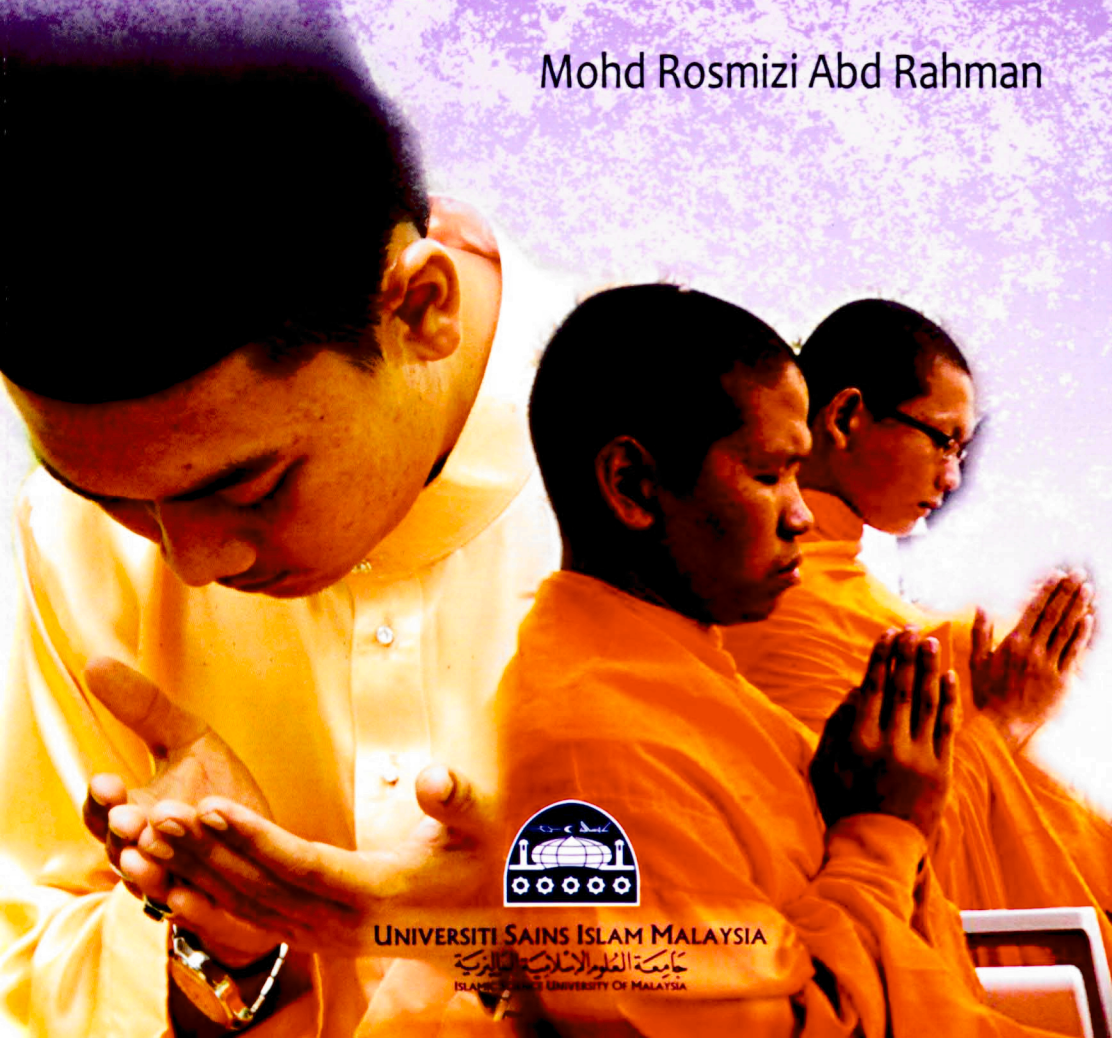


INTRODUCTION TO ISLAMIC AND BUDDHIST PERSONAL ETHICS

Mohd Rosmizi Abd Rahman



UNIVERSITI SAINS ISLAM MALAYSIA

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INTRODUCTION TO
ISLAMIC AND BUDDHIST
PERSONAL ETHICS



*“Let there arise out of you a band of people
inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right,
and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones
to attain felicity.”*

