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The genetic development in Al-Ghazzaliyy's epistemology

Abu-Sway, Mustafa Mahmoud, Ph.D.

Boston College, 1993

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Boston College

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Department of Philosophy

THE GENETIC DEVELOPMENT IN AL-GHAZZALIYY'S EPISTEMOLOGY

a dissertation

by

MUSTAFA MAHMOUD ABU-SWAY

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May, 1993

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BOSTON COLLEGE

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES

The thesis of Mustafa Mahmoud Abu-Sway

entitled The Genetic Development in Al-Ghazzaliyy's Epistemology

submitted to the Department of Philosophy

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences has been read and approved by the Committee:

Patrick H. Byrne

Merlin Swartz

Date April 16, 1993

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1993

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The Genetic Development in Al-Ghazzaliyy's Epistemology

Mustafa Mahmoud Abu-Sway

Abstract

This dissertation argues that the epistemology of Al-Ghazzaliyy (450 A.H./1058 C.E.-505 A.H./1111 C.E.) evolved through different stages in his life. He began his life as a conformist, that is, accepting knowledge on the authority of parents and teachers; but soon he broke with conformism and began his quest for truth which led him to experience the most original and dramatic case of skepticism in the history of thought. The only way out of his crisis was divine illumination. After he regained his trust in logical necessities, he studied all the existing schools of thought including philosophy and dialectical theology [*`ilm al-kalam*]; his search culminated in his acceptance of Sufism [i.e., Islamic mysticism] as the only path that leads to what he described as peremptory knowledge [*`ilm yaqin*].

The introduction includes the state of research on Al-Ghazzaliyy's epistemology and a statement of the problem.

Chapter one presents a sketch of Al-Ghazzaliyy's life as an aid to understanding the complexities and the controversies that surround this great Muslim thinker.

Chapter two deals with Al-Ghazzaliyy's writings as a student and how these writings could be related to his epistemological development.

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Chapter three deals with Al-Ghazzaliyy's writings during the first period of public teaching (478 A.H./1085 C.E.-488 A.H./1095 C.E.) in which he encountered all existing schools of thought in his quest for true knowledge.

Chapter four analyzes the works Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote in seclusion as a Sufi (488 A.H./1095 C.E.-499 A.H./1106 C.E.).

Chapter five examines Al-Ghazzaliyy's writings during the second period of public teaching at the Nizamiyyah of Nishapur which lasted for about four years.

Chapter six discusses the last stage in Al-Ghazzaliyy's life (505 A.H./1111 C.E.). This chapter questions the claim that he abandoned Sufism for the method of the traditionalists.

The conclusion recapitulates the major themes in Al-Ghazzaliyy's epistemological development.

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I wish to thank the many friends who helped me collect the original works of Al-Ghazzaliyy from different countries. Without mentioning them by name, I wish to thank them all. In this respect, the Inter-Library Loan Office at O'Neil Library was a great help. To those who work at this office, I express my deep gratitued.

Special thanks are due to my wife Iman Khalil `Eid for her moral support and encouragement.

Finally, thinking about knowledge as a cumulative process, this dissertation must have started some thirty five years ago with my parents teaching me the first lessons of this life, to them, I dedicate this dissertation.

Mustafa Mahmoud Abu-Sway
Boston College

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Introduction

1. Statement of the Problem:

The basic problem that this dissertation will be concerned with is the genetic development of Al-Ghazzaliyy's theory of knowledge [*Ma`rifah*]. It is my contention that this theory of knowledge evolved through various stages. Both his life and writings reflect this development. As a student, he began his academic life with an interest in traditional Islamic studies such as jurisprudence [*fiqh*]. After he assumed his first teaching position at the Nizamiyyah school of Baghdad he became a methodological skeptic, a situation which prompted him to study all schools of thought available at the time in search for peremptory knowledge [*`Ilm Yaqini*]. From skepticism he moved to Sufism [Islamic mysticism], and finally there are indications that he ended up studying the traditions [Hadith] of prophet Muhammad, which led many to claim that he shifted to the methodology of the traditionalists [*Ahl Al-Hadith*] and that he abandoned Sufism. It is the aim Of this study to trace Al-Ghazzaliyy's quest for knowledge throughout his life.

