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## Saint Augustine and al-Ghazali on Achieving Balance in the Observance of Good Works: Analyzing Their Inner Conditions

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines and compares the spiritual insights of Saint Augustine and Imam al-Ghazali in achieving balance between the physical and spiritual aspects of good works. They both analyse not only the normal outer conditions of good works, but also their inner aspects and revealing fundamental inner conditions that should be observed. Both Imam al-Ghazali and Saint Augustine maintain that good works consist of outer and inner dimensions or physical and spiritual realm. To realize the objective of any good work, therefore, these both aspects need to be observed simultaneously. This study is theoretical in nature, and it involves bibliographic research, employing descriptive and comparative analysis methods. This study found that despite coming from different religions, both of these great thinkers share a lot of common insights on the detailed items of inner conditions of good works and on the need to balance both dimensions. They believe that to achieve balance and real objective, believers should observe both physical and spiritual conditions of good works. Their insights are relevant and applicable to all individuals and societies, regardless of religion.*

**Keywords:** Faith, good work, inner condition, love, sincerity.

Saint Augustine (354–430) and Imam al-Ghazali (1058–1111), two prominent thinkers in Christianity and Islam, respectively, emphasized the need for balance in the practice of good works (or good deeds), highlighting the importance of nurturing their inner dimensions alongside external actions. Both thinkers underscored the significance of integrating the inner and outer aspects of good works to achieve genuine spiritual fulfilment. Augustine and al-Ghazali

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emphasized the need for a balanced approach to religious practice, highlighting its role in attaining spiritual happiness while criticizing ritualism, legalism, and dogmatism. Despite their divergent religious backgrounds, they both strove to rediscover the inner dimension of religious practice and foster deeper spiritual reflection within their societies.

Aurelius Augustinus Hipponensis, better known as Saint Augustine of Hippo, a prominent Church Father of Western Christianity and a great figure in early Christian theology, was born in Tagaste, North Africa (now Souk Ahras, Algeria). Saint Augustine is widely recognized as one of the most significant and influential Latin thinkers and philosophers. Many scholars consider him the greatest of all Christian Fathers (Schaff 1886:1;1890: 2). He is particularly renowned for his contributions to the doctrine of Original Sin and Grace, for which he has been bestowed with the title Doctor of Grace. Augustine was known to be an exceptional bishop, but his later life and writings were not without controversy, as they were marked by arguments and polemics. Nevertheless, he was a prolific author and a great preacher, contributing to the formation of Christian orthodoxy (Kenney 2012: 284-296).

Imam Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali al-Tusi, widely known as Imam al-Ghazali, one of the greatest scholars Islam has ever produced, was born in Tus, a city located in the Khurasan province of Persia. Imam al-Ghazali is renowned for his intellectual contributions to Islamic philosophy and theology, having been bestowed with various titles including *Hujjat al-Islam* (Proof of Islam), *Zayn al-Din* (the Ornament of Faith), *Islam's ha-Nesher ha-Gadol* and *Doctor Angelicus*, 'Highway of Religion' and *Sharaf al-A'imma* (the Nobility of the Leading Scholars). Widely considered as one of the greatest scholars Islam has ever produced, al-Ghazali's influence extends beyond the Islamic world, as he is regarded as one of the world's most influential thinkers (al-Subki 1968: 191; Moosa 2004: 274-275; Watt 2005: 3649-3472; Watt 2004: 2; Moosa 2005: 2; al-Akiti 2011: 573-580; Smith 1983: 215; Glick et. al. 2005:194).

Augustine and al-Ghazali recognized a significant spiritual gap within their respective religious communities, marked by an overemphasis on external religious practices at the expense of inner spiritual development. Both thinkers critiqued the prevalent focus on superficial expressions of faith, highlighting the neglect of nurturing the inner self, which they viewed as central to genuine religious life. They observed that virtuous deeds were often reduced to obligatory rituals or routine practices, insufficient for true soul purification or fostering a deep connection with the Divine. In response, Augustine and al-Ghazali critically examined long-standing religious practices, condemning excessive ritualism, legalism, dogmatism, and intellectual arrogance devoid of spiritual depth. Despite their distinct theological backgrounds, both shared a common goal: to revive the inner dimension of religious practice and promote profound spiritual reflection. Ultimately, they emphasized the necessity of harmonizing the outer and inner dimensions of good works, asserting that true spiritual growth and the fulfillment of religious objectives require a balanced integration of both aspects.