(Qur’an, Āli ‘Imrān: 104)

*“He who amongst you should see something
abominable should modify it with the help of his
hand, and if he has not strength enough to do it,
then he should do it with his tongue, and if he has
not strength enough to do it, (even) then he should
(abhor it) from his heart, and that is the least of
faith.”*

(Ḥādīth: Mūṣḥīf, chapter XXI, no. 79)

*“To avoid all evil, to cultivate good, and
to cleanse one’s mind — this is the teaching of the
Buddhas.”*

(The Dhammapada, 183)



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PERSONAL ETHICS

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TRANSLITERATION

Table of the system of transliteration of Arabic terms and names followed in this book.

Consonant

ب	b		ط	t
ت	t		ظ	z
ث	th		ع	'
ج	j		غ	gh
ح	h		ف	f
خ	kh		ق	q
د	d		ك	k
ذ	dh		ل	l
ر	r		م	m
ز	z		ن	n
س	s		ه	h
ش	sh		و	w
ص	ṣ		ء	'
ض	ḍ		ي	y

Short Vowels = — = a — = i — = u
 Long Vowels = ا = ā ي = ī و = ū
 Diphthongs = اي = ay او = aw

FOREWORD

Today different religious traditions are everywhere colliding, sometimes in violent conflict, often in mutual incomprehension. We find ourselves in an unprecedented and highly volatile global landscape, characterized by both inter- and intra-religious strife and discord. Media networks flood us with apocalyptic scenarios envisaging 'the clash of civilisations', new 'crusades' and 'holy wars' against 'terrorists' or 'infidels'. A persistent motif is the highly charged confrontation of militant religious fundamentalism and the forces of modernity. The most conspicuous locus of these scenarios is the Middle East and the smoldering confrontation of 'Islam' and 'the West'. Whilst the Middle East remains a highly visible powder-keg there are many other parts of the world where religion is seen, quite understandably, as an explosive and divisive force. To restrict ourselves to flashpoints where Islam is involved we might mention the on-going Hindu-Muslim hostilities in the subcontinent, Christian-Muslim antagonisms in Africa, central Asia and south-east Asia, or the acute social tensions arising out of the settlement of Muslim communities in the West.

Much contemporary discussion of the inter-relations of religious traditions is entangled with inflammatory political forces, and public discourse about these tensions might often better be described as propaganda, obfuscating rather than clarifying the issues at hand. Ideological heat and rhetorical excess is the order of the day! The situation is further complicated by the fact that any inquiry into the inter-relations of the religions, today and into the future, must take account of three modern developments: the radically altered situation, in the last two centuries, whereby religious multiplicity is now an inescapable reality; the apparent triumph of anti-religious and anti-traditional forces in the West; and, thirdly, the consequent emergence of both aggressive religious fundamentalism (in both East and West) and religious liberalism (principally in the West).

In these troubled and confusing circumstances it is of the utmost importance that adherents of the different religious traditions develop much greater mutual understanding, thereby not only recognizing our differences but also our common humanity. Out of such understanding comes a new respect and a sense of moral solidarity against all those dark forces which threaten the very existence of the great religious traditions. Not without a sense of urgency have spiritual leaders such as the Dalai Lama long since been arguing the need for more widespread and ever-deepening inter-religious dialogue.

Ethics is one domain of human experience with which all religious traditions are centrally concerned. Every religious follower must grapple with questions about the ways in which we live, the ways in which we relate to each other and to the world around us. Each religion summons its adherents to live out certain ethical ideals. Much of the strife in the contemporary world no doubt arises from the failure of religious followers to live up to the ideals extolled by their own tradition, and much intolerance and antagonism stems from a failure to understand and appreciate the ethical values of other faiths. Any serious inquiry into this field reveals a great deal of common ground. The present volume takes up the task of comparing and contrasting the ethical ideals of two of the world's richest religious traditions, the Islamic and the Buddhist. Through a careful, informed and thoughtful treatment of this complex subject Mohd Rosmizi Bin Abd Rahman makes a valuable contribution to the development of inter-religious understanding. Such an undertaking can only be applauded by people of good will, no matter what might be their own religious position. It is a pleasure to commend this book to prospective readers. I hope it will find a wide audience.

