

Hermeneutics of Al-Ghazzālī Concerning Mercy (*al-Raḥmah*) and its Social Applications: A Religio-Ethical Study

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Abstract: *This contribution examines the work of Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī (d.1111) concerning various dimensions of Mercy (al-Raḥmah) in Islam and its applications in our daily life to rectify ourselves participating in the society. It is a significant aspect of Islamic thought to grasp the role of Divine Mercy (DM) in the anthropocosmic entities and its mutual link in the God, Man and Universe Relationship (GMUR). In this qualitative research, we reviewed the theological insight of al-Ghazzālī regarding Divine Mercy (al-Raḥmah al-Ilāhīyah) and on the other hand, his interpretation about multiple ethical values exercising mercy (al-Raḥmah) at the human level. This work finds that the Islamic concept of mercy is not just an idea and dogmatic perception. It has the practical facets for human attitude and behaviour associated with constructive social input demanded by the Qurʾān and Sunnah. He provided several principles to contextualize making sense of Islamic morality and ethics on a pragmatic scale to enhance and preserve the values for communal amelioration. His contribution shows that with the application of mercy (al-Raḥmah), the relationship with the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣallā llāhu ʿalayhi wa-sallam) should be based upon obedience and spiritual affection, self-purification (heart-cleansing) getting away from any kind of unethical performance and the functions of intellect all are mutually associated. It leads us to think about the framework of Raḥmah-Oriented Society (ROS) in the current global scenario is a supreme need of the Muslim Ummah for the harmonic functions of social*

matters. It leads us to exercise within the genre of moral par-excellence (makārim al-akhḷāq) rooted in Islamic al-Raḥmah Paradigm.

Keywords: *Al-Ghazzālī, Hermeneutical Approach, al-Raḥmah, GMUR, Ethical Applications, ROS*

I. Introduction

Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad bin Muḥammad bin Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī (d.1111), was born in Iran and also known as ‘*Hujjat al-Islām*’ i.e., the Proof of Islam. He addressed several themes and issues of philosophy, theology, creed and Sufism etc. His magnum opus *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* is a famous contribution around the world concerning the revivification of the religious sciences. He was a disciple of Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī al-Shāfi’ī (d.1085), a distinguished Ash‘arite expert in theology and jurisprudence. Consulting the relevant parts of the literature of al-Ghazzālī (d.1111) concerning *al-Raḥmah al-Ilāhiyyah* (DM), we need to understand his thought and theological remarks about Divine Names and Attributes which are mutually linked with the notion *al-Raḥmah* (mercy). His explanation regarding Divine Mercy (DM) and Divine Name al-Raḥmān (the Most Merciful) projects the Ghazzālīan concept of mercy along with the other relevant ideas.

This paper includes the relationship of Allah Almighty with His creatures and devotee with special reference to *al-Raḥmah al-Ilāhiyyah* (DM). In order to bestow His favour and mercy upon the human being, Allah Almighty conveyed to us multiple sources to acquire mercy. In this way, the glimpse of Divine Traits (*Ikhḷāq al-Allah*) and Attributes may be manifested in human life keeping in view the Prophetic teachings where the doctrine of matchlessness and Oneness of Allah Almighty (*Tawḥīd*) with a distinct position required to pay undivided attention. On the other hand, compassion-oriented work has two prongs association. One is from Allah Almighty; to acquire the Divine Blessing and mercy and the other direction is towards human beings and His Creature which is worthy of consideration with due respect, love, peace and mercy.

In the complex situation of Islamic scholarship, al-Ghazzālī emerges as a luminary whose profound insights have left an indelible mark on the intellectual and spiritual heritage of Islam. This paper delves into the hermeneutics of al-Ghazzālī, focusing on his understanding of mercy (*al-Raḥmah*) and its multifaceted social applications. We focused practical implications of al-Ghazzālī's hermeneutical approach concerning mercy, emphasizing its role in shaping a compassionate and just society. This religio-ethical study aims to shed light on the enduring relevance of al-Ghazzālī's perspectives, transcending temporal boundaries to offer valuable insights for contemporary discourse on ethics, compassion, and social justice within the Islamic tradition.