This study is theoretical in nature and it integrates bibliographic review, descriptive analysis and comparative analysis to ensure both depth and breadth. Theoretical research focuses on the original works of Augustine and al-Ghazali to understand the foundations of their thought within broader philosophical contexts, while bibliographic research examines primary and secondary sources, including scholarly interpretations. Descriptive analysis clarifies key concepts and arguments, and content analysis identifies recurring themes in their writings. Additionally, comparative analysis highlights the similarities and differences in their theological and ethical views, offering a well-rounded examination of both scholars.

### **Augustine's Spiritual Perspective on Good Works: Cultivating a Deeper Understanding**

Augustine's theological reflections on Christian ethics highlight the importance of internal transformation in performing good works. He argues that religious duties like fasting, prayer, and almsgiving are meaningful only when driven by sincere love for God and genuine devotion. In *On Christian Doctrine*, Augustine (1890b) asserts, "If it is not done out of love, it is of no value; even if it is done with perfect correctness, it is of no value," emphasizing the primacy of pure intention behind actions. He views love as the transformative force that not only motivates virtuous

behavior but also purifies the soul, guiding believers towards spiritual perfection. Augustine also stresses the role of divine grace in enabling individuals to cultivate righteousness, asserting that while moral effort is important, true transformation comes through God's grace. His insights underscore the inseparable connection between faith, love, and moral action, urging believers to internalize their spiritual practices for authentic Christian living (Augustine 1890b).

Augustine's emphasis on the inner self and the law of love profoundly shapes his understanding of good works. He argues that good works extend beyond mere external actions; they originate from the depths of one's inner being. In his discourse on the Sermon on the Mount, Augustine underscores that the outward performance of good works is inadequate without the right intentions and motivations. He contends that actions undertaken for the sake of human recognition or material gain may appear virtuous on the surface but lack genuine moral value. He emphasizes that genuine goodness arises from engaging in good works with a pure heart and sincere love for God and others. He also stresses the importance of aligning internal disposition with external actions, urging believers to cultivate virtuous intentions. Augustine's approach highlights the inseparable connection between inner disposition and external conduct, emphasizing the transformative power of love and righteousness (Augustine 1890a, 2013a).

Augustine delves into the deeper meaning of good works and religious practices, offering insights into why certain Old Law practices are no longer followed by Christians. He argues that Christ's coming fulfilled these laws, abolishing distinctions between clean and unclean foods and shifting the focus to the Lord's Day instead of Sabbath observance (Augustine 1890a: 73 I.6.7, 735; 7.8, 735; II.7.15, 752; 24.57, 774; III.50.62, 9015). Augustine interprets commandments such as 'Thou shalt not kill' as addressing not just physical actions but also inner attitudes like anger and hatred (Augustine 2013a). He emphasizes the importance of forgiveness, viewing it as a transformative act of letting go of resentment and showing love to others. Augustine's perspective underscores the need for inner renewal and the cultivation of virtues like humility and grace in the Christian life, offering timeless guidance for believers.

In essence, Augustine's perspective on good works underscores the significance of grasping their true significance and purpose and integrating their practice in a manner that leads to inner transformation. He regards religious rituals and moral behaviour as pathways to spiritual rejuvenation and development, emphasizing the essential qualities of humility, love, and grace within the Christian journey. Augustine's teachings serve as a timeless wellspring of inspiration and direction for contemporary believers, guiding them towards a deeper understanding of faith and personal growth.

### **The Internalisation of the Performance**

Augustine's exploration of the inner conditions necessary for performing good works is both profound and extensive, offering valuable spiritual insights that remain relevant today. While his writings on this topic are not presented in a systematic manner, they nevertheless provide guidance on cultivating a virtuous character essential for embodying Christian teachings. In this section, we will delve into Augustine's thoughts on key inner conditions for performing good works, drawing from various primary sources that shed light on different aspects of the subject. By focusing on qualities such as humility, hope, and love, Augustine encourages readers to look beyond mere outward actions and instead strive for a deeper transformation of the self (Grabowski 1952: 336-358).