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In the first place, I would like to thank Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful for showering me with His Grace, Mercy and Blessing in completing this humble book. I would like here to express my endless gratitude and thanks to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kamar Oniah Kamaruzaman, who is my spiritual and intellectual guidance, for her keen interest in this work and for her critical evaluations and constructive suggestions. I would further like to express my gratitude to Dr. Haslina Ibrahim, Assoc. Prof Dr. Wan Azam Mohd Amin and other lecturers for their invaluable ideas and suggestions. My special thanks also go to all my family members, my wife and our kids, my colleagues and friends who either physically or morally, directly or indirectly, assisted me in completing this book. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge Islamic Science University of Malaysia for having an interest to publish this book. To all these people, I shall always be indebted and I pray that Allah may reward them with the best rewards here and hereafter.

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INTRODUCTION

There are claims that religion hampers development and progress. Therefore, secularism, which separates religion from worldly activities, is propagated as an ideology that can replace religion. However, the reality today is that without religion, be it individually, socially, or ethically, there will be no real development but there will be many unethical individuals, families, societies, and nations.

Consequently, some people are living without religious guidance and ethics. This leads to other complicated problems such as violence and exploitation. For this serious problem of unethical behaviour to be solved, the causes must be removed.

In fact, all religions—Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism—teach and encourage good conduct and prohibit bad behaviour. Realizing the importance of this, therefore, this book seeks to present an introduction to the fundamental ethics of two major religions, namely Islam and Buddhism. However the study will be limited to the personal code of ethics in these two religions, that is, the ethical conduct that should be cultivated by every believer of these religions. Personal code of ethics, in the religious perspective, refers to personal ethical behaviour, conduct, or character which is outlined by religion. Therefore, Islamic and Buddhist personal codes of ethics refer to personal ethical conduct which is approved by the two religions and should be cultivated by every believer of these religions. This is because every person is an important unit of society. If every person is good, then this is likely to produce a good society.

In doing so, the personal code of ethics of these two living religions will be analysed and compared. Thus the true concept of ethics and morality in Islam and Buddhism will be studied in this book. Besides, it also attempts to discuss and compare the cardinal ethical items of the personal codes of ethics in the two religions. In this manner, the definition as well as categorization of good and bad conduct according

to both religions will also be discussed. Islam and Buddhism are chosen because both are regarded as ethical religions which have their own unique moral systems. Their moral systems are rather apparent, clear, straightforward and understandable. Besides, even though there are many books written on Islam and Buddhism, only few focus on comparative study between these two religions. For that reason, this book attempts to analyse and compare the personal code of ethics in these two religions.

As mentioned earlier, this book only attempts to present ‘an introduction’ to this subject. Therefore it only focuses on the ‘external’ aspects of the topic –be it on similarities or on differences. This is because the present discussion is interested more on the external similarities rather than the internal-philosophical differences of this topic. It is true that besides the various similarities that this book highlights between these two religions on the topic, there are still a considerable differences left unexplained here and for that reason, readers who are interested to know more about these ‘unexplained differences’ here should consult other literatures and studies.

In term of significance, this book is useful and essential because it tries to answer different aspects of questions that are related to religious ethics and personal ethics in Islam and Buddhism as follows;

1. What are the definitions of ethics and morality?
2. How have they been interpreted in Islam and Buddhism?
3. Who is the role model of the perfect ethical man in the two religions?
4. What is the concept of “virtue and vice” or “good and bad character” in the two religions?
5. What are the cardinal items of the personal ethics in the two religions?
6. Are there any similarities and differences on the personal code of ethics between the two religions?

Thus the present topic is important in order to understand the basic concept of ethics and morality as well as the cardinal items of the personal code of ethics in Islam and Buddhism. Besides, it is also significant because it attempts to promote common ground and mutual understanding between Muslims and Buddhists in particular and among multi-religious societies in general.

