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**ABSTRACT**

“Ren and Imán: A Comparative Approach to Confucian and Islamic Virtues”

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Islam and Confucianism are two of the five greatest religions of the world. Although representing two totally different worldviews, it is mostly in the ethical characteristics of these religions that we can find noteworthy similarities, which provide strong potential for dialogue among followers of these traditions. Islam, as explicitly representing monotheistic characteristics, asks its followers to be steadfast and righteous in their actions in the world which are determined and governed by the ultimate power, God (Allah). On the other hand, Confucianism basically does not talk about God as a concept, but rather about Heaven, which is not a personal power; its followers must be righteous and steadfast in their life. This paper analyzes the concept of *ren*, which is one of the most important (and also elusive) concepts of Chinese thought, its place in *Analects*, and its historical evolution in the history of the Confucian tradition. The first part of this presentation examines the historical development of *ren* and its place in contemporary Confucianism. The second part identifies a concept within Islam which holds the potential for a meaningful comparison between *ren* (humaneness, love, benevolence etc) and *imán* (faith, belief etc). A comparison between the two significant concepts in Confucianism and Islam shows that even though they symbolize and articulate different virtues in their cultural context, their impacts on the other external virtues such as practicing the rituals and being a trustworthy believer are very similar. Their equally remarkable power on the external virtues which lead the believer toward being a harmonious member of society can be conceptualized as an instrument for dialogue between the Confucians and the Muslims. This paper questions the possible inclination of the two terms' dialogical perspective.