This study will take into consideration the historical circumstances and the social context in which Al-Ghazzaliyy flourished. It is my conviction that these circumstances influenced his personal and thus his intellectual life as well.

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2. Previous Studies:

There are numerous previous studies of Al-Ghazzaliyy. However, most of these studies dealt with subjects such as Sufism, ethics and Jurisprudence. While a very few of these studies dealt with Al-Ghazzaliyy's theory of knowledge, none of them could be considered comprehensive: no studies so far have used all of his books to determine his epistemology. And certainly, these studies did not show the genetic development that took place in his thought.

One of the studies that dealt with Al-Ghazzaliyy's notion of knowledge [*ma`rifah*] is Jabre's *La Notion De La "Ma`rifa" Chez Al-Ghazali*. Although he discussed the relationship of ethics to the notion of *ma`rifah*, his approach remains philological.[1] This philological method was also used by Hava-Lazarous Yafeh primarily to determine the authenticity of Al-Ghazzaliyy's works.[2]

Another study that discussed Al-Ghazzaliyy's theory of knowledge is Dunya's *Al-Haqiqah Fi Nazar Al-Ghazali*.[3] This study was limited in its sources and depended heavily on *Mi`raj Al-Quds*, a book that was attributed to Al-Ghazzaliyy but remains unconfirmed

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1 Farid Jabre, *La Notion De La "Ma`rifa" Chez Al-Ghazali* (Beyrouth: Editions des Letteres Orientales, 1958).

2 Hava-Lazarous Yafeh, *Studies in Al-Ghazali* (Jerusalem: The Magnus Press - Hebrew University, 1975).

3 Sulaiman Dunya, *Al-Haqiqah Fi Nazar Al-Ghazali* (Cairo: Dar Al-Ma`arif Bi-Masr, 1965).

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because none of the medieval historiographers listed this book, nor there are cross-references in Al-Ghazzaliyy's confirmed books.[4]

I have undertaken in the task of studying all of Al-Ghazzaliyy's works in order to trace the development in his epistemology. The basic working list can be found in Badawi's *Mu'allafat Al-Ghazali*, numbers 1-72.[5] The criteria for choosing these books are based on any of the two following conditions: the first is that there should be cross-references in Al-Ghazzaliyy's works, as it was his habit to mention books that he wrote, or those he was going to write, and the second is that it has to be mentioned by medieval historiographers such as in Ibn As-Subkiyy's *Tabaqat Ash-Shafi`iyyah Al-Kubra*. This book is a biography of the jurists who belonged to the Shafi`iyy's school of jurisprudence; Al-Ghazzaliyy was one of them.[6]

While I have considered secondary sources, I mostly relied upon Arabic texts of Al-Ghazzaliyy's works. This was to avoid the possibility of distortions in translation.

The first chapter covers the life of Al-Ghazzaliyy. There the primary interest is to present the socio-politico context which explains his intellectual movement. The political scene at the time and the role he played in shaping it is covered. His relationship with

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4 `Abdur-Rahman Badawi, *Mu'allafat Al-Ghazali*, 2nd ed. (Kuwait: Wikalat Al-Matbu`at, 1977) p. 244.

5 Badawi, *Mu`allafat*, pp. 1-238.

6 Taj Ad-Din As-Subkiyy,*Tabaqat Ash-Shafi`iyyah Al-Kubra* (Cairo: `Isa Al-Babi Al-Halabi & Co., 1964)

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the existing schools of thought, and his position regarding major events are also discussed. In addition, his formal education and academic career and the events related to them are investigated.

The next five chapters survey the books that were written during the corresponding stage among of the five periods in Al-Ghazzaliyy's life according to Maurice Bouyges' division[7] which I have adopted. The first of these stages begins with his life as a student; the second covers the first period of public teaching at the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad; the third deals with his years of seclusion and withdrawal from public life; the fourth covers the years of the second period of public teaching at the Nizamiyyah of Nishapur, and the fifth reflects the last stage in Al-Ghazzaliyy's life after his second withdrawal from public teaching.