Hopefully, this book will be able to show that these ethics are very significant and valuable. Finally, it is also hoped that this book will be able to contribute to Muslim understanding on Buddhist ethics and vice versa.

ENDNOTES

¹ *The Encyclopedia Americana*, (1982), 2nd edition, vol. 10: 610. Axiology is one of the four branches of philosophy alongside metaphysics, epistemology and logic. For that reason, while some writers regard ethics as a branch of axiology, others classify it as a branch of philosophy and both are right.

² *The Encyclopedia Americana*, (2001), vol. 10: 610. See also Becker, Lawrence C. and Charlotte D. Becker (eds.), 2001: 48).

³ *Mores* is the plural of *mos*.

⁴ See further al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, vol. 3: 86; Mohd. Nasir Omar, 2003: 163; Quasem, 1975: 79-80; Ansari, 1964: 83.

⁵ The *Shari'ah* refers to Islamic social order. It is the collective name for all the rulings of Islam, including Islam's whole religious and liturgical, individual and social, ethical and jurisprudential, as well as economic and political systems, among others. For further discussion on the *Shari'ah*, see Mawdūdī, 1990: 95-116.

⁶ See also his other book entitled (n.d.), *How to practice Buddhism*: 11.

⁷ See also Misra, 1984: 78; Piyasilo, 1987: 1.

⁸ Positive injunctions refer to the rules which prescribe what people should do and negative prohibitions are those rules which specify what people should not do. See Chidester, 1987:12-13.

⁹ See more discussion in the next topic entitled *The Source of Islamic Ethics*.

¹⁰ *Dharma* is in the Sanskrit language while *Dhamma* is in the Pali language.

¹¹ The position and importance of *sila* in Buddhism will be elaborated in the next discussion.

¹² However, Damien Keown uses the term "descriptive ethics" instead of "applied ethics." By descriptive ethics he asserts that its job is "to give an objective account of the moral prescriptions, norms and values of a community or group and to show how these principles or precepts ('moral action guides') are (or would be) applied in specific contexts." (Keown, 1992: 3).

¹³ Ibid. Keown argues that its task is “the derivation of formulation of ethical rules and standards, the provision of justification, and a method for the validation or defence of the norms it seeks to establish.” (Keown, 1992:3).

¹⁴ According to Islam, one of important purposes of man’s creation is to become God’s *khalīfah*, see the Quran, *al-Baqarah*: 30. *Khalīfah* means vicegerent, deputy, trustee or steward. (Sonn, 2001: 61).

¹⁵ Zahara Maskanah and Tayar Yusuf argue that besides the Quran and the *Sunnah*, *ḥukamā’* and philosophers’ thoughts are also sources of Islamic ethics (Zahara Maskanah and Tayar Yusuf, 1986: 9). However, the Quran and the *Sunnah* are regarded as the main sources of Islamic ethics.

¹⁶ For more discussion see Rahman, 1995: 255-260.

¹⁷ There are numerous *aḥādīth* on ethics which have been compiled. For example, in his *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* has narrated more than a hundred *aḥādīth* on this. See *al-Bukhārī*, 1970, vol. 8.

¹⁸ For some lists of blameworthy character, see Moh. Thalib, 1983.

¹⁹ *Al-Tawḥīd* is the doctrine of believing in the oneness of God (Allah). It is the most important and fundamental teaching of all prophets. It is embodied in the Islamic creed which affirms that there is no God but Allah. With regard to ethics, *al-Tawḥīd* is considered as the basic principle of Islamic ethics which has a great influence and effect on Muslims’ ethical life. For more discussion see Mawdūdī, 1990: 62-72; al-Fārūqī, 1983: 70.

²⁰ Both the Prophet and the Quran affirm that humans are all born in *fiṭrah*. For instance, the Prophet said “No baby is born but on *fiṭrah*. It is his parents who make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Polytheist....” See Muslim, 1981: MCVII: 6423: 1398; and al-Quran, *al-Rūm*: 30 states “So set thou face steadily and truly to the faith: (Establish) Allah’s handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind: no change (let there be) in the work (wrought) by Allah: that is the standard religion: but most among mankind understand not.” For that reason, all human beings are capable to follow Islamic ethics, that is to behave like God wills them to. See also Sonn, 2001: 72.