Augustine's examination of the inner conditions essential for carrying out good works lacks a systematic structure. Nevertheless, his discourse on this subject is profound, extensive, and provides valuable spiritual wisdom. Our previous studies have identified several important general inner conditions of good works highlighted by Augustine (Mohd Rosmizi Abd Rahman 2014, 2018 & 2019b). This section examines key inner conditions for performing good deeds, as identified in Augustine's selected writings. These preconditions, relevant to the general types of good deeds within the scope of this study, can be grouped into several primary categories as follows:

1. **Right Motive and Inner Purification:** Augustine's emphasis on performing good works with pure motives transcends mere external actions. He underscores the importance of aligning one's intentions and desires with the divine will, ensuring that actions stem from genuine love for God and humanity (Augustine 1890c). This inner purification involves a profound transformation of the heart, where selfish desires are replaced with selfless devotion to serving others. Augustine's teachings highlight the need for individuals to continually purify their inner selves through prayer, self-reflection, and spiritual discipline, fostering a deeper connection with God and a heightened sense of moral responsibility.
2. **Faith, Hope, and Love:** Augustine's theological framework places immense significance on the virtues of faith, hope, and love as foundational pillars of Christian life. Faith, in Augustine's view, is not merely an intellectual assent to theological truths but a deep-seated trust in God's providence and fidelity to His promises. It provides the bedrock upon which individuals build their moral actions, anchoring them in a transcendent reality beyond the material realm. Hope, meanwhile, serves as a guiding light amidst life's trials and tribulations, sustaining individuals in their pursuit of righteousness and steadfast commitment to God's kingdom. Love, the crowning virtue, encapsulates the essence of Christian ethics, permeating every facet of human existence with divine grace and compassion. Augustine's theology of love underscores its transformative power in reshaping human relationships, fostering unity, and promoting justice and solidarity in society (Augustine 1890d, 2013b).
3. **Humility and Fear:** Augustine's teachings on humility and fear of God reflect his profound understanding of human nature and the dynamics of moral agency. Humility, as Augustine espouses, is the antidote to pride and self-righteousness, fostering an attitude of meekness and openness to God's guidance. It involves a recognition of one's inherent limitations and fallibility, leading individuals to embrace a posture of dependence on divine grace and mercy. Fear of God, far from being a paralyzing dread, serves as a healthy reverence for His majesty and holiness, guiding individuals away from sin and towards righteousness. Augustine's theology of fear underscores its role as a moral compass, directing individuals towards the path of virtue and moral integrity (Augustine 1890d, 1992).

By internalizing these inner conditions, individuals undergo a transformative process, aligning their actions and inner selves with the principles of Christian faith. Through this journey, they cultivate a Christ-centred and grace-centred approach to life, nurturing a deeper relationship with God and fulfilling their ultimate purpose in serving His kingdom (Grabowski 1952: 336-358). Augustine's holistic approach to morality emphasizes the integration of faith, hope, and love with humility and fear, fostering a holistic understanding of Christian ethics and guiding believers towards a life of spiritual flourishing and moral excellence.

### **Al-Ghazali's Spiritual Perspective on Good Works: Exploring their Inner Dimensions**

Al-Ghazali's insights into good works and religious life present a comprehensive understanding that emphasizes both external actions and inner spiritual states. He categorizes these into two key dimensions: the outer and the inner. While acknowledging the importance of external observances, al-Ghazali argues that the inner dimension is crucial for the true efficacy and purpose of good works, as the quality of one's intentions profoundly influences the impact on the soul (Quasem, 1978, pp. 47-48). He stresses the necessity of balancing outward actions with the observance of certain inner conditions, such as sincerity (Ibid).

Moreover, al-Ghazali highlights that religious observances hold mysteries and wisdoms that transcend mere ritualistic practices (al-Ghazali 1967: 116, 1953: 75, 1992: 75, 2004). He invites believers to delve deeper into the spiritual significance behind their actions, urging them to cultivate a deeper awareness of the divine presence in all aspects of their lives. By recognizing

the profound spiritual dimensions inherent in religious practices, individuals can infuse their actions with greater meaning and purpose, thereby enriching their spiritual journey.

In his writings, al-Ghazali advocates for a deeper understanding of religious practice among Muslims, urging them to move beyond superficial outward observances. He contends that engaging in devotional acts without a genuine connection to their inner spiritual essence will render them ineffective in nurturing the soul and achieving their true purpose of fostering spiritual growth and enlightenment. Al-Ghazali argues that true fulfillment and higher spiritual attainment can only be realized when devotional practices are infused with a profound inner dimension. Thus, he emphasizes the importance of achieving balance by incorporating the inner aspects of religious practice and reflecting on their deeper significance (al-Ghazali 1986).