Looking into some valuable contributions of al-Ghazzālī, we may be able to think about his thought and philosophical development. For example, *Iḥyā’ al-‘Ulūm al-Dīn* (The Revival of Religious Sciences) is a monumental work, written in the early part of al-Ghazzālī's career. It explores various aspects of

Islamic spirituality, ethics, and jurisprudence presenting his initial focus on ethical issues. Moreover, *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* (The Incoherence of the Philosophers), marks a critical phase in al-Ghazzālī's intellectual journey. It criticizes the philosophical ideas of the time, signaling a shift towards skepticism regarding rationalistic philosophy. al-Ghazzālī concerning reason (*'aql*) has the opinion that reason is the principle of *naql*. Without prophet and Sharī'ah, establishing reason is impossible. Both are Nūr (light) from Allah Almighty, therefore between reason and *naql* there is no inconsistency. According to him, both strengthen and defend each other. (Ali Akhbar & Rozi, 2020)

Al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl (The Deliverance from Error), this work, documents his personal spiritual journey. It reflects his introspection, struggles, and eventual turn towards Sufism, showcasing a transformative period in his thought. Due to his work we may think a paradigm shift in Islamic thought in the twelfth century. By underlining the limits of the rational understanding of prophecy, he reinstated the fading orthodox narrative through a much more dynamic and logical understanding. (Ashar Khan, 2021)

It's important to note that al-Ghazali's intellectual journey is characterized by shifts and development. While earlier works may emphasize legal and ethical considerations, later works demonstrate a heightened focus on mysticism and Sufism, indicating a transformative evolution in his philosophical and theological outlook. W. Montgomery Watt writes about al-Ghazzālī's transformation as:

“At length God cured me of the malady; my being was restored to health and an even balance; the necessary truths of the intellect became once more accepted, as I regained confidence in their certain and trustworthy character. This did not come about by systematic demonstration or marshalled argument, but by a light which God most high cast into my breast. That light is the key to the greater part of knowledge” (Watt,1952)

Let us analyse the interpretations of al-Ghazzālī (d.IIIII) about mercy and its applications in our daily life. There are several etiquettes encapsulated with *al-rahmah* which can be exercised at individual level in the light of his teachings. On the whole, to embellish social life with good manners for upward trend of moral values permit us to focus upon a *Rahmah-Oriented Society* (ROS), a supreme need of Muslim Ummah today. Therefore, this study concentrates various religio-ethical dimensions to know how mercy functions making a harmonic style in the social life securing peace and morality within the Muslim communities and its positive impacts upon the others races and the followers of different religions. This work will help to analyse an ethico-religious worldview recommended by *al-rahmah* in Islam.

2. A Comprehensive Outlook of Al-Ghazzālī regarding Mercy (*al-Rahmah*)

Abū Ḥāmid (d.IIIII) speaks about the universality of DM. In this regard, *Rahmah* should be understood in its original context concentrating the semantic layers associated with its derivatives. He

emphasized the Qur'ānic verses and relevant linguistic parameter. In the light of Qur'ānic verse (3:159) and linguistic background of the word *Rahmah*, he gives us the concept of alertness, vigilance and motivation (to do what is right). (Al-Ghazzālī, *Haitu*, 152, 1419 AH). DM embraces deserving and undeserving. It includes this world and the world Hereafter. DM wants to fulfill the necessities of the needy and it enfolds an object of mercy whereas no one is an object of mercy unless he is in need (Al-Ghazzālī, 53, 1970). Indeed, DM results in the entrance to Paradise and Divine Meeting (*liqā' Allah*). It does not descend due to *zīkr* only (mentioning the pious people)? But it (*zīkr*) brings down a reason (*sabab*) for 'bestowal of mercy'. For the heart is moved to become eager to imitate the righteousness and rectitude and to reject shortcomings, negligence and indulgence in unethical activities. The principle and the origin of the mercy is doing good, and the principle of doing good is desire (*al-Raghbah*), and the principle of desire (*al-Raghbah*) is to mention the conditions of the righteous. This is the meaning (giving the sense) of mercy in descending form (*nuzūl al-Rahmah*). The cause of curse is to go away from the remembrance of Allah Almighty and to keep one busy with the worldly comforts (Al-Ghazzālī, n-d., 2:231). Referring to a Ḥadīth, Al-Ghazzālī (d.1111) mentioned:

“show mercy to a riding animal and do not load to it beyond its capacity. Don't beat it on its face as it is prohibited. Don't sleep over its back as it gives trouble to the riding animal.” (Al-Ghazzālī, n-d., 2:159)