²¹ For example, al-Quran, *Fāṭir*: 24 states “Verily We have sent thee in truth, as a bearer of glad tidings, and as a warner: and there never was a people, without a warner having lived among them (in the past).” See also al-Quran, *al-Ra’d*: 7, etc.

²² There are numerous verses of al-Quran on this. For instance, in chapter *al-Naḥl* verse 97, God says “Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has faith, verily, to him We will give a new life, and life that is good and

pure, and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions.”

²³ There are also numerous verses of al-Quran on this. For example, al-Quran, *al-An 'ām*: 49 states “But those who reject Our Signs, - them shall be punishment touch, for that they ceased not from transgressing.”

²⁴ “*Nirvana*” is in the Sanskrit language, the Pali word equivalent to it is “*Nibbana*”. This topic will be discussed in the next discussion.

²⁵ Quoted in George Grimm (1982: 45).

²⁶ Quoted in Gruzalski, 2000: 4-5.

²⁷ K. Sri Dhammananda argues that every man experiences unsatisfactoriness. This is because man can never be satisfied with what he has or gains, but man still wants something else as soon as he gets it. See K. Sri Dhammananda, n.d. *Why we should practice Buddhism*: 7-8.

²⁸ Activities of will refer to all types of activity or action done with volition. Therefore, activities without volition such as unintentional and unconscious actions, are excluded.

²⁹ As quoted in Grimm, 61.

³⁰ There are three kinds of desire, namely [i] desire to become, such as desire for existence, [ii] desire to get, such as desire for possession and selfish enjoyment, and [iii] desire to avoid, such as desire for annihilation of undesirable objects. See Anderson (ed.), 1991: 172. See also Yenprasit, 2004: 19; Gruzalski, 2000: 13-14.

³¹ Quoted in Gruzalski, 4-5.

³² For further discussion see Dhammananda, *Practical Buddhism*, 24-26, see also his other works; 2006, *Question time*, Kuala Lumpur, Sasana Abhiwirdhi Wardhana Society, 11-14 and n.d., *Do you believe in rebirth*, Kuala Lumpur: Buddhsit Missionary Society. All of these books are also available at <<http://www.ksridhammananda.com/>>.

³³ Buddhism believes that men have undergone many stages of lives and they will undergo many more. This is because Buddhism believes that the life process always continues as men are always craving for existence and for other things. See Dhammananda, *Practical Buddhism*, 24.

³⁴ According to Buddhism a person is made up of five elements; the body, the sensations, the perceptions, the activities of the mind, and the cognition. For further discussion, see Grimm, 1982: 67-91.

³⁵ K. Sri Dhammananda, n.d., *The Buddhist concept of heaven and hell*, Kuala Lumpur: Buddhist Missionary Society p. 21. This book is also available at <<http://www.ksridhammananda.com/>>.

³⁶ Ibid, For more discussion on *Nirvana* see Hammalava Saddhatissa, n.d., *What is Nibbana?*, Kuala Lumpur: Buddhist Missionary Society, This book is also available at <<http://www.ksridhammananda.com/>>.

³⁷ Among Buddhist scriptures, the *Dhammapada* is seen as the best text to summarize Buddhist morality. See Carmody and John Tully Carmody, 1996: 97.

³⁸ See Dhammananda, *How to practice Buddhism*, 11. In fact, among these three pillars or basic principles of Buddhism, the observance of *sila* is regarded as the prime objective. See Dhammananda, 1996: 31.

³⁹ Buddhism has several precepts that should be followed by all Buddhists (especially those who have taken refuge under the Buddha, the *Dhamma* and the *Sangha*). Essentially, the precepts for lay Buddhists are different from the precepts for monks. However, the Five Precepts are the fundamental precepts which should be observed by all Buddhists, including monks, nuns and the laity.