To achieve this balance between the outward and inward or inner and outer aspects of good works including religious life, al-Ghazali imparts valuable guidance to his readers. He underscores the importance of cultivating an understanding of the inner knowledge of devotional acts, emphasizing the significance of discerning their deeper spiritual meanings and implications. By delving beneath the surface of outward observances, individuals can uncover the profound spiritual truths embedded within religious practices, thereby enriching their spiritual journey and fostering a deeper connection with the divine (Ibid.).

Moreover, al-Ghazali urges his audience to reflect on the genuine inner knowledge of religious matters, transcending the conventional teachings of jurists and the superficial perceptions prevalent in society. He advocates for a critical examination of religious doctrines and practices, encouraging individuals to seek a deeper understanding of the spiritual truths that underpin their faith. By venturing beyond the confines of conventional wisdom, individuals can attain a deeper appreciation of the spiritual dimensions of religious life and unlock the transformative power inherent in sincere devotion and spiritual contemplation (al-Ghazali 1986: 21,56).

In his philosophical inquiries into religious life, al-Ghazali introduces two fundamental principles that underpin the analysis of spiritual practice: the pursuit of right knowledge and the commitment to right action. The concept of right knowledge encompasses a deep understanding of the inner workings, true purpose, and profound significance behind religious acts and rituals. Conversely, right action pertains to the practical implementation of these insights into one's daily spiritual practice.

Al-Ghazali elucidates that both right knowledge and right action exhibit dual dimensions: the outward and the inward, or the inner and outer. The outward dimension relates to the observable and tangible aspects of religious practice—the physical rituals, ceremonies, and observances that are visible to the external eye. However, al-Ghazali contends that true spiritual fulfillment and enlightenment lie not solely in the outward performance of religious acts but in the inner dimension that transcends the physical realm (Mohd Rosmizi et. al., 2017).

In this context, the inner dimension of religious practice assumes paramount importance. It encompasses the inner, spiritual aspects of devotional acts—the intentions, motivations, and heartfelt sincerity with which these acts are performed. Al-Ghazali emphasizes that it is the inner meanings and intentions behind religious acts that infuse them with transformative power and spiritual value. Without a genuine understanding of the inner dimensions of devotional practices, the outer observances risk becoming hollow and devoid of spiritual significance.

### **Understanding the Inner Knowledge of Good Works and Religious Life**

Al-Ghazali's profound insights into the inner or inward dimension of religious life offer a compelling perspective on the transformative power of devotional acts. Through his teachings, he illuminates the complex relationship between the outer expressions of faith and the inner disposition of the believer. Central to his philosophy is the notion that true spiritual fulfillment cannot be attained through mere outward rituals, but rather requires a profound engagement of the heart and mind in communion with the divine (al-Ghazali 1986: 4,39).



For instance, one of al-Ghazali's key teachings revolves around the inner conditions and qualities essential for prayer. He emphasizes that prayer is not merely a mechanical exercise of recitation and bodily movements, but a profound spiritual encounter with the Almighty. According to al-Ghazali, the effectiveness of prayer depends on the sincerity, mindfulness, and presence of the heart with which it is performed. It is this inner engagement that imbues prayer with its transformative power, enabling believers to experience a deep sense of connection with the divine and derive spiritual nourishment from their devotional practices (al-Ghazali 1986: 21,56).

Furthermore, al-Ghazali underscores the need for mindfulness in all aspects of religious life. He emphasizes the importance of cultivating an enhanced awareness of one's thoughts, intentions, and emotions, particularly during acts of worship. By remaining fully present in the moment and attuned to the divine presence, believers can deepen their spiritual experience and derive greater benefits from their devotional acts.

### **Exploring the Inner Conditions of Good Works and Religious Life**

These inner conditions are considered essential because they are necessary to produce the desired effects of devotional acts, which is to establish a bond of faith in Allah, to purify the heart, and to attain closeness to Him. In fact, al-Ghazali argues that the inner conditions are the core of the act, and the outward aspect is merely the form (al-Ghazali 1986, 3, 2-3). Therefore, Muslims should strive to observe both aspects in balance and harmony, as they complement each other in producing the desired effects.

