism (Smith, 1944) and religious views (Frank, 1994). His monumental work for revival of religious sciences and his autobiographical account – Deliverance from Error – had often been compared to Augustine's confessions. It supported the triumph of revelation over reason (Honderich, p. 339).

Ghazali studied various branches of the traditional Islamic religious sciences in his hometown of Tus, Gurgan and Nishapur in the northern part of Iran. He was also involved in Sufi practices from an early age. Being recognized by Nizam al–Mulk, the Vizir of the Seljuq Sultans, he was appointed Head of the Nizamiyyah College in Baghdad in 484 AH (1091 AD).

As the Intellectual head of the Islamic community, Ghazali lectured on Islamic jurisprudence at the College. He also refuted heresies while responding to questions from all segments of the community. Four years later, however, al-Ghazali fell into a serious spiritual crisis and finally left Baghdad, renouncing his career and the world.

After wandering in Syria and Palestine for about two years and finishing the pilgrimage to Mecca, he

returned to Tus, where he got engaged in writing, Sufi practices and teaching his disciples until his death. He also resumed teaching for a few years at the Nizamiyyah College in Nishapur during this time.

The eventful life of Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali (or al-Gazali) could be divided into three major periods. The first was a period of learning – initially in his hometown of Tus in Persia, then in Gurgan and finally in Nishapur. After the death of his teacher, Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwayni, Ghazali moved to the court of Nizam al-Mulk, the powerful Vizier of the Seljuq Sultans, who eventually appointed him the Head of the Nizamiyyah College at Baghdad in 484 AH (1091AD).

The second period of al-Ghazali's life was his brilliant career as the highest-ranking orthodox-doctor of the Islamic community in Baghdad (484 AH; 1091– 95 AD). This period was short but significant. During this time, he was busy refuting heresies and responding to questions from all segments of the community besides lecturing on Islamic jurisprudence at the College. In the political confusion that followed the assassination of Nizam al-Mulk and the subsequent violent death of Sultan Malik Shah, al-Ghazali himself fell into a serious spiritual crisis and finally left Baghdad, renouncing his career and the world.

This event marked the beginning of the third period of his life, that of retirement 484 –505 AH (1091–1111 AD). It included a short period of teaching at the Nizamiyyah College in Nishapur. After leaving Baghdad, he wandered as a Sufi in Syria and Palestine before returning to Tus, where he engaged in writing, Sufi practices and teaching his disciples until his death (Nakamura, 1998).

Aurelius Augustinus (Augustine, 354–430 AD) was one of the greatest and most influential of Christian philosophers (Pojman, 2003, p. 407; concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2000, p. 63; Blackburn, p. 28; Honderich, 2005, p. 66; Audi, 2001, p. 60; Matthews, 1998), Theologian (Blackburn, p. 28; Audi, 2001, p. 60; Matthews, 1998), a source of Christian thought (Audi, 2001, p. 60; Matthews, 1998) and a seminal influence permeating every branch and every period of Western Christian ethics (Macqarre and Childress, p. 46). He was perhaps the most influential philosopher between Aristotle and Aquinas (Pojman, 2003, p. 407).

For well over eight centuries after his death, in fact, until the ascendancy of Thomas Aquinas at the end of the thirteenth century, Aurelius was also the single most influential Christian Philosopher (Matthews 1998; concise Routledge Encyclopedia of philosophy 2000, p. 63).

Aurelius' enormous influence on the doctrines of Western Christianity, were owed much to his skill and perseverance as a philosopher. In the history of philosophy itself, he was a secondary figure, partly because he did not have the taste or leisure to acquire more than a scrappy knowledge of the 800–year old tradition that preceded him.

As a young student at Carthage he developed an ambition, according to his Confessions (397– 400 AD), to lead a philosophical life, which pursued truth. The opportunity to fulfill this ambition came when at the age of thirty-one; he resumed his childhood Christianity at Milan (386 AD) and gave up his career as a

schoolmaster.

Aurelius had spent a winter at Cassiciacum by the north Italian lakes with some friends, discussing philosophy, composing dialogues on skepticism, the happy life and soul's immortality. When he returned from there to his birthplace –Tagaste in Numidia (Souk –Ahras, Algeria) in 388 AD, he set up a community of young disciples and wrote on the problem of evil, order, prosody, language and learning. However, that life came to an end soon when the Catholic congregation at Hippo on the Numidian coast prevailed on him in 391AD, to become their Presbyter and later a Bishop.

From that time onwards, he was never free from pastoral business. He did not stop writing. His written output – nearly all of which survived, was bulkier than from any other author of ancient times. His subject matter however, became mainly polemical, against the schismatic and heretic. Even his masterpieces – The Confession and City of God (413 – 426 AD), had a pastoral purpose. The first was a public meditation on his slow journey towards Catholic Christianity, and the second was an attack (which was to have important historical effect) on the pretentious claim of pagans about having a valuable and independent culture.

At the end of his life he catalogued and reviewed ninety-three of his works, excluding the numerous sermons and letters, in his collection – Retractions in 426–427 AD (Honderich 2005, p. 66).

Apart from a few years spent in Italy around the 380 AD, he lived his life chiefly in three places: Tagaste, Hippo, and Carthage. His trips elsewhere in North Africa were few and limited. Although his words traveled widely, his geographical limitations were important to remember, not in the least because they kept him mainly in the more urbanized and coastal north of Africa, away from the high plains and the frontier, away from the districts where a rough form of life and perhaps a more native form of religion held sway (O' Donnell 2006, p. 8).

Ghazali and Augustine were chosen to be compared for this book considering important points about their way of life, kind of personality, thinking process, scope of influence, type of expertise and many other factors. On the other hand although the two were both a theologian and a philosopher, their philosophy was investigated and compared because of being strongly influenced by their theology. The interactive effect of theology and philosophy meant that their philosophy could be considered with an emphasis on some important aspects of their theology.