Al-Ghazzālī's description of the Divine Name *al-Rahmān; the Most Merciful* consists of four layers, mentioning both worlds and various manifestations of Mercy of Allah Almighty towards humanity. Divine Name *al-Rahmān* is One who fulfills the necessities of a needy person, whether he is worthy of or not. We examined his views about DM in the four steps. Firstly, Allah Almighty created man and (according to him) creation (*takhliq*) is an expression of Divine Mercy and manifestation of His Love. Secondly, Divine Guidance (*hidāyah*) towards faith and triumph, with the provision of the greatest guiding source *al-Qur'ān* (also known as mercy). Thirdly, (because of His Mercy) man will be provided everlasting pleasure in the life of the next world. Fourthly, His matchless Mercy is (a gift) for deserving devotees bestowing them (His *Qurb*) and vision of *His Gracious Face* (Al-Ghazzālī, 15, 1970). This four-dimensional interpretation of mercy (*al-Rahmah*) provides a comprehensive view regarding the universality of compassion and mercy in the Islam.

This description includes the man's journey from starting to that of the end and with effect from his coming into existence and up to the culmination in addition to one's ultimate goal. This is the wide-ranging definition of the Most Merciful (*al-Rahmān*). It enlarges our view towards Ultimate Reality from the very beginning of our creation. So, we can say that al-Ghazzālī's classification of attribute of mercy and Divine Name *al-Rahmān* is so closely related to the themes of mercy expressed in the Qur'ān. Explaining this topic, he quoted Qur'ānic verse:

“What Allah out of his Mercy doth bestow on mankind there is none can withhold.” Al-Qur’ān (35:2).

This verse has also been referred in his interpretation (*tafsīr*); ‘*Jawā’ir al-Qur’ān*’ when he discussed DM in relation to the significant aspects, phenomena and created things. For example, he commented about Divine Creation mentioning mosquito, elephant, bees and their physical structures. The architectural engineering of bees is due to the guidance of Allah Almighty. This is an example of the wonders of Allah’s Creation, Kindness, and Mercy to His creation (al-Ghazzālī, 1986).

Furthermore, this leads us to a perception that our surrounding and biological environment and its functioning is due to Divine Mercy.

Al-Ghazzālī (d.IIIII), in his book ‘*Mīzān al-‘Amal*’ discussed *al-rahmah* and informed us how to acquire it with reference to the Qur’ānic guidance and Prophetic Sayings. He observed that the advantages of His Kindness and Mercy what Allah Almighty bestows to His friends (*al-Awliyā’*) and His Prophets is an exceptional case. This is a unique situation which may not be grasped even by the rational person that (what is being experienced by the friends of Allah Almighty due to bestowal of DM). He said that this mercy is showered upon them due to Divine Generosity and no one is aware of it. He remarked that the veil (*Hijāb*) is on the human side, not on the side of Divine Mercy. Removal of this curtain depends upon the degree of self-purification (heart-cleansing) getting away from any kind of action and unethical involvement which contaminates the heart causing turbidity (Al-Ghazzālī, Dunyā, 1964).

Talking about the types of worlds like spiritual to that of material and their proportional relationship along with Divine Holiness (*Ḥazīrat al-Quds*) al-Ghazzālī mentioned the role of Divine Mercy and stated: “Therefore, the Divine Mercy gave to the World Visible (*‘Ālam al-Shahādah*) a correspondence with the World of the Realm Supernal (*‘Ālam al-Malakūt*).” (al-Ghazzālī, 1964)

Hamid Naseem said regarding statement of al-Ghazzālī about Mercy and human intellectual ability in the words:

“through personal experience Ghazzali discovered that human reason, unaided by divine grace and mercy, will never free itself from doubt” (Naseem, 2011)

We should judge thesis of Anslem (d.II09) about mercy (focusing on weighing scale) in the light of al-Ghazzālīan thought visiting the all-inclusive concept of mercy in Islam. Justice-based decisions are due to sound reason and equally well-conveyed by the concept of mercy. Owing to Divine Mercy we have been blessed with this intellectual ability to decide what is closer to reality. Mercy also functions to provide justice while justice defends the mercy-based milieu. Hence, *the Rahmah-Oriented Society* (ROS) in the current global scenario is a supreme need of Muslim Ummah. His Worldview supports us to prepare a feasibility report; a precursory account to set up ROS.