These inner conditions are regarded as fundamental due to their essential role in achieving the intended outcomes of devotional acts. Their significance lies in their ability to establish a profound bond of faith with Allah, facilitate the purification of the heart, and enable individuals to draw closer to Him. Al-Ghazali underscores that these inner conditions constitute the essence of the act, emphasizing their primacy over the outward or outer form. According to his teachings, while the outward aspect serves as a visible expression of devotion, it is the inward or inner disposition that truly defines the act's essence and efficacy.

By prioritizing the cultivation of these inner conditions, Muslims can infuse their devotional practices with deeper spiritual meaning. Rather than merely going through the motions, adherents are encouraged to engage in acts of worship with sincerity, humility, and genuine devotion. This inner focus not only enhances the spiritual experience of the individual but also fosters a more profound connection with the divine.

Moreover, al-Ghazali highlights the interconnectedness of the inner and outer dimensions of devotional acts, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a harmonious balance between the two. While the outer form provides structure and discipline to religious practices, it is the inner disposition that infuses these acts with spiritual vitality and efficacy. Therefore, Muslims are encouraged to cultivate both aspects simultaneously, recognizing that they complement each other and work synergistically to bring about the desired effects of spiritual growth and closeness to Allah.

These common inner conditions of devotional acts play a crucial role in fostering spiritual growth and deepening one's connection with the divine. They encompass various aspects of the believer's inner disposition and attitude towards worship, guiding individuals towards a more profound and meaningful engagement with their religious practices. Our previous studies have revealed several key general inner conditions for good works emphasized by al-Ghazali (Mohd Rosmizi 2014, 2019a; Mohd Rosmizi & Mohamed Mihar, 2017; Mohd Rosmizi et. al, 2017). These common inner conditions of devotional acts can be grouped as follows:

1. **Purification of the Heart and Sincerity:** This refers to the need to purify one's heart or soul from impurities such as pride, envy, and selfishness, and to perform religious acts with sincerity and solely for the sake of God as in line with the concept of *Tawhid*. Purification of the heart involves the constant effort to rid oneself of negative traits and spiritual impurities that hinder one's relationship with God and fellow human beings (al-

Ghazali 1986: 32, 141-142). Sincerity, on the other hand, underscores the importance of performing religious acts with pure intentions and solely for the sake of God, without seeking praise, recognition, or any worldly gains. It involves aligning one's innermost desires and motivations with the divine will, seeking only the pleasure and approval of Allah (al-Ghazali 1986: IV.7, 379-381). Practicing sincerity requires a deep contemplation and self-awareness, as individuals must constantly examine their intentions and motivations behind their actions. It entails striving to purify one's heart from hidden desires and ulterior motives, ensuring that every act of worship is performed with utmost devotion and dedication to God alone (Quasem 1978; al-Ghazali 2003: 48-61).

2. **The Presence of the Heart & Mind:** This refers to the need to focus one's heart and mind on the act of worship being performed, and to be present in the moment, avoiding distractions and heedlessness. The concept of the presence of the heart and mind in worship underscores the importance of mindfulness and attentiveness during religious acts, as advocated by scholars like al-Ghazali. It emphasizes the need for individuals to engage fully with their spiritual practices, directing their thoughts and emotions towards God and the act of worship at hand. Being present in the moment entails cultivating a state of mindfulness, where one's attention is wholly focused on the act of worship, free from distractions and worldly concerns. It requires individuals to disconnect from external influences and internal distractions, allowing them to immerse themselves fully in the spiritual experience. This presence of heart and mind is essential for deepening one's connection with the divine and experiencing the spiritual benefits of worship. It enables individuals to engage with the sacred rituals and prayers with sincerity, reverence, and devotion, thereby enhancing the quality and efficacy of their worship (al-Ghazali 1986: I.4, 161-163).
3. **Humbleness and Adoration of God:** This refers to the need to approach God with humility and reverence, recognizing one's own insignificance in relation to the Creator. Humbleness and adoration of God encapsulate the recognition of human insignificance in the face of divine greatness and the acknowledgment of God's sovereignty and majesty. This attitude is deeply rooted in the concept of *Tawhid*, the fundamental Islamic belief in the absolute oneness and uniqueness of God. *Tawhid* emphasizes that all power, authority, and perfection belong solely to God, and this realization fosters a profound sense of humility in the believer. Al-Ghazali's emphasis on humility and adoration as essential conditions for all types of good works underscores their significance in fostering a meaningful relationship between the individual and God. Regardless of the specific nature of the good deed, these virtues serve as foundational elements that should permeate daily activities. They exemplify the servant's acknowledgment of their dependence on and reverence for the Divine. According to al-Ghazali, every virtuous action, no matter how small or significant, is regarded as an act of worship (*'ibadah*) when performed in accordance with the principles of humility and adoration (al-Ghazali 1986: I.4, 169). Therefore, it becomes imperative to cultivate and sustain this relationship with God throughout the execution of good works, ensuring that they are infused with sincerity and devotion.
4. **Fear (or piety) and Love:** This refers to the need to have a balance of fear and love towards God. Fear refers to the recognition of God's power and authority, while love refers to the recognition of His mercy and benevolence. Fear (or piety) and love are two interrelated yet distinct emotional and spiritual qualities that play crucial roles in the believer's relationship with God in Islam. Fear, often understood as piety or *taqwa* in Islamic terminology, encompasses a profound reverence and awe towards God's divine attributes, power, and authority. It involves a deep awareness of God's Omnipotence and Omniscience, as well as a keen recognition of His absolute justice and accountability. Love,