Philosophy could be considered as a discipline, a method, an activity and an essence. For the purpose of this research, philosophy was being considered as a discipline, which consisted of the branches ontology, epistemology and axiology. Anthropology was a subject of ontology. Thus a comparative study of Ghazali and Augustine in these fields was carried out with the aim of discovering the similarities more than their differences. Extraction of their similarities was expected to constitute a shared model of Islamic–Christian philosophy, which could be applied by all Muslims and Christians of the world.

Ontology

Ghazali

Ghazali considered 'existence' to be a subject of theosophical science and the greatest sought after truth. He believed that 'existence of being' really existed. The doubt that Ghazali presented in this regard was an attempt to destroy uncertainty and ignorance. It was not to deny knowing.

Ghazali paid attention to the nature of existence. He wanted to know what existence was. He considered existence as a simple and indivisible concept, and not a combined nature of several things. Existence for him was of one the most obvious concepts upon which the cognition of all things was based. Therefore, he deemed it unnecessary to define existence.

For Ghazali, referring to anything in existence was in fact a reference to God. Existence could be of high and low ranks, all of which remained a manifestation of the single Truth. Existence was deemed to be restricted only to God and His Actions.

Ghazali believed in existential unity. Existence was a beam of the Divine Beauty and, all that things belonged to Him. All things existed because of Him. Nothing had a reality without Him; and the existence of all things was a beam of Light reflecting His Being or Existence.

According to Ghazali, there was nothing in the state of being save God and His Face. Therefore, the real being or existence was peculiar to God, and all things other than Him were a manifestation of His Face.

Whithersoever you turn; there is the Face of God; God is All-Embracing; All- Knowing (Baqarah: 115)

Lasting existence was deemed to be of only for one, and that was God

O which of your Lord's bounties will you deny? All that dwells upon the earth is perishing. Yet still abides the Face of thy Lord, Majestic Splendid. (Al-Rahman. 25 - 27)

Ghazali's view and attitude towards existence was monistic. In such a view, existence or reality of being was one basic Reality or Unity. In the light of this view, the difference between different particles of being was focused on a spiritual and meta-material Unity. This opened the way to illuminate the relation of the beings and the Creator.

This view also gave a general meaning to the beings and the particles that formed it, within a spiritual frame. It saw man, as a part of a harmonious whole, not as a remote particle separate from the whole. Man was seen as a being in the world and as interested in leading himself towards the aim of his existence, which was the same as the origin of the world – that is – God. And, he aimed to do so in harmony with that meaningful whole (Rafiei 2002, p. 28–36).

Ghazali considered cognition of God to be the supreme knowledge. He believed that this kind of cognition was the very knowledge that the Prophet of Islam had ordered to be acquired even if necessary through long and troublesome journeys.

Ghazali, like most Muslim scholars, admitted that one should not try to understand the Essence of God because His Essence was such that it was impossible to put forward any question about it. Man's intellect stood to be quite astonished by comprehension of His quiddity. He maintained that God was beyond our imagination and controversies.

Instead, Ghazali spoke about God's essence, attributes and actions. He explained such topics as proof of God and His Being (existence and nature, seeing God, God's essence, attributes actions and names, etc – Rafiei 2002, p.37). Since believing in God was a natural predisposition, Ghazali had deemed that it was unnecessary to prove God, although he did sometimes spoke about proving God.

Ghazali considered proving existence of God from epistemological point of view and he found out that one could not understand presence or non-presence of God through experience. Therefore, he put forward some reasons for proving God and tried to prove him through establishing the fact that this world needed a Creator. He said that there could be no phenomenon unless there was a Creator. And, since the world itself was a phenomenon, then it could not be without the need of having a Creator.

Another way that Ghazali chose to prove God was a posteriori argument. With this approach, it was possible to understand through observation of the creatures that there was a Creator of the world. This was the reason why Ghazali invited people to undertake external and spiritual journey.

Ghazali spoke of the epistemological benefits of the familiarity with the Creation's secrets. He called the phenomenal world, as a mirror for the unseen world and claimed that one could see in it the manifestations of the Essence, its attributes and actions of the Exalted Truth (Rafiei 2002, p. 37–38).

Ghazali thus proved the existence of God (the Creator) from the existence of the world. An atomistic ontology was presupposed here, and yet there were also philosophical arguments to refute the criticism of other philosophers.

As for God's attributes however, Ghazali regarded them as 'something' different from, yet adding to God's essence and His acts. According to Ghazali, God had attributes such as knowledge, life, will, hearing, seeing and speech. These were included in God's essence and were coeternal with it.

Concerning the relationship between God's essence and His attributes – both were said to be 'not identical, but not different'. The creation of the world and subsequent changes had been produced through God's eternal knowledge, but this did not necessarily mean a change in God's attributes in line with the changes in the empirical world (Nakamura 1998).

The essence of God

No person knew about God's essence and it was impossible that anyone could know His essence. God has said in the Quran:

...they comprehend Him not in knowledge (Taha: 110).

This was why the Prophet of Islam asked people to contemplate about the creation of God. Ghazali believed that one could understand some of the attributes of God to an extent through similitude and examples giving due attention to the attributes in the essence of human spirit (Rafiei 2002, p. 39–40)

From Ghazali's viewpoint, God had some attributes. The negatives in His essence were that He had no partner, no need, no corporeal substance, no dimensions to measure and no change, etc. The positive attributes in His Essence were – life, knowledge, power, etc. His attributes of action meant that God had created all things, all things were in accordance to His will and providential scheme, etc. (Rafiei 2002, p. 41–43).

Ghazali asserted that humans could see God in the hereafter. The more a man's cognition of God was, the better and more they would be able to see Him. In his mystical approach, Ghazali spoke of love, affection and pleasure of vision of God in this world, which could be made possible through purification from carnal desires (Rafiei 2002, p. 45–47).

Ghazali admitted that the world was real, and a trifling ray of God's infinite power. Some of the most important topics that he discussed about the world could be summarized as follows: (Rafiei 2002, p. 47–53):

In Ghazali's viewpoint, God was the axis of existence and all things were dependent upon His will. Ghazali referred to God as the Writer of the Book of existence. God was the cause of all existence and existence is the effect. Ghazali was of the opinion that it was the knowledge of God that necessitated the creation of creatures. The world had been thus created for this knowledge.