Talking about the modes of knowledge in relation to human nature (*fiṭrah*), Elia and Orfali

commented that al-Gazzālī (d.III) as per Avicennan philosophy stated that the sensory world is a ladder to [the world of the] Intellect. Where in the footnotes they further elaborated with reference to al-Gazzālīan outlook. They write.

“the Divine Mercy made the visible world to accord with (*‘alā-mawāzina*) the world of dominion.” (Elias & Orfali, 2020)

Furthermore, a professor of Islamic studies at the Department of Religious Studies at Yale University; Frank Griffel (b.1965) observed the philosophical theology of al-Ghazzālī (d.III) and stated:

“Complete trust in God, al-Ghazzālī continues, results from a firm belief in God’s mercy (*al-rahmah*) and in His Wisdom (*ḥikmah*).” (Griffel, 2009)

So, DM is the reason why everything in the visible realm is in fact a symbol of the invisible. Al-Ghazzālī (d.III) presumably therefore sees himself as helping his readers to benefit from this mercy by explaining at least part of that invisible realm. (Whittingham, 50, 2007). There is no variation in DM in relation to our conditions and situations. It shows the absolute worth and dignity of Muslim faith (Wohlman, 94, 2010). These perceptions from Al-Ghazzālī (d.III) present the identity of *al-rahmah* clarifying the Doctrine of Divine Impassibility (DDI) anchored firmly epistemologically in Islam. This discourse leads us to understand the role of mercy expressed by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī (d.III) regarding an ethical performance and an active relationship of God, man and universe (GMUR).

3. Mercy *vis-à-vis* Anthropocosmic Existence and Survival

In the second verse of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, according to him, Divine Mercy in terms of Divine Names (*al-Rahmān al-Raḥīm*) after mentioning the worlds and before mentioning the owner of the Day of Judgment has two great benefits in preference where mercy is applicable. He created the man with a perfect and best kind and gave him everything he needed. He created the world of beasts, the smallest of which are mosquitoes, flies, spiders and bees. All these things are mutually linked and the creation from nothingness and survival of created things is an expression of DM. The second is its attachment to His saying, “*The Owner of the Day of Judgment.*” He refers to mercy concerning the Day of Recompense (Al-Ghazzālī, al-Qabānī, 1986).

The creation of the universe is the result of the upsurge of Divine Mercy and the continuity of *al-rahmah* from Allah Almighty is evoked in sustaining the entire universe by Him. Referring to al-Ghazzālī (d.III), Siddique says DM answers every need so it is perfect (in all aspects). Those who merit it or not, all are under the universal range of DM. Allah Almighty was not compelled nor was He obliged to create anything. So, cosmic creation and sustenance of human and all creatures are the expressions of DM (Siddique, 2001). Moreover, there are elaborations regarding *creatio ex-nihilo* Abū

Ḥāmid Al-Ghazzālī's discussion may provide the answers to the theological objections about Divine Mercy.

In order to bestow His favour and mercy upon the human being, Allah Almighty conveyed us the times of prayer. In this regard, the Messenger of Islam (*ṣallā llāhu 'alayhi wa-sallam*) said:

“When it is the last third of the night, our Lord, the Blessed, the Superior, descends every night to the heaven of the world and says, Is there anyone who invokes Me (demand anything from Me), that I may respond to his invocation; Is there anyone who asks Me for something that I may give (it to) him; Is there anyone who asks My forgiveness that I may forgive him? (Al-Bukhārī, 1997)

Al-Ghazzālī (d.1111) quoted this Ḥadīth concerning the concept of mercy with slightly different words that *'is there anyone who wants mercy so that I bestow him with it'*. He further discussed the concept of mercy, philosophically, in his publication *'Mishkāṭ al-Anwār'* (The Niche for Lights) and commented that if there is no Divine Mercy then it is impossible to know the Lord, then being an effect of the Divine Mercy, it is (considered that man is created) in the image of One Who is the Merciful (*al-Raḥmān*), as compared to *'in the image of Allah'*. So, the Presence of the Lordship (*rubūbiyyah*) is not similar to the Presence of the Merciful One, nor as to the Presence of The Kingship, nor as to the Presence of the Sovereign-Lordship (al-Ghazzālī (*'Aḥḥ*), 1964). He quoted Ḥadīth:

That is “Allah has created man in the image of the Merciful” (al-‘Asqalānī, 1379)

Let us focus on the vital things, for example, the removal of suspicion, the disclosure of facts, the knowledge and consciousness of things as they are, and the realization of the mysteries. There is no key to unlock these (stated) things except for one who strives, suppresses baseless worldly desires, and turns, completely, towards Allah Almighty. Adherence to pure thought instead of the impurities of arguments. All these ethics and moral values are due to the Mercy from Allah the Mighty and the Sublime One (Al-Ghazzālī, 1985).