on the other hand, represents a deep and profound affection for God based on His boundless mercy, compassion, and benevolence towards His creation. It involves recognizing and appreciating God's infinite love and grace, as well as His constant care and concern for His servants. Love for God inspires believers to cultivate a deep emotional attachment to Him and to seek His pleasure and nearness through acts of devotion, worship, and service. It serves as a source of spiritual nourishment and motivation, drawing believers closer to God and fostering a sense of intimacy and communion with the Divine. Love is the highest in degree and it is observed by the lover of God (al-Ghazali 1986: IV.33, 155).

5. **Shame, Hope, and Trust in God**-Reflection after Completing Devotional Acts: This refers to the need to feel a sense of shame and humility after completing devotional acts, recognizing any shortcomings or mistakes made, while also maintaining hope in God's forgiveness and mercy, and trusting in His guidance and protection. After completing devotional acts, it is imperative for believers to experience a range of emotions and attitudes that contribute to their spiritual growth and relationship with God. Al-Ghazali maintains that after completing good works or any devotional act, Muslims should reflect on any shortcomings with a sense of shame, fearing that their efforts may not be accepted. However, they should also maintain hope in God's mercy, trusting that He may forgive and accept their deeds. Consequently, after exerting their best efforts, they should place their hope and trust in God (al-Ghazali 1986: IV.3 & 5). Al-Ghazali extends the spiritual connection between individuals and God by emphasizing that this relationship should persist beyond the completion of any good deed. According to him, nurturing and sustaining this spiritual bond is essential throughout one's life journey. In essence, experiencing a range of emotions such as shame, hope, and trust after completing devotional acts is integral to the believer's spiritual journey. These emotions facilitate self-awareness, humility, reliance on God's mercy, and trust in His guidance, fostering a deeper connection with God and facilitating spiritual growth and development.

### **Brief Comparison**

Both Saint Augustine and Imam al-Ghazali expound upon the complex nature of good works and religious devotion, asserting that these practices encompass two essential dimensions: the inner and the outer, the inward and the outward, or the physical and the spiritual. They both contend that a complete and authentic religious life necessitates the harmonious integration of both aspects. Thus, both Saint Augustine and Imam al-Ghazali emphasize the integral nature of good works, advocating for a comprehensive approach that encompasses both inner and outer dimensions. They both contend that true righteousness extends beyond mere outward actions; it involves a profound inner transformation of the heart and soul. The teachings of Augustine and al-Ghazali converge on the significance of the inner dimension of good works, advocating for a profound internalization of religious practices to foster spiritual growth and connection with the divine. Both theologians urge believers to delve beyond mere outward or outer observances and rituals, encouraging them to imbue their actions with deeper meaning and purpose. They both invite readers to internalise their performances by understanding the deeper meaning, real purpose, and significance of the good works they perform. In essence, Augustine and al-Ghazali advocate for a holistic approach to religious practice that integrates both inner and outer dimensions. They assert that true piety and spiritual fulfilment are achieved through the harmonious balance of inward devotion and outward expression, guiding individuals towards a deeper and more meaningful connection with the divine.