The 'time' and the 'world' had been created along with each other, because in Ghazali's view, 'time' had a beginning and an end like the world.

The world belonged to God, it remained with God, and it existed for God. Ghazali believed that God's creation of the world had been decided in the eternal past, and therefore it did not imply a change in God because time itself was God's creation.

If God had complete knowledge of a person from birth to death, there would be no change in God's eternal knowledge, even though the person's life changed from moment to moment (Nakamura 1998).

For Ghazali, the world as a whole proceeded not by eternal or logical necessity, but from the will of God (Audi 2001, p.21).

Ghazali considered the world as the supreme possible world. In a posteriori argument, he emphasized the wonders of creation, and tried to lead the reader to believe that the world was the best system by reminding them of the creative and dedicated marvels of God's creation.

In a priori demonstration Ghazali tried to prove that the world had the best system, through proving that its Creator was the best. He tried to show that it was impossible that such a Creator (God) did not have the best action (the world itself) by emphasizing on some of God's attributes such as power, wisdom, knowledge and justice. He said that this world was the most perfect and best possible world (Nakamura 1998).

Augustine

For Augustine, knowing God included knowing that God exceeded our powers of comprehension and the powers of description. As he put this point in a sermon – "If you have been able to comprehend it, then is it God you contemplate?" (Matthews 2006, p. 183).

According to Augustine, the recognition that God was a true Being was accompanied by awareness that beings other than God were distinct from God and depended on God for their existence. Thus, their existence was contingent and dependent.

Augustine held that the universe was fundamentally comprised only of existing realities, that is, of natures or substances that had an existence. If one looked for something strictly contrary to God, they would find absolutely nothing, for only non-being was contrary to being. Therefore there could be no nature contrary to God (MacDonald 2006, p. 83). All existing things other than God depended on God for their being (ibid, p.84). God was the only Creator. Created things could not bring other things into existence out of nothing (Knuuttila 2006, p. 103).

Augustine's God was not only the cause of things but also the cause of our knowing them. God illuminated truths as the sun illuminated all visible things. It was not the senses that supplied knowledge, because objects perceived by them were mutable (Honderich 2005, p. 66). Knowledge was obtained through enlightenment from God – the only teacher who could do more than provide an occasion for learning (ibid, p. 67).

Instead of supposing that what we know could be abstracted from sensory particulars that imparted such knowledge, Augustine insisted that our mind was so constituted that it could see 'intelligible realities' directly from an inner illumination (Matthews 1998).

Augustine's talk of illumination was, in part, simply the deployment of an apt and traditional metaphor – that of light. He often used this metaphor in discussions about cognition, saying that whoever apprehended what was transmitted in the sciences and admitted without any hesitation that this was absolutely true, must believe that it could not be apprehended as it were, of its own accord, if it was not illuminated by another sun. Augustine concluded that no 'outward' teacher could teach what anything

really was by asking or telling us something about it. At most, the 'outward' teacher could admonish or remind us to look 'within'.

Augustine did present an argument for the existence of God and believed that God was not distinct from His attributes (Matthews 1998). Augustine believed that God was both within and beyond the creation. The created world in its beauty cried out: "He made us!" (Mcvoy 2006, p. 255–256).

Augustine was also of the opinion that God created the world out of nothing (ex nihilo) (Mautner 2005, p. 56). He maintained that the true God was the author of things (Honderich 2005, p. 66). Augustine's assumption was that nothing existed, except that it existed because God existed. Moreover, because everything changeable had a beginning and the heavens and the earth were certainly changeable as God had created them (Matthews 1998).

According to Augustine, God was Absolute Being and Absolute Good; the created being depended upon Him both for its own existence and for its goodness. That God was our happiness then, was not determined by an arbitrary 'change of taste' on the part of human beings, but on the ontological fact that God was good in Himself while we are good only when dependent upon Him (Macquarrie & Childress 2001, p. 46).

Augustine asserted that God Himself being without any beginning must be outside time: "His years do not pass but, stand simultaneously" (Honderich 2005, p. 67). According to Augustine, God created movement in the universe (Knuuttila 2006, p. 103). Time depended upon movement, and since God was unmoving, there was no time before creation (ibid, p. 106).

Anthropology

Ghazali

Ghazali believed that man was the supreme among all creatures. From his viewpoint there was no way to know a person except through the cognition of his soul.

Some of scholars have considered Ghazali as the founder of Islamic psychology. According to Ghazali, it was the spirit of human being that caused his superiority over other creatures. It was in the light of his spirit that man became the superior to all other creatures and was God's vicegerent on the earth. It was by virtue of this spirit that man had accepted human dignity and could be adorned with the beauty of knowledge. It was due to this spirit that a human being became similar to God with regards to their essence, attributes and actions.

Man's spirit was quite different from his body. The body would be destroyed but the soul would remain eternal because its substance was abstract and divine. Ghazali mentioned two aims for a man's soul – worldly and otherworldly. The desired worldly aim of the soul was acquisition of knowledge and freedom, finally attaining pure monoism, comprehension and witnessing of the oneness of existence.

If a soul achieved a real absorption into monoism or reached pure monoism, it would see nothing save God and would understand that there was nothing else in the universe but God. There was only one that was existent and that was God. In such a state, soul would see nothing else in the world but absolute beauty, absolute virtue, and absolute goodness, and would see itself consistent and united with this beauty, virtue and goodness.

Ghazali considered the vision of God in the hereafter as the desired otherworldly aim. This aim had different ranks, which were dependent on the knowledge of the soul towards God – which was called 'faith'. In other words, anyone who achieved the utmost happiness and monoism in this world would also attain the ultimate aim of seeing of God in the hereafter. That which the soul would plant in this world, it would harvest that in the hereafter.

In addition to having a vision of God, the soul would also enjoy the bounties of the hereafter, the kind and measure of which would be a function of soul's knowledge, intentions and actions in this world.