Al-Ghazzālī (d.1111) raised some philosophical questions regarding the Divine Attributes; the most merciful and compassionate (*al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*). This discussion includes the Divine Awareness, Intention and Omnipotence concerning the needy and one who demands mercy to be bestowed. Moreover, emotions are important with regard to the question of kindness and compassion. It guides us to answer the posed questions regarding awareness of feeling and suffering with special reference to the Doctrine of Divine Impassibility (DDI). He stated that the Mercy of Allah Almighty is *al-Raḥmah al-Tāmah* (He fulfils the needs of the needy) and *al-Raḥmah al-Āmah* (He bestows upon deserving and non-deserving). It is universality and perfectness of mercy to feel the feeling, sentiments and suffering of others without their accepting the impacts of heart leniency (*riqqah*). Da‘wah and preaching to bring people to the right path saving them from punishment is a mercy-based expression of human beings. He also clarified the concept of distress and difficulties in this world. (Al-Ghazzālī, 248-252, 2004).

Human stimulus towards mercy and its application for the needy is different are compared to the DM. This philosophy leads us to observe the contents of good and bad, what is ethical limitations and what are the unethical domains along with the question of suffering and emotional individuality.

Therefore, in any case, mercy is an essential factor for ethics to be performed. It strengthens the relationship between a servant and Allah Almighty in the light of teaching conveyed by the Prophet Muḥammad (*ṣallā llāhu ‘alayhi wa-sallam*) showing various modes and ways of Divine Nearness. It is stated in a Prophetic Saying (Ḥadīth):

“and if he draws near Me by the span of a palm, I draw near him by the cubit, and if he draws near Me by the cubit I draw near him by the space (covered by) two hands. And if he walks towards Me, I rush towards him.” (Al-Bukhārī, Ḥadīth 7536, 9:386, n-d.)

Al-Ghazzālī (d.III) elaborated this concept in the words; My mercy and blessing are flowing towards My servants more bountifully than their obedience towards Me (Al-Ghazzālī, 39, 2004). So, the Divine Role and Response to human beings (in this relationship) is in the shape of mercy (DM). One Who is Creator and Merciful, then it is natural proximity that human should have perform good deeds, ethics and characters based upon love and mercy. His elaboration presents the universality of the Qur’ānic concept of *Raḥmah*. Moreover, the straight actions and the righteous deeds indicate the interests (*maṣāliḥ*) in this world and the world Hereafter. To turn away from (this fact) is a strayed path, exactly. And due to intellect and the ruling, he referred to grace and Divine Mercy (Al-Ghazzālī, 1975, 59). So, the Ghazzalian worldview incorporates mercy and its relation to the multiple aspects of human life together with the ethical norms and human practices and good deeds and contributions making sense of it.

4. Mercy and Human Ethical Dimensions

Al-Ghazzālī (d.III) discussed different themes presenting the role of DM in another publication; *‘Minhāj al-‘Ābidīn’*. He says that you should know that Allah Almighty saves us from impurities of sin due to mercy, humbleness and inclination towards Allah Almighty bring the reward of DM. He mentions the way of performance to get closer to the enclosure of mercy (*al-raḥmah*). Defining hope (*al-raḥā’*), he says that it is a sign of confidence and trust of man in Allah thinking about the vastness of His mercy. Indicating another aspect of human life, he said; O; humankind when you see that there are difficulties in the life (instead of luxuries) you should know that DM is enclosing you (al-Ghazzālī, 2017). Similar discussions have also been done by the other Islamic scholars. Legal study of mercy and justice has also been saturated with this sort of argument and discussions.

Concerning man’s spiritual relationship Oliver Leaman (b.1950) discussed al-Ghazzālī’s methodology regarding how to acquire the blessing of mercy from Allah Almighty. Basic connection with Lord requires deep attention and a long journey to stabilize in the human memory; what is the glory

of (Divine Bounties). One has to think about his own death, this remembrance of passing away as a useful method. This repeated meditative exercise may invigorate the human's ability to feel the bestowal of Divine Mercy.