Central to their teachings is the emphasis on understanding the inner conditions that accompany good works, such as right motive or intention, humility, fear, and love. By cultivating these inner qualities, believers can transcend mere ritualism and legalism, and instead, engage in acts of devotion that are sincere, heartfelt, and spiritually enriching.



Despite differences in their theological frameworks and the extent of systematic discussion, Augustine and al-Ghazali share a common understanding of the importance of spirituality in religious life. Their teachings underscore the transformative power of inner reflection, sincere intention, and spiritual devotion in fostering a deeper connection with the divine and achieving true fulfilment in the religious journey. By internalizing the insights offered by Augustine and al-Ghazali, believers can embark on a path of spiritual growth that transcends external practices, leading to a more profound and meaningful experience of faith and religious life.

Both Augustine and al-Ghazali share a profound concern for spiritual fulfilment and acknowledge the essential role of good works in its attainment. They contend that the purity of the soul is dependent upon its closeness to the divine, asserting that closer position with God leads to greater levels of happiness and moral excellence. However, both scholars caution that the effectiveness of good works depends on the internalization of their spiritual essence, arguing that performing them without this dimension may even lead to adverse consequences.

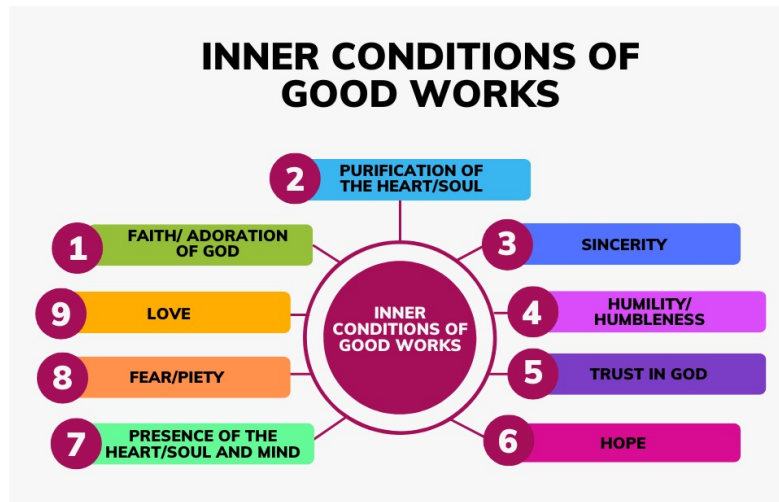
To elucidate the essence of good works, Augustine and al-Ghazali advocate for contemplation into their inner meanings, significance, and underlying purposes. Augustine achieves this by synthesizing Jewish Law and Christian teachings to explicate the intrinsic meaning and intent behind the laws, underscoring the necessity of a sincere and virtuous heart in their observance. Conversely, al-Ghazali conducts a meticulous examination of the inner dimensions inherent in various forms of good works, emphasizing the transformative potential that lies within their spiritual depth.

Through their respective approaches, Augustine and al-Ghazali invite readers to embark on a journey of contemplation and introspection, encouraging them to delve beyond the surface of good works and uncover their profound spiritual implications. By internalizing these insights, believers can cultivate a deeper understanding of the spiritual essence of good works and their inherent significance in the pursuit of spiritual fulfilment.

Both Augustine and al-Ghazali advocate for a harmonious balance between the outer and inner dimensions of good works, recognizing the significance of both aspects in fostering a profound spiritual connection with the divine. They emphasize the importance of internal conditions, such as right motive, humility, fear, and love, which are indispensable for the sincere and authentic performance of good works.

Based on the discussion above, several items of inner conditions have been highlighted by both Augustine and al-Ghazali. These items of inner conditions of good works can be considered as universal or common item, since they are applicable at all time beyond religious boundaries. From Augustine, we found: right motive and inner purification; faith, hope, and love, and; humility and fear. From al-Ghazali we found: purification of the heart and sincerity; the presence of the heart & mind; humbleness and adoration of god; fear (or piety) and love, and; after completing devotional acts: shame, hope, and trust in god. In combining the insights of Augustine and al-Ghazali, we can refine a comprehensive list of inner conditions essential for religious life and good works. These conditions encompass various aspects of the inner self and spiritual disposition. Thus, when we combine them together, we can list them as: purification of the heart/soul, sincerity, humility/humbleness, trust in god, hope, the presence of the heart and mind, fear/piety, love, and faith adoration of God.