Thus, in the second chapter I study the works that were written when Al-Ghazzaliyy was a student during the years 465 A.H./1072 C.E.- 478 A.H./1085 C.E. I begin by outlining his sources of knowledge in order to define his epistemology during this period, a process which will be repeated in each of the following chapters in an attempt to trace the development in his epistemology.

The third chapter covers Al-Ghazzaliyy's works during his first period of public teaching at the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad which extended from 478 A.H./1085 C.E. till 488 A.H./1095 C.E. In this

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7 Badawi, *Mu'allafat*, pp. xv-xvii.

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chapter I discuss his systematic inquiry in quest of true knowledge. In addition, his encounter with the different schools of thought including the philosophers will be investigated. Finally, I explore the influence of Sufism on his epistemology and how it led to his withdrawal from public life.

The fourth chapter covers the works written during his years of seclusion from 488 A.H./1095 C.E. till 499 A.H./1106 C.E. In this chapter we shall discuss the influence of Sufism on his epistemology. Of especial importance is his introduction of a faculty higher than reason as a source of knowledge. We shall define the nature of the relationship between this new faculty and prophecy.

The fifth chapter deals with the books that were written during the second period of public teaching at the Nizamiyyah of Nishapur (499 A.H./1106 C.E.-503 A.H./1110 C.E.).

The sixth chapter discusses the last stage in Al-Ghazzaliyy's life (505 A.H./1111 C.E.). This chapter questions the claim that he abandoned Sufism for the method of the traditionalists.

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Chapter One

The Life of Al-Ghazzaliyy[8]

In this chapter I shall present a sketch of Al-Ghazzaliyy's life (450 A.H.[9]/1058 C.E.-505 A.H./1111 C.E.) as an aid to understanding the complexities and the controversies that surround this great Muslim thinker. Not only his writings (e.g., Al-Ghazzaliyy's books on knowledge), but also his life is a direct manifestation of his spiritual and intellectual development. This is especially true when the person is a Sufi [*sufiyy*][10], a Muslim mystic, whose everyday life is the premise and his epistemology is the conclusion.

In this sketch I begin with the historical conditions surrounding the time of Al-Ghazzaliyy's life, especially the political setting. I will then move on to consider his life, education and academic career.

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8 In Arabic grammar, every attributed name [*An-Nasab*] should have a stressed *Ya'* suffixed. For more details see `Abd Al-Ghaniyy Ad-Duqr, *Lexicon of Arabic Grammar*, (*Mu`jam Qawa`id Al-Lughah Al-`Arabiyyah*) (Damascus:Dar Al-Qalam, 1986) p.496. In quotations and bibliographic citations I have used Al-Ghazzaliyy's name in its original form (e.g. Algazel.). For further discussion of his name see page 31.

9 A.H.=After Hijrah (the migration of prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in 622 C.E. It was the second Caliph, `Umar Ibn Al- Khattab, who used this event to mark the first year (which is lunar) of the Islamic calendar. I have chosen to use the A.H. dating because it provides a sense of time that places the topic under discussion in its proper "Islamic context".

10 The word "Sufi" is derived from Arabic *suf* [wool]. Dressing wool, among the Sufis, became a symbol of detachment from worldly pleasures and affairs. For further discussion of "Sufism", see Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Furqan Bayn Awliya' Ar-Rahman Wa 'Awliya'" Ash-Shaytan* (Beirut: Al-Maktab Al-Islamiyy, 1981) p.42. In addition, there were those who maintained that the word "Sufi" is derived from Greek "sophia" in an apparent attempt to show that Sufism had its origin in Greek thought and thus disqualify the notion that it stems from Islamic backgrounds.

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1. The Political Scene

The political scene at the time of Al-Ghazzaliyy reflects a disintegrated caliphate. The provincial governors gained considerable powers that left the `Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad virtually powerless. The Caliphs who ruled during the life of Al-Ghazzaliyy were Al-Qa'im Bi-Amrillah (d.467 A.H./1074 C.E.)[11] followed by his grandson, Al-Muqtadi Bi-Amrillah (d.487 A.H./1094 C.E.).[12] Al-Muqtadi Bi-Amrillah was followed by his son the Caliph Al-Mustazhir Billah (511 A.H./1117 C.E.).[13] It is to be noted that Al-Ghazzaliyy attended the ceremony [*bay`ah*] in which Al-Mustazhir was inaugurated.[14] The presence of Al-Ghazzaliyy at this ceremony, which was noted by the historians, indicates his support of the Caliph which is also manifested in Al-Ghazzaliyy's book *Al-Mustazhiriyy Fi Ar-Rad `Ala Al-Batiniyyah* which was named after the Caliph.