He defined hope (*al-rajā'*) in the words that it is the recognition of Divine Grace and pleasure to observe it along with the happiness due to vastness of Divine Mercy. This meaning of hope belongs to the heart and is not under human control. But it is in human control to remember Divine Grace and Mercy which bring expectation towards bestowal of Allah Almighty. And what is opposite is called a disappointment. It means to remember not Divine Mercy and Grace is an act of sin. Hope is an obligatory act (*farḍ*) when there is no way to get rid of disappointment. While it is commendable (*mustahab*) in normal case. However, trust in Divine Mercy and Grace is mandatory. He defines four formulas for hope. Where role of remembrance of Divine Mercy is a significant aspect. (al-Ghazzālī, 2017)

Mutual dealing of believers based on the brotherhood for sake of Allah Almighty and admonition to the right path is a unique expression in this relation. Believers' collaboration is due to Allah's company and their detachment is only for Allah's pleasure. Al-Ghazzālī (d.IIIII) mentioned the statement of Shaykh dhun Nūn al-Miṣrī i.e.; "*Do not accompany with God except what is suitable (ethically). Nor with Satan except with enmity.*" Hence, there is neither brutality in this relation and behaviour (*sulūk*) or any heartbeat, rather, this relationship is the eye of compassion and mercy. In a social life he defined mercy as a foundational stone to build up a building for ethical performance. (al-Ghazzālī, Abū liḥyah, 228, 1437). On the other hand, whoever alerts you and warn you from a reprehensible characteristic in order to purify yourself, actually he is warning you the attack of scorpion and destruction. He is your well-wisher, if you hate this ethical and moral support then imagine; how stupid are you (al-Ghazzālī, Abū liḥyah, 229, 1437).

Furthermore, Al-Ghazzālī (d.IIIII) examined the impact of persistence (*mawāzibah*) in performing pious deeds. He explained the concept with the example of 'an act of mercy'. If one who feels mercy in his heart for an orphan, pats on his head and looks after him, he would realize in the heart, what he acts following mercy, an increase (in confirmation that his act is based on) mercy. In another place (in the same book) explaining another issue, he stated that a person who has no mercy, which is impossible to imagine since a human being cannot be detached from empathy and mercy. If it is, nevertheless, assumed to be the case despite its impossibility, then something else remains i.e., the praise for having good character and mercy for the creation. (Al-Ghazzālī (al-Khalīlī), 123, 2004).

Moreover, al-Ghazzālī (d.IIIII) compiled a chapter about the arrogance of the disobedient believers and discussed their case in relation to Divine Mercy referring to the Divine Mercy Pairs (DMP) *al-Ghafūr al-Raḥīm*. He indicated the people; who rely on Divine Forgiveness but neglect work and due practices (al-Ghazzālī, 29-31, n-d.). The affirmation to love Allah Almighty and His Prophet should

be analysed with the help of specific signs and pieces of evidence to observe whether it is true or not (al-Ghazzālī, n-d.). He discussed the psyche of wrongdoers and righteous people along with the role of DM concerning their matters. As for the unwise souls who do not acquire longing for the awareness and gnosis (*ma'rifah*) and when it is separated from the bodies has different grades as compared to the wise one (Al-Ghazzālī, I:153, 1975). This shows the aftereffects of actions along with ethical performance in this world and emotional perceptions.

Moreover, in '*The Alchemy of Happiness*' he declared: the functions of sound intellect (based on) mercy. While the knowledge and betterment are the ethics of the angels (al-Ghazzālī, 2010).

Religio-ethical dimensions presented by Al-Ghazzālī to locate *Al-rahmah* in Islam include good manner, lessening wrath and increasing mercy-based works, etiquettes of beautiful talk and departure from the behaviour which cause discomfort and pain for the others. (Al-Ghazzālī, 86, 2012). The teachers should also encourage students to leave bad habits in a suggestive manner and compassionately, rather than aggressively and embarrassingly (Sheikh & Ali, 2019). Teaching method should be based on mercy and *al-rahmah* instead of dealing forcefully and awkwardly. Teacher should beautify himself with positive ethics and cleanliness (Al-Ghazzālī, 288, 2012). He applies the golden rule as an axis around which great themes of religion are surrounded: Divine Relationship, purity of heart, justice, compassion, altruistic love, goodwill, human brotherhood, and neighbourliness. Many of these themes are common to theistic religions and non-theistic philosophies. By examining them in relation to Al-Ghazali's applications of the golden rule, we should find Islamic literature which inspire us mutual to understand a peaceful moral line and dealing between Muslims and non-Muslims.