The undesired aims for the soul in this world were – paganism, disbelief, ignorance, egoism, ambition and oppression. The undesired aim of the soul in the hereafter was deprivation from vision of God and being unable to benefit from God's bounties and being afflicted in the hell's doom, the kind and measure of which would be determined by the state of the worldly life of the soul (Rafiei 2002, p. 54–69).

According to Ghazali, whosoever did not know his soul could only recognize the superficial and external surface of the religion, and he was in fact alien to the reality of the religion. Ghazali emphasized that one could not know God without the cognition of their soul. This soul remained the divine aspect of mankind. Although it was not primordial, it was everlasting. It was essential, single, simple, and abstract. Body served as an instrument for the soul. And, it was up to human beings to achieve the perfection of their soul.

Ghazali believed that this perfection could only be attained in the light of the religion, and people could only achieve happiness and perfection by following the religion. In other words, following the religion was considered to be happiness, and happiness and perfection were dependent on surrendering to it (Rafiei 2002, p. 236–238).

According to Ghazali, human beings consisted of body and soul, but their essence was the soul. The human soul being a spiritual substance was totally different from the body. It was something divine, which made it possible for the human being to have knowledge of God. According to Ghazali, the body was a vehicle or an instrument for the soul (Nakamura 1998 & Skellie 1938, p. 31) on its way to the hereafter, and had various faculties to maintain the bodily activities. When virtues of temperance, courage, wisdom and intellect were moderate, harmonious and well balanced, then happiness and justice were found.

In reality, however, there was an excess or deficiency in each faculty, and so various vicious characteristics were found. The fundamental cause for all this was a love of the world. The purpose of

religious exercises was to rectify these evil traits of the soul through bodily exercises by utilizing the inner relationship between the soul and the body (Nakamura 1998).

Ghazali called death 'the small resurrection' which accepted soul in the state that it is after death (Nakamura, 1998). Ghazali believed that thereafter it was in the light of the heart of man that he was been given the great honor and was considered qualified to draw near to God (Skellie 1938, p. 25).

Ghazali admitted that the powers of human volition acted as God's power. Human power and action were both created by God and therefore, human action was actually a creation of God. Yet, it was also human acquisition of God's will, which was reflected in human volition. Thus Ghazali tried to harmonize God's and our own responsibility for our actions (Nakamura 1998).

Ghazali emphasized the contingency of everything and God's complete freedom of decision. He inclined towards a neo-platonic mysticism (Mautner 2005). Ghazali said that while God could place any obligations that He wished upon us, it was also incumbent on Him to do what was best for us and to give rewards and punishments according to our obedience or disobedience. However, He was absolutely free and was under no obligation at all, so this was unimaginable for God (Nakamura, 1998).

Augustine

Augustine desired to know God and the soul. Later he expressed the same desire in his prayer – "God ever the same, may I know you, and may I know myself" (Teske 2006, p. 116).

He simply wanted to know his own soul. Augustine's search for self-knowledge continued through many of his other writings. He decided that the admonition to "know self" was to be understood as an admonition not to turn away from oneself but to live according to one's nature under God's will (Matthews 2006, p. 1777).

Augustine also spoke of a divine soul. He asserted that the soul was divine. He later described a life devoted to reason as living in accordance with the divine aspect of the soul (Taske 2006, p 117–118).

Augustine said that soul was superior in its nature to the world, since it was the source of life for the body. Augustine tried to identify the presence of God within the soul by means of self-knowledge. The better one knew himself, the more one appreciated God's transcendence of His creation.

God had left a distinctive mark of His presence at the deepest point of human self-consciousness, which corresponded to His transcendence. It was expressed as the joy that soul felt in the truth, which was completely ineradicable from the human mind and memory (McEvoy 2006, p. 256). Augustine believed that although souls were incorporeal, soul was also a part of nature or a substance. And, until the general resurrection, the souls of the dead would 'live' without bodies (Honderich 2005, p. 67).

Augustine claimed that the will was 'in our power'. Since it was in our control, it was free for us. He asserted that that God, through His Knowledge, was the cause of all that He foreknew, including a free

choice of the will.

Since Augustine defined 'will' as a movement of the soul, under no compulsion, toward getting or not losing something. It thus followed that human will was free from compulsion. Augustine maintained that the grace of God could work on the human will without destroying its freedom (Matthews 1998). Moreover, among the things that God foreknew the things that we would to do out of our own free choice (ibid).

Augustine maintained that although we were free agents our freedom operated within major constraints imposed by original sin and the possibility of our reaching towards our supernatural destiny, let alone attaining it, depended upon God's aid (Mautner 2005, p. 56).

Augustine said that one must not think that free choice had been removed because (the Apostle) said, "It is God who works in you both to will and to do, of (His) good will." Because if this were so, he would not have said above, "Work out your own salvation in fear and trembling." For when it was commanded that they work, their free will was being invoked (Stump 2006, p. 134).

Augustine affirmed the reality of the 'Fall', and of the original sin as the inherited moral disease that we all bear. It was only curable by God's grace. This teaching confirmed the predestination of the elect, for grace would always be a gift rather than earned (Blakburn 2005, p. 29).

According to Augustine, men were not able to 'fulfill the divine commands' without God's aid, nor even to 'will and believe' aright without God's 'acting'. To those who received them these benefits came as grace, unmerited, and God's will in bringing them 'could not be resisted'. Yet it seems that what could not be resisted was not received free and in one mode. Augustine at last confessed that though 'I tried hard to maintain the free decision of human will, the grace of God was victorious' (Honderich 2005, p. 67). Augustine thus admitted the inability of human will to do morally good actions without the grace of God (Audi 2001, p. 61).

Epistemology

Ghazali

Ghazali believed that human beings could acquire knowledge in two general ways. Firstly, it was through instruction. This was carried out with the help of a teacher or senses and intellect, through which the sensory world, that he also called phenomenal world, became known. This way of learning was possible for the general public.

Secondly, it could occur by Divine instruction whereby the knowledge was acquired directly, without the mediation of other people. From Ghazali's viewpoint of, this kind of knowledge could be obtained through two ways – schooling and instruction from outside along with learning through inner thinking.