Furthermore, Baghdad itself came under direct rule by war lords who became known as "Sultans." They presented themselves as de facto rulers and restricted the Caliph to dignitary functions (i.e. attending ceremonies). The most important family of Sultans was the Seljuks [*As-Salajiqah*] who, according to Ibn Kathir (d.774 A.H./1372 C.E.) established their reign in Khurasan in 429 A.H./1037 C.E.[15] They moved to Baghdad in 447 A.H./1055 C.E. under Tughrul

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11 Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidaya Wan-Nihaya* (Beirut: Maktabat Al-Ma`arif, n.d.) vol.12, p.110.
12 Ibn Kathir, vol.12, p.146.
13 Ibn Kathir, vol.12, p.182.
14 Ibn Kathir, vol.12,.p.147.
15 Ibn Kathir, vol.12, p.44.

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Beg, their first king.[16] He remained in power until his death in 458 A.H./1065 C.E. His successor was his nephew Alp Arslan who was killed in 465 A.H./1072 C.E.[17] He was followed by his son Malik Shah (d.485 A.H./1092 C.E.),[18] who had to fight his own half-brother, Tutush in his quest for power.[19] After the death of Malik Shah, the struggle for power within his family continued: between his wife Zubeida and his son Mahmud (d.487 A.H./1094 C.E.), who was only five years old at the time, on the one hand, and his son Barkyaruq (d.498 A.H./1104 C.E.), who was thirteen years old, on the other. The army fueled this struggle by splitting into two divisions; one sided with Barqyaruq, and the other with Mahmud. It should be noted that the actual struggle over power was not led by the above mentioned children, but rather by their trustees and older family members: they included Zubeida and vizier Taj Al-Mulk Al-Marzuban rival of Nizam Al-Mulk. This rivalry led the supporters of Nizam Al-Mulk, who were convinced that Taj Al-Mulk played a role in the death of Nizam Al-Mulk, to side with Barkyaruq.[20] This dispute was resolved on the battlefield in favor of Barkyaruq who remained Sultan until his death. He was followed by his brother, Muhammad Ibn[21] Malik Shah (d.511 A.H./1117 C.E.), who ascended

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16 Ibn Kathir, vol.12, p.66.
17 Ibn Kathir, vol.12, p.90.
18 Ibn Kathir, vol.12, p.139.
19 Ibn Kathir, vol.12, p.148.
20 Henri Laoust, *La Politique De Gazali*, (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1970) p.59.
21 Ibn= Arabic for son [of].

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to power in 498 A.H/1104 C.E. after another internal struggle, this time with his nephew, Malik Shah Ibn Barkyaruq, grandson of Malik Shah, who was four years old.[22] After the death of Malik Shah, in 485 A.H./1092 C.E., Zubeida demanded that his son Mahmud, who was five years old at the time, should have the right of appointing governors [*wilayat al-`ummal*]. But even more significantly, the scholars of Baghdad, including Al-Mutatabbib[23] Abu Muhammad Al-Hanafiyy, issued a ruling [*fatwa*] stating that there was nothing wrong in granting this right to the boy, in an unprecedented move. The only exception to this ruling came, we learn, from Al-Ghazzaliyy, who forbade the transfer of such powers to Mahmud Ibn Malik Shah. Fortunately, the Caliph, Al-Muqtadi, adopted Al-Ghazzaliyy's position.[24] Al-Ghazzaliyy's *fatwa* was in accordance with Islamic law [*Shari`ah*]. The Shari`ah is very clear about the qualifications of the man who is going to lead the Islamic state: he must be a sane adult, knowledgeable about jurisprudence, aware of public matters, and have a capacity for leadership among many other qualifications. None of these qualifications was present in the above mentioned case.[25] Moreover, there is more than one *Hadith*[26] on the question

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22 Ibn Kathir, vol.12, pp.164-180.