⁴⁰ That is having faith in Islamic teachings such as to believe in the Oneness of God, believe in the Prophets, believe in the Holy Books or Scriptures, believe in the Angels and others.

⁴¹ For extensive lists, though with brief discussion, of Islamic morals and manners, see al-Kaysī, (1986); Abbasi, (1981); M Fadloli H Chusaini, (n.d.), *Pendidikan budi luhur menurut ajaran Islam* etc.

⁴² For the study on Muslim scholars' discussions on ethics, see Fakhry, (1991).

⁴³ Al-Quran, at many places, commands all Muslims to follow to the Prophet Muhammad. See al-Quran *Āli 'Imrān*: 31; *al-Nisā'*: 65, 80; *al-Nūr*: 56; *al-Hashr*: 7, etc.

⁴⁴ For instance, Anas narrated "The Prophet was the best among the people (both in shape and character)..." See *al-Bukhārī*, 1970, vol. 8, book 73, chapter 39: 59: 38. See also Quran, *al-Qalam*: 4.

⁴⁵ For instance, Ibn 'Abbās said "The Prophet was the most generous among the people, and he used to be more so (generous) in the month of Ramaḍān." See *al-Bukhārī*, 1970, vol. 8, book 73, chapter 39:37. See also Muslim, 1981, vol. 4, chapter CMLXIII, no. 5718:1241.

⁴⁶ For instance, Jābir narrated "Never was the Prophet asked for a thing to be given for which his answer was 'no'." See *al-Bukhārī*, 1970, vol. 8, book 73,

chapter 39: 60: 38. See also Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: Being traditions...*, vol. 4, book 30, chapter CMLXV: 5726: 1242.

⁴⁷ For instance, Anas narrated: “The Prophet was the best among the people (both in shape and character) and was the most generous of them, and was the bravest of them. Once, during the night, the people of Medina got afraid (of sound). So the people went towards that sound, but the Prophet having gone to that sound before them, met them while saying, “Don’t be afraid, don’t be afraid...” See *al-Bukhārī*, 1970, vol. 8, book 73, chapter 39, no. 59: 38. See also Muslim, 1981, vol. 4, book 30, chapter CMLXII: 5715: 1240.

⁴⁸ For instance Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī reported that “Allah’s Messenger was more modest than the virgin behind the curtain (or in the apartment), and when he disliked anything, we recognised that from his face.” See Muslim, 1981, vol. 4, book 30, chapter CMLXVII, no. 5739: 1244.

⁴⁹ For instance, ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Amr said “The Prophet was neither ill-mannered nor rude. He used to say that the best among you are those who have the best manners and character.” See *al-Bukhārī*, 1970, vol. 4, book 56, chapter 22: 759: 491.

⁵⁰ See al-Ghazālī, *Imam Gazzali’s ihya...*, book 3: 275-276.

⁵¹ For instance, Anas narrated “I served the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) for ten years, and he never said to me, “*Uf*” (a minor harsh word denoting impatience) and never blamed me by saying, “Why did you do so or why didn’t you do so?” See *al-Bukhārī*, 1970, vol. 8, book 73, chapter 39: 64: 40. See also Muslim, 1981, vol. 4, book 30, chapter CMLXIV: 5720: 1241.

⁵² For a brief account on the noble character and conduct of the Prophet, see al-Ghazālī, 1963, book 2: 258-282.

⁵³ However, the study will not follow al-Ghazālī’s approach plainly, for, whenever necessary, some combinations and additions will be made to make the discussion more complete and relevant to the present study.

⁵⁴ For more discussion on disadvantages or harms of gluttony or over-eating, see al-Ghazālī, 1978, book 3: 86-94.

⁵⁵ Al-Ghazālī gives special training to overcome these problems. With regards to gluttony he describes three general types of training which relate to the quantity of food, the time of meal, and the kinds of food to be taken. To reduce excess in sex, he proposes three methods according to situations such as fasting, marriage, and engaging in business. See al-Ghazālī, 1978, book 3: 94-107.