Ghazali considered inner thinking as part of external instruction and schooling. He added that instruction was learning of one person from another, and thinking was the use of the soul's knowledge from the general soul. He believed that the instructional effect of the general soul was much more powerful than learning of a person from another person (like himself).

Ghazali divided Divine instruction into two kinds – inspired and revealed. He believed that a revelation was particular to God's prophets who had attained the perfection of soul through purification and refinement so as to directly acquire knowledge from God. He considered inspiration (instinctus insitus as a kind of revelation, which was reserved for the souls that had somewhat approached the prophets of God from the point of view soul's purification.

Revelation was the direct, immediate and explicit instruction of super naturalistic subjects. Inspiration (instincuts insitus) was their figurative instruction. Revelation was called prophetic knowledge, and inspiration was called inner knowledge (Rafiei 2002, p. 70–71).

Ghazali believed that knowledge caused nearness of student to God. But for him, morality was higher in worth than knowledge, and all the reprehensible properties of scholars were due to lack of refinement of the soul and from not learning the religious wisdom. Instruction and learning without soul's purification was the cause of corruption.

Ghazali not only believed in the precedence of self-purification to instruction, but also he deemed it impossible for one to acquire a real knowledge unless it was in the light of a purified soul. He referred to this fact that the real knowledge and sin could not be gathered in one person. Whosoever knew even the introduction of real knowledge would surely come to know that sin was like mortal deadly poison and thus he or she would avoid committing sins. If it was sometimes seen that some people spoke of real knowledge while having blameworthy dispositions, they were not scholars in actual fact (Rafiei 2002, p 152–152).

Ghazali called reason (intellect) the balance of God upon the earth. Reason for him, was like a mirror that showed all virtues and vices, and all goodness was due to rational thought. Whosoever had intellect, it would lead him to knowledge, and whosoever had knowledge and did not have intellect or reason, all their work was upended.

Anyone who had complete reason and knowledge was a messenger, or a wise person, or an Imam. Ghazali believed that the virtue, goodness, esteem and order of the two worlds of people were due to reason. It was in the light of reason that man became God's vicegerent. Reason served as man's divine eye through which a human could comprehend the mysteries and philosophy of the affairs, because reason was a sample of the light of the Great God, and it was His manifestation among mankind.

In spite of all of these, the reason or intellect by itself had some veils, which decreased its efficiency. Therefore, a man could not reach happiness by reason alone. This was so because there were some things that were necessary for human happiness but reason could not find them. While Ghazali deemed

it possible to comprehend truth and to find out the episteme, he believed that only very few people could reach such a status through reason. In his view, it might not be even possible for one person in an era to attain such level of reason and intellect to be able to achieve truth and a true cognition or episteme in the light of reason alone. The remedy lay in appealing to religion.

Ghazali was of the opinion that the reason could not be guided right unless it was through religion, and religion could only be interpreted right in the light of reason. Reason was like eye, and religion was like light – eye was unable to do anything without light, and light had no benefit without the eye. Therefore, religion could be seen as external reason and reason as internal religion for human being. These two were the helpers for each other. These two could in fact be considered as one single thing.

Thus according to Ghazali, religion and God's grace should be there to help human beings so that reason could bring them to happiness. Failing this, it might be that one doubted even in prima. Ghazali himself was involved in such an epistemological crisis in a part of his life, and according to him, it was only due to the help of a spiritual light, which God shone onto his heart that he was saved.

Ghazali admitted that reason, as other natural powers of humans, could be nurtured, and introduced through instruction, learning, teaching, and thinking about the best ways of nurturing reason. Ghazali believed that thinking caused an increase in affection for God, for one's heart loved someone in whose greatness they believed in. And, the appreciation of Glory and Greatness of God was obtained through cognition of His Attributes and Deeds. Thinking caused cognition, and cognition caused knowledge, and reverence caused affection.

Ghazali invited people to external and spiritual journey for the subject of thinking. He invited people and students towards self-cognition. (Rafiei 2002, p. 201–204). Ghazali said that thinking had two results – particular or direct and general or indirect.

The particular and direct outcome of thinking was creation of transformation and development in one's cognitive respect. The general and indirect result of thinking was the creation of transformation and development in one's cognitive, affective and behavioral aspect. In other words, it was true that thinking originally and directly affected individuals' cognitive domain, but since this domain influenced the affective aspect, and the affective aspect had impact on the people's behavioral domain, then with transformation and development of the cognitive domain, man's affective and behavioral domains of personality were transformed.

Cognition of the correct method of thinking was the product of Divine light, which shone naturally in the hearts of people such as prophets, or it might be a result of instruction, repetition and practice. One could reach God through thinking about God's creation and creatures (Rafiei 2002, p. 290–291).

Ghazali valued the insight given by mystical comprehension of things over and above that achieved through logic or reason (Blackburn 2005, p. 152). He believed that there was no way to certain knowledge or the conviction of revelatory truth except through Sufism. This implied that the traditional

form of Islamic faith was in a very critical state during the lifetime of Ghazali (Nakamura 1998).

The noblest kind of knowledge was considered to be the knowledge of God, His attributes and His deeds. Through this came man's perfection, and in his perfection lay his happiness and worthiness to live close to the Divine Majesty and His perfection.

Knowledge was said to be the end to which man had been destined for and it was the special characteristic for which he had been created (Skellie 1938, p 31). Ghazali approved seeing of God as a kind of knowledge, which was beyond corporeality. In fact, later he gave a deep mystical and philosophical meaning to the vision of God. God remained a personal and an absolute reality beyond human reason (Nakamura, 1998). Ghazali said that he owed his deliverance, not to a concatenation of proofs and arguments, but to the light, which God caused to penetrate into his heart (Ghazali 1909, p. 18).

Augustine

Augustine is said to have 'active' theory about sense of perception. The term 'active' in this context involved the idea that during a vision the eyes emitted rays, which touched the object that was being visualized.