The Christian doctrines that form the backbone of the book are the doctrines of human sinfulness and Divine Mercy. Ethical cosmopolitanism of Kant (d.1804) cannot be understood without reference to these central doctrines. Thus, his accounts of radical evil, providence, and divine mercy provide universally acceptable versions of deeply religious claims. He gives what would otherwise seem to be historical doctrines of faith ...to promote that ethical cosmopolitanism which will bring about a universal community of virtue, a "kingdom of God on earth" (Frierson, 145-146, 2007) Moreover, Kant's (d.1804) concept of treating humanity as one's own person or other, all are equal in respect it may have an impact on society so we should treat with manner. (Kant, 1964).

Abū Ḥāmid explained, logically, with examples. The best of kings is he who sits with the people of knowledge, and it is said that all things beautify themselves with knowledge...knowledge is the permanence and permanence of glory, and the reason is the permanence of pleasure and its order. And whoever combines knowledge and reason during what he practices, then twelve qualities are combined in him: chastity, etiquette, piety, honesty, health, modesty, mercy, good manners, loyalty, patience, forbearance, and management in their place (Al-Ghazzālī, 1988). Hence, mercy is also a contributing agent along with the other characteristics and moral values.

It means, in Islamic philosophy, mercy also functions in intellectual nourishment. Therefore, we should imagine, what will be the resultant and outcome of mutual social affair in the absence of Divine Mercy. So, mercy is a pivotal factor of peace-building endeavour within the Islamic world in addition to the rest of people around the globe.

5. Conclusion

The whole discussion boils to the conclusion that interpretation of al-Ghazzālī (d.IIIII) regarding Divine Mercy includes the moral values and practices for individual and social betterment. He explained DM and emphasized acquiring mercy from the Lord on account of heart purification. Human reason, closeness to the perfect understanding, mercy and HAB (Human Attitude and Behaviour), mercy in relation to human psychology and the existential aspects of anthropocosmic entities etc. all are the significant themes to locate the concept of *mercy* in the Ghazzālīan worldview. This study finds that he wants to bring humanity back toward their Lord and suggests a way to follow what demands His Mercy (*al-rahmah*). If there is no mercy then there is no space for Divine Gnosis (*ma'rifah*). It provides a practical track leading towards the stage where Divine Mercy covers human beings and as a result *al-rahmah* conform HAB to act positively. His work emphasizes that the God of Islam is one who is the Most Merciful and the Prophet of Islam is a source of mercy for the whole humankind. His interpretation of DM incorporates the biological kingdom and engineering of the honey bee and examples of natural phenomena. The literature of Al-Ghazzālī (d.IIIII) along with his work explained by the Islamic scholars lead us to establish a *Rahmah-Oriented Society* (ROS) uplifting the social standard. It is to take mercy, love and compassion from Allah Almighty and to deliver it towards the whole human beings irrespective of race, colour and religion performing in the best ethical domain with the prescribed limitations.

6. Recommendations

In the light of al-Ghazzālī's insight the concept of mercy is a foundational source to build up a mercy-based society. So, during a journey towards *Rahmah-Oriented Society* (ROS), we have to comprehend and internalize the merciful attributes as the cornerstone for fostering compassion, *Rahmah* and kindness in the society. Hence, in this regard self-reflection and spiritual development is essential elements at individual level. Leadership embodying mercy is also significant factor of ROS framework. Leaders keeping in view the requirements of a mercy-based society should prioritize compassion, empathy, and justice in their decision-making, creating an environment that reflects mercy. Moreover, establishing an educational framework based on Ghazzalian principles involves integrating teachings on compassion, empathy, and inclusion of ethical behaviour into curricula. Education should be a means to instill ethical values that contribute to the development of a merciful society encouraging community

and its welfare initiatives. So, we have to establish charitable endeavours, social support systems, and programs to alleviate the suffering of others. A society grounded in mercy acknowledges human flaws, promoting forgiveness and fostering reconciliation for collective well-being sharing the joys and sorrows of others, creating a supportive social fabric as well as practices that protect and preserve the environment, ensuring sustainability for future generations.

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