⁵⁶ For further discussion on lawful and unlawful earnings in Islam, see al-Ghazālī, 1978, book 2 : 75-108.

⁵⁷ In his *Iḥyā'*, al-Ghazālī only focuses his discussion on speech or tongue, however, in his other works such as *Bidāyat al-hidāyah* and *Minhāj al-'ābidīn* he does discuss on the controlling of other bodily organs, namely the eyes, the ears, the tongue and the hands. Because of their direct relations, the present study combines them in the same part here.

⁵⁸ In his discussion on controlling all bodily organs in *Minhāj al-'ābidīn*, al-Ghazālī adds one more item, that is the heart for it has a direct relation to the other bodily organs. See al-Ghazālī, n.d., *Minhāj al-'ābidīn* : 69.

⁵⁹ For al-Ghazālī's further discussion on anger, rancour (or hatred), and envy see al-Ghazālī, 1978, book 3, chapter 5.

⁶⁰ Al-Ghazālī argues that to overcome anger, one has to know its root causes and then remove them. He also suggests and explains some methods based on knowledge and actions to overcome anger. See al-Ghazālī, 1978, 3 : 159-163.

⁶¹ According to al-Ghazālī (1978, 3: 160), the causes which grow anger are self-conceit, self-praise, jests and ridicule, argument, treachery, too much greed for too much wealth and name and fame. They are regarded as evil and those who have these evils cannot escape from anger.

⁶² There are many *aḥādīth* on this. For example see *al-Bukhārī*, 39: 64: 40; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* CMLXIV: 5720: 1241.

⁶³ Quasem, 1975 : 134. See also Zahara Maskanah and Tayar Yusuf, 1986: 93. *Al-shirk* refers to the act of associating anyone or anything with God. It is regarded as the greatest of all major sins in Islam. In ostentation, as mentioned above, one performs *'ibādāt* (devotional acts) not for the sake of God, but for other purposes. Thus he is considered as associating something else with God in his *'ibādāt*. For that reason, ostentation is regarded as lesser polytheism.

⁶⁴ This is an estimation of total Muslim population in 2007. See <<http://www.islamicpopulation.com/>> (accessed 22 June 2007).

⁶⁵ Except all kinds of fish and grasshoppers, for Islam allows eating them without any need to be slaughtered.

⁶⁶ For more discussion on the concept of man in Islam and Buddhism, especially Theravada, see Yenprasit, 2004).

⁶⁷ The *Dhammapada*, 14: 183. See Mascaro (trans.), 1973: 62.

⁶⁸ See Maitreya, 1988: 52.

⁶⁹ This is because they are only applicable to monks and not to the laity. Essentially, there are two groups of the monkhood, namely the *Samanera* or novice and the *Bhikkhu* that is the full member of the community. Each has to observe some more additional special precepts. For example, the *Samanera* has to observe the Ten Precepts and for the *Bhikkhu* there are 227 precepts that need to be observed which are divided into 8 groups. For more discussion on this, see Tachibana, 1975: 76-85.

⁷⁰ All of these precepts are quoted from Tachibana, 1975: 57-68; Klostermaier, 1999: 107-108; Keown, 1992: 29-30; and Piyasilo, 1987: 10-11.

⁷¹ See Harris, 1998: 52; Harvey (ed.), 2001: 187; Harvey, 2004: 67. However, S. Tachibana regards the Five Precepts as compulsory on every Buddhist layman. See Tachibana, 1975: 65.

⁷² The ill-effects would be in the form of negative effects on one's life. See more detail in the next discussion.

⁷³ In Pali it is called *Uposatha*. See Misra, 1984: 89. See also Tachibana, 1975: 65.

⁷⁴ This is because, unlike the other precepts, the last three precepts of the Eight Precepts are not actually practised by the laity in their daily life, but only will be observed by the devout laity on special occasion, namely on *Upavasatha* days.

⁷⁵ Therefore, for monks, they have to observe '*brahmacarya*,' that is a celibate life whereas the laity should observe '*kamamithyacara-virati*' that is to restrict sexual desire only to one's wife.