More generally it was Augustine's contention that, while physical sense organs underwent a change during perception, perception was not something carried out by the soul. It was something that the body underwent per se and it was not hidden from the soul. The soul only took note of what body underwent as the body perceived it. The soul experienced it through the body – which messenger, as it were, was used by the soul to transform itself towards the very thing that was brought to its attention from outside.

Augustine asserted that there were three kinds of vision – physical, spiritual and intellectual. What Augustine stated as the physical vision was in fact a sensory perception of the body; spiritual vision was the stimulation of mental imagery, whether in memory or imagination; and intellectual vision was the non-imaginal perception of universal objects, structures and truths.

This work included Augustine's most serious attempt to account for errors in the sensory perception. It also included one of his most beautiful descriptions of mystical vision, and in fact this work later took on great significance in the middle ages, for the discussion of mysticism (Matthews 1998).

According to Augustine, we could learn from nature because it showed or presented experience to our bodily senses. Nature – this sun and the light pervading and clothing all things that were present, the moon and the other stars, the lands and the seas, and the countless things begotten in them – showed and displayed aspects of itself to those paying attention to it (Quinn 1998, p. 82).

When discussing the relationship of faith and reason, Augustine characteristically insisted that faith must precede understanding. For understanding was the reward of faith; therefore he ordered not to seek to

understand in order to believe, but believe so that you would understand.

Augustine divided the things to be believed into three classes. The first ranged over the temporal dealings of human beings. These were things that were 'always believed and never understood'. In second group were those which were 'understood as soon as they were believed' – these are based upon human reasoning. It was the third group, which concerned divine dealings that were believed first and understood afterwards (Matthews 1998).

Augustine held that while reason established existence of God, it could not, unlike the scriptural revelations, disclose the historical truths of creation, fall, incarnation and redemption, knowledge of which was necessary for salvation; and nor, unlike spiritual prayer, could it bring the seeker into beatific union with God. For this to happen, there had to be grace and faith (Mautner 2005, p. 56).

Augustine asserted that no one other than God could show or present to anyone intelligible things, which could only be perceived by the mind. According to Augustine when we dealt with things perceived by the mind, using intellect and reason, we were speaking about things that were being looked upon immediately in the inner light of truth, in virtue of which the so-called inner man was illuminated and rejoiced, taught by things made manifest within by themselves when God disclosed them. God taught us about intelligible things by showing or presenting them directly to our minds (Quinn 1998, p. 82–83).

Augustine normally held that in this life we could know a certain amount about God by reason alone, but this would not be enough for happiness and salvation. Our consequent need for faith or true belief, in matters of religion could be compared with our need for and reliance on the belief in other areas of our lives (Rist 2006, p. 26). Faith, necessarily associated with hope, was required as a prerequisite to understanding (ibid, p.32).

According to Augustine we were too weak to discover the truth by reason alone and for this reason need the authority of the sacred books (Matthews, 2006, p. 183). Augustine told us that it is the light of God, by which the mind was able to discern the objects of intellectual vision (Matthews 2006, p. 180). Christ the inner teacher dwelt within. Augustine insisted that the 'intelligible realities', which presumably included what we thought of as a priori truths, could not be learned or even confirmed through sensory experiences (ibid).

Perhaps Augustine's idea of Divine illumination was meant to invoke supernatural aid in dealing with the problem of ambiguity (Matthews 2006, p. 181). Augustine maintained that introspection or inwardness was the way of discovering the created hierarchies by which to ascend to God (Audi 2001, p. 61).

Axiology

Ghazali

Ethics was one of the most important discussions that Ghazali put forward in his writings. He spoke of three ethical approaches in his moral instructions, i.e. his moral instructions were based on these three approaches – philosophical, theological or religious and mystical.

As for the philosophical ethics, Ghazali referred to cardinal moral virtues, i.e. eminence, wisdom, courage and chastity. He considered each virtue as the moderation of the two extremes. Regarding theological or religious ethics, Ghazali did not consider moral virtues as restricted to the mentioned virtues. He also believed in confined virtues (based on the religion) and Divine–aided virtues.

Ghazali admitted that it was impossible to acquire virtues without the Divine grace. Therefore confined and Divine-aided virtues were both necessary for human happiness and obtaining the content of God.

In religious ethics, obeying the commandments produced virtue (eminence) and not obeying them led to vice. Ghazali distinguished between the morality of general public and the elite where mystical ethics was concerned,. He was of the opinion that the virtues of the elite was not focused only on happiness in the hereafter, rather it was directed at obtaining God's content, nearness to Him and His Vision.

Ghazali believed that four things were involved in a morality of good or bad – good or bad behavior, recognition of good from bad, ability to do good or bad, constant and soul–related state which had attitude to do good or bad work and invited man towards them, making those easy for him.

Ghazali said that the thing, which was considered as morality and directed behaviour was the fourth state. In other words, behaviour is moral when it becomes a part of one's personality and character. Then it can be considered as one's (second) nature.

Ghazali considered soul's purification as the superior of practical sciences, because if this refinement was carried out and one reached moderation in behavior, such moderation would influence his behavior in family and society. He argued that how it could be possible – if soul refinement had not prepared a person and he could not administer his own soul – that he would be able to administer his family or his society?

According to Ghazali, when power of thinking was purified, as it deserved to be, wisdom was prepared in its light. The result of such wisdom would be the fact that one could recognize truth from falsehood in their beliefs, and would understand right from wrong in their speech, and would distinguish beauty from ugliness in their behavior (Rafiei, 2002, p. 245).

According to Ghazali, the totality of man's happiness therein lay in making the meeting with God, his aim. The abode of the world in the hereafter was to be considered his final dwelling place, the present world was his temporary stopping place, the body was his vehicle, and its members were his servants (Skellie 1938, p. 33).

The greatest joy for Ghazali was seeing God in the intellectual or spiritual sense of the beatific vision. In comparison with this, sensuous pleasures were nothing. The beatific vision of God by the elite after the quickening of the bodies, or the great resurrection, has been an intellectual view in opinion of the philosophers. The mystical experience of the Sufi was a foretaste of the real vision of God in the hereafter (Nakamura, 1998).