**Figure 1: Summary of the 9 Items of Inner Conditions of Good Works according to Augustine and al-Ghazali**



While Augustine briefly touches upon these inner conditions within the framework of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, al-Ghazali provides a more comprehensive examination of these prerequisites within the context of various types of good actions, drawing from the Islamic principle of *Tawhid*. Through his detailed analysis, al-Ghazali delineates the significance of these internal qualities in facilitating a deeper engagement with religious practices and nurturing a closer relationship with God.

Despite the differences in theological frameworks and cultural contexts, both Augustine and al-Ghazali underscore the universal importance of inner conditions in the performance of good works. They reprimand readers to adhere to these inner conditions, emphasizing their integral role in elevating the spiritual quality and efficacy of religious observances. By embracing these internal virtues, believers can cultivate a deeper spiritual awareness and forge a more intimate connection with the divine, thereby enriching their journey towards spiritual fulfillment and moral excellence.

In conclusion, the teachings of Augustine and al-Ghazali serve as profound reminders of the holistic nature of religious practice and the essential role of inner spirituality in the pursuit of divine closeness. Despite originating from distinct theological traditions and cultural contexts, both theologians converge in their emphasis on the harmonious integration of outward observance and inner spiritual growth as essential components of a meaningful religious life. Both theologians advocate for a holistic approach to religious observance, emphasizing the indispensable role of inner conditions in the performance of good works. Their teachings reflect a shared understanding of the transformative power of sincere intention, humility, fear, and love in nurturing a deeper spiritual connection with the divine. Both Augustine and al-Ghazali emphasize the importance of balancing outward observance with inner spiritual growth in order to journey closer to God. They both stress the need for understanding the inner dimensions of good works and observing their inner conditions, thus balancing both dimensions of good works.

Augustine's theological framework, deeply rooted in Christian doctrine, underscores the transformative power of sincere intention, humility, and love in guiding believers towards a deeper relationship with God. His synthesis of Jewish Law and Christian teachings illuminates the inner significance of religious practices, inviting believers to transcend superficial acts of piety and embrace a more authentic expression of faith grounded in the inner workings of the heart.

Similarly, al-Ghazali's Islamic perspective offers a comprehensive exploration of the inner dimensions of good works, drawing upon the principle of *Tawhid* to elucidate the spiritual essence of religious actions. His meticulous analysis highlights the transformative potential of inner virtues in nurturing spiritual growth and moral excellence within the Muslim community, emphasizing the importance of aligning one's intentions with the pursuit of divine closeness.

Both Augustine and al-Ghazali advocate for the cultivation of a more profound engagement with the inner dimensions of faith, guiding believers towards a deeper understanding of the spiritual significance of their religious practices. By incorporating elements such as right intention, humility, fear, and love into the practice of good works, individuals can embark on a transformative journey towards spiritual fulfilment and moral integrity, enriching their lives with a deeper sense of purpose and meaning.

Both Augustine and al-Ghazali underscore the imperative of achieving balance between the inner and outer dimensions of good works. They articulate the notion that true righteousness necessitates not only the outward manifestation of virtuous deeds but also the cultivation of inner virtues that animate those actions. Central to their teachings is the idea that the sincerity of one's intentions, coupled with humility, hope, and love, forms the foundation upon which genuine piety is built, thereby fostering a profound connection with the Divine.

Despite differences in emphasis and depth of analysis, both Augustine and al-Ghazali converge in their exhortation for believers to uphold these inner conditions in their practice of good works. They impart a shared conviction that adherence to these inner virtues not only enhances the moral quality of one's actions but also fosters a deeper intimacy with the Divine. In essence, they advocate for a holistic approach to righteousness that encompasses both the outward expression and inward disposition of virtuous conduct.

The teachings of Augustine and al-Ghazali continue to resonate with believers across diverse religious traditions, offering timeless wisdom and guidance for navigating the complexities of modern life. Their emphasis on the inner dimensions of good works serves as an important reminder of the universal significance of sincerity, humility, and love in fostering a deeper connection with the divine and cultivating a more compassionate and ethical society.

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