⁷⁶ For further discussion on the positive aspects of these moral precepts, see Harvey, 2004: 68; 1990: 207; Piyasilo, (1987): 3, etc.

⁷⁷ The 'truth' here refers to the Buddhist conception of truth, namely the Four Noble Truths. See the previous discussion on *The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path*.

⁷⁸ Tachibana has collected an extensive list of these evils which are mentioned in Buddhist scriptures. See Tachibana, 1975: 73-75.

⁷⁹ In fact, Buddhism considers attachment – regardless of its forms – as the cause of man's grief and sorrow. See Dhammananda, n.d. *Life is uncertain, death is certain*. 13.

⁸⁰ For more discussion on this, see Tachibana, 1975: 114-123.

⁸¹ See *Anguttara*, 3: 430. *Arahatsip* is the concept of the ideal person or monk who attains *Nirvana* in Theravada Buddhism. In Mahayana Buddhism, it is known as *Bodhisatva*. It is the ultimate goal of every Buddhist.

⁸² Such as, tormented by abusive speech, a victim of vilification, incredibility, and a stinking mouth. See Piyasilo, 1987: 11-13.

⁸³ See the previous discussion on ill-effects.

⁸⁴ The other prerequisites are *īmān* (faith), *taqwā* and observing the *Shari'ah*.

⁸⁵ However, as mentioned before, besides good conduct, Muslims also need to have faith, *taqwā* and observe the *Shari'ah*.

⁸⁶ For example, the Quran, *al-Muddaththir*: 38, *Ghāfir*: 17. See also Tachibana, 1975: 271.

⁸⁷ See Harris, 1998" 52; Harvey (ed.), 2001: 187; Harvey, 2004: 67. However, Tachibana regards the Five Precepts as compulsory on every Buddhist layman. See Tachibana, 1975: 65.

⁸⁸ For more discussions on the importance of religions in man's life and in ethical development, see Kamar Oniah, (26-30 March 2006), "Mainstreaming religion into contemporary society," (unpublished paper presented in seminar proceeding on 32nd world congress in religious freedom, organised by International Association for Religious Freedom, Kaoshiung, Taiwan).

⁸⁹ For more discussion on this, see Kamar Oniah, n.d, "Religion as a mechanism for world peace: The rudiments of interfaith dialogues and engagements," (unpublished paper presented in Vatican Seminar on *Nostra aetate today: Reflections 40 after its call for a new era of inter-religious relationship*).

⁹⁰ For more discussion on this, see Kamar Oniah, (10-13 August 2005), "Educating for a culture of peace through values, virtues, and spirituality of diverse cultures, faiths, and civilization: Overcoming wars and other forms of direct violence," (unpublished paper presented in International Symposium on *Cultivating wisdom, harvesting peace*," organised by Multi-Faith Centre Griffith University, Brisbane).

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INTRODUCTION TO ISLAMIC AND BUDDHIST PERSONAL ETHICS

Today, moral decadence becomes a serious global predicament. In one aspect, this problem is due to the fact that some people have left religion and faith behind, taking up secularism, liberalism, rationalism and empiricism as the substitution. Consequently, some people live and behave unethically and as a result violence, oppression, crime, exploitation, victimization and other problems, are spreading and enveloping almost the entire globe. However, in the ethical aspect, all religions, including Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism, have provided ethical system and emphasis on moral life that is, all encourage good conduct and prohibit bad behaviour. Realizing the importance of this, therefore, this book seeks to present an introduction to the fundamental ethics of two major religions, namely Islam and Buddhism. The focus of this book is limited to personal code of ethics of these two religions. In so doing, the personal code of ethics in these two living religions is highlighted, analysed and compared in several aspects. Generally, Islam and Buddhism share a lot of similarities and have mutual understanding on various aspects related to ethics, such as on the nature, the position, the significance and objectives of ethics in life. Moreover, the nature, the understanding and the items of personal code of ethics in the two religions are also similar. To conclude, both religions have provided personal codes of ethics which elucidate comprehensive and excellent guidelines on how to live morally and both religions agree that every man should observe and practise these personal ethics throughout his life.

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