According to Ghazali, the doors of mercy were opened for some people, who were bestowed generously by reason of goodness and generosity of God who did not begrudge it for anyone. However it appeared only in those hearts that were exposed to the gifts of God. This exposing of one's self to these gifts was done through cleansing and purifying the heart from evil and from turbidity, which came from a blameworthy character (Skellie 1938, p. 29–30).

Ghazali was of the opinion that whosoever spent his energy in pursuing the bodily pleasures and ate like animals did was brought down to the depths deserving of brutes (Skellie 1938, p. 32).

Augustine

According to Augustine, God was the highest good. Ontological ranking and value ranking therefore coincided – the Highest Being was the highest good. Moreover, just as all agreed, it was God that they had to place above all other things. So the happiness that everyone sought was the highest good (Macdonald 2006, p. 79).

Augustine reminded his readers that anything good in human person, including any goodness in the will, was a gift from God. In his view, human beings were unable to form a good volition unless God produced it in them or cooperated in producing it (Stump 2006, p. 131).

Augustine asserted that moral virtues such as continence could not be acquired without divine assistance. God spoke to us through discourses contained in oral sermons and written scriptures (Quinn 1998, p. 91).

Augustine maintained that a good conduct was motivated mainly by an individual's desire for reward, whether now or in heaven. In such cases the regard for self, overshadowed the regard for the other. Self-love predominated clearly over love of God and neighbor (Kent 2006, p. 215).

Augustine argued that the universe was good on the whole, and that evil was only a privation or absence of that which was good. In the case of moral evil, this resulted out of free will (Blackburn 2005, p. 28). According to this view, any evil was not a thing, a substance or a property, but rather it was an absence of what should be there, or a privation. His idea obviated the need to look for a creative source of evil. It also offered a way to reconcile the human condition, and that of the world more generally, with the existence of an all–knowing, all–powerful, all–good creator ('All things that existed therefore, seeing that the Creator of all of them was supremely good, were themselves good... but their good may be diminished' – Mautner 2005, p. 56).

According to Augustine, God made everything, and all that He made was good. The attribute of evil arose from a tendency of things to decay: 'for a thing to be evil meant for it to fall away from the state of its own being and tend towards a state in which it was not'.

The ordinary course of nature was the regular and planned unfolding of causal or 'seminal' reasons, which dated from the creation when God 'completed' his work (Honderich, 2005, p. 66). Augustine defined evil as the 'absence of good.' Since existence was good (as it had been created by God), evil was the negative element of existence, a privation of existence (Pojman, 2003, p. 407).

Evil was not a reality but a mere privation and so, in a way, it did not exist. Yet the fear of something nonexistent itself will be evil (Matthews, 1998). Only good things come from the supremely good God. Hence, evil must be not be in nature but a privation in or corruption of an existing nature.

The Universe could not fundamentally be comprised of opposing natures – good and evil. Cosmological monism being true, evil could not exist in nature or a substance. It could not have been created by God, and could not have been originated from a divine power independent of God (Macdonald 2006, p. 84).

Augustine shared with ancient philosophers the conception of ethics into an inquiry into the supreme good – that which we sought for its own sake, never for the sake of some further end and that which made us happy. He also shared the conviction that all human beings by nature wanted to be happy. He agreed that happiness was a condition of objective well–being, not merely a pleasure a person might gain by satisfying whatever desires they happened to have, irrespective of it being a delusion or self–destructive in nature.

He argued that happiness was possible only in the afterlife, as happiness was a gift of God's grace, so, too was virtue – a free gift, which could not be earned through one's own natural resources or independent merits. Augustine contended that all virtues were rooted in self as a God–given charity (Kent 2006, p. 232). With God's grace, the greatest sinner might be converted to be a virtuous one (ibid, p. 234). Augustine believed that if happiness were given only in accordance with the human merit, grace would not remain grace (ibid, p. 235).

Happiness was one of Augustine's lifelong themes. His two most consistently recurring ideas were that – one, all human beings without exception had a desire to be happy and second, his overriding conviction was that no thing and no person could fulfill their own desire for happiness. No experience or any object of desire, even when attained, could make one completely and reliably happy. This could not be attained even through attainment of the highest ideal open to humankind, such as the search for wisdom and their love of it (McEvoy 2006, p. 255).

Augustine believed that two quasi-ideas – happiness and truth – gave coherence to our entire mental and affective life. This happened in ways that we were not fully conscious of and which did not lay within our powers to alter. Everything we thought, desired or did was structured by these two primal instincts and was their expression. These came together, when we found 'joy in the truth' (McEvoy 2006, p. 256).

Augustine maintained that the true God was at once the author of things, the illuminator of truth, and the giver of happiness (Honderich 2005, p. 66). He asserted that all human actions arose from a quest for happiness. God alone could make human beings happy, and happiness could not be reached by solitary individuals on their own or living under the conditions of their earthly existence. The way to happiness lay through faith in the mediator and obedience to his commands (Macquarrie & Childress, 2001, p. 46).

For Augustine, happiness consisted what could be achieved in the afterlife for virtue that was present in this life. Virtue itself was a gift of God. It was founded on love, and not on the wisdom that was prized by philosophers (Kent 2006, p. 205).

Augustine thought that we all do and we ought to pursue happiness, which he equated with seeking the experience of joy. As he saw it, all humans aspired to be happy. He remarked that if people were asked whether they would like to be happy, each would at once respond without the least hesitation, that they would choose to be so.

For Augustine, the happy life consisted of joy grounded in and caused by God. Still he was well aware that to find happiness, they did not want to find God as their source of joy. Rather a happy life was joy based on the truth. This joy was grounded in God, He being the Truth itself.

Augustine believed that the human heart remained restless until it rested in God (Quinn, 1998, p. 86–87). According to Augustine, friendship was depicted as a source of intense happiness. He thought that happiness should lie in loving friends with a sense of mortality that alone could allow the precious value of every present moment to be savoured in its entirety.

Such happiness could not be had without a faith in God's providential love and eternal life (McEvoy, 2006, p. 257). Augustine believed that the motivation of any act or attitude was love (most commonly *dilectio*), which is a metaphysical dynamism at the heart of all cosmic movement.

Whether love was right or wrong, could be distinguished by the appropriateness of the object that was loved. In Augustine's interpretation of New Testatment (NT) ethics, a virtue was conformity of love as all-embracing category in ethics, which corresponded with the unprecedented centrality assigned to Matt. 22:39 and parallel Gal. 5:14; and Rom. 13:9.

Love must always be subjected to norms, as it followed the cognitive recognition of the structure of reality. It is not possible that any object of love would be without a value, since it was always possible to recognize the created goodness, even in the midst of its corruption (Maguarrie & Childress 2001, p. 47).

According to Augustine then, there was one virtue and the whole of virtue was to love what you saw and the greatest happiness was to have what you love (Matthews, 1998). Augustine believed that virtue required loving others, as they deserved to be loved, according to their intrinsic worth; instead of being in proportion to how well they happened to serve our own interest or satisfy our own desires.

A virtuous person will therefore never regard others as merely the means to her own needs. Augustine explained that we must love our neighbor as a human being, for his intrinsic worth, and not for some pleasure or advantage that we hoped to derive from him. We must love people because they belonged to God, not because they belonged to us. To love somebody should be not because he was your son rather because he was a human being, made in the image of and belonging to God. This was so because God alone was to be loved for His own sake, i.e. to be 'enjoyed' and all human beings were to be loved for the sake of God, i.e. to be 'used' (Kent 2006, p. 214).

Augustine said: "A short and true definition of virtue was due ordering of love". Aquinas and he could demonstrate how one could go from self-love to the love for others, from selfish love of the others to selfless love for them, from covetousness to benevolence, and from benevolence to charity, in summary, from 'eros' to 'philia' and then, sometimes, at least as little, as a distant possibility, from 'philia' to 'agape'.

Augustine said that where there was humility, there was also charity. This was because humility led to love. In Augustine's famous phrase, he said – "I was not in love as yet, yet I loved to love". Whenever the feeling of love failed to triumph or blossom, this could suffice in any case for love to remain valid as a model or commandment (Comte–Sponville, 2003).

Discussing virtue and vice Augustine contrasted those things that were desirable in themselves with those that were desirable for the sake of something else. He said that things of the first type were to be enjoyed whereas those of the second sort were to be used. Vice was waiting to use what was to be enjoyed or wanting to enjoy what was to be used (Matthews, 1998).

In the discussion of teaching by preaching, Augustine considered the problem of how to address those who knew what ought to be done yet did not do it. For him an important part of moral education involved persuading people to do what they ought to do. However, merely instructing them about what they ought to do was not always sufficient to persuade them to do it.

When there was resistance to doing what ought to be done, teaching in the grand style was aimed at moving an adverse mind towards conversion. But conversion could not be achieved without divine assistance. Since an attempt at persuasion would succeed only if God assisted it. Therefore, anyone who engaged in moral teaching needed to pray that God placed a good speech in his mouth (Quinn 1998, p. 86).

Conclusion

It can be concluded from this article that there were many similarities between the views that Ghazali and Augustine held on philosophy. Considering Ghazali as a representative of Islam, and Augustine as a representative of Christianity it could be claimed that these similarities could somehow be attributed as common to both Islamic and Christian philosophy. Thus, a shared model of Islamic and Christian

philosophical ideas could be expected so that both Muslim and Christian philosophers all over the world could utilize it.

Some of the important shared views of Ghazali and Augustine on ontology, anthropology, epistemology and axiology that have been extracted and summarized have been put forward in this article as follows:

The world was not restricted to matter. Non-material things existed too. On this premise, therefore, God existed as well.

God was beyond man's comprehension and man could not know His Essence and nor could he define or describe Him in words.

God's essence and attributes were not separate from each other but were one. No phenomena could exist without a Creator, i.e. God. God had created the world. The world was real, God being the cause and the existence was His effect. The world itself was a manifestation of God and a higher and unseen world, the universe being a goal-centered system.

Human being was a combination of body and spirit. This spirit would not be destroyed after death. There would be resurrection and hereafter for all human beings.

Human beings had a divine eternal and a non-material soul. Whosoever did not know his soul would not know God and himself and would attain only a superficial knowledge of the religion.

Man had been created to be similar to God in his attributes. He possessed from his origins – a very good personality and the best of properties. He could remain good and achieve the highest positions by the grace of God. His virtues were dependent on God's aid.

Man had been purposefully created to reach God and acquire a nearness to God by achieving his vision. They had free will, authority and freedom. This was so because God wanted to create human beings with these characteristics. Therefore, man's freedom and will were not against the authority of God.

Man's senses played an introductory role in the process of perception and understanding. These senses prepared for cognition to be introduced to the mind. One's soul or spirit played a very great and important role in the cognition. Man's intellect by itself was not sufficient for this.

Faith along with reason or intellect could cause man to have a perfect perception. Faith came before reason in this process. Reason alone was unable to understand particular details of creation and religion, and therefore it was not enough to bring the humans to salvation, happiness and the goals for which human beings had been created.

God's guidance, grace and aid, revelation, religion, Divine scriptures, faith, reason and senses were all of necessary elements necessary for man's salvation and happiness. Values and virtues obtained in the light of God's aid and grace were needed for man to be truly happy. Obeying God's commandments

produced virtue and disobedience toward His commandments led to vice.

The real learned did not only focus on happiness in the hereafter, rather they attempted to obtain God's content, nearness and vision in this life itself. Man's greatest happiness lay in the spiritual and intellectual meeting with God. Other sensory pleasures were worthless as compared with the greatness of such happiness. In spite of enjoying high ranks of happiness in this world, the good human beings would get real happiness in the hereafter too.

Happiness could not be obtained through the worldly things; rather it could only be achieved in the light of faith and through obeying God's commandments. It was based on truth i.e. God. Man's rest also lay in this fact. Therefore, it was up to all of human beings to seek such happiness and rest.

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