23 Literally, the medical practitioner. Many Muslim scholars used to work in areas not related to their scholarly work in order to avoid taking money from those in office. The scholar would acquire a title related to this profession. It could be that Al-Mutatabbib was one of them.

24 Ibn Kathir, vol.12, p.139.

25 Mustafa Al-Khin, Mustafa Al-Bugha, and `Ali Ash-Shurbajiyy, *Al-Fiqh Al-Manhajiyy `Ala Madhhab Al-Imam Ash-Shafi`iyy* (Damascus: Dar Al-Qalam, 1989) vol.8, p.265.

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of *imarah* (leadership). In one of them, which cited by Al-Bukhariyy[27] and Muslim[28] in their respective *Sahih*, the prophet Muhammad asked `Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Samurah not to seek leadership [*imarah*] unless he was asked.[29] It must be that such a *Hadith* and the above mentioned qualifications convinced Al-Ghazzaliyy to issue his *fatwa* against granting such powers to a boy. Al-Ghazzaliyy was aware of the need of a strong ruler, who could unify the Islamic world. In addition, one can not conceive Al-Ghazzaliyy supporting the rivals of Nizam Al-Mulk who opened for him the doors of the Nizamiyyah school in Baghdad.

In another *fatwa*, to Yusuf Ibn Tashafin (d.500 A.H./1106 C.E.), the Sultan of Al-Maghrib, Al-Ghazzaliyy encouraged this Sultan to unite the divided principalities, by dismissing their kings [Muluk At-Tawa'if] under his rule.[30] The impact of Al-Ghazzaliyy on the political scene went beyond issuing *fatwas*, and writing letters. Both Ibn Khallikan and Ibn Khaldun reported that Muhammad Ibn

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26 Literally, a *hadith* means a saying. In Islamic sciences, it means a narration or tradition about prophet Muhammad. This narration could be about an actual saying of the prophet, an act that he did, or an act that he approved. In addition, these three things compose what became known as the *Sunnah* [the way of the prophet].

27 Al-Bukhariyy, Muhammad Ibn Isma`il Ibn Al-Mughirah, Abu `Abd Allah (d.257 A.H./870 C.E.). He was the greatest authority on *Hadith*. He compiled a collection of sound narrations [*hadith sahih*] in *As-Sahih*.

28 Muslim Ibn Al-Hajjaj, Abu Al-Husayn Al-Qushayriyy An-Naysaburiyy (d.262 A.H./875 C.E.). He also compiled a collection of *hadith sahih* which ranks second to *Al-Bukhariyy's Sahih*. The *hadith* that is mentioned in both collections is classified as "agreed upon" [muttafaq `alayh].

29 Muhammad Fu'ad `Abd Al-Baqi, ed. *Allu'lu' Wal-Marjan Fima Ittafaqa `Alayhi Ash-Shaykhan* (No city: Dar Al-Fikr, n.d.) vol.2, p.241.

30 `Abd Al-Amir Al-A`sam, *Al-Faylasuf Al-Ghazzaliyy* (Beirut: Dar Al-Andalus, 1981) p.90.

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`Abdallah Ibn Tumart, a student of Al-Ghazzaliyy, established Almohad [*Al-Muwahhidun*] rule in Al-Maghrib, replacing the state that had been established by Ibn Tashafin, which experienced corruption after his death.[31] These *fatwas* are significant in showing the role of Muslim scholars [`*ulama'*] in the political life at the time. It appears that the rulings of the scholars were decisive in important matters that affect public life. One could add that Muslim scholars remain very important in shaping the decision making process in many Muslim countries until these days.[32]

These incidents reveal that Al-Ghazzaliyy enjoyed a prestigious position with those in office at the time that enabled him to send daring letters to the various Sultans and viziers. He reminded them of their duties toward their subjects, and advised them about the affairs of the state. In *The Golden Ingot For Advising Kings* [*At-Tibr Al-Masbuk Fi Nasihat Al-Muluk*], Al-Ghazzaliyy addressed the Sultan Muhammad Ibn Malik Shah and warned him about the injustice that resulted from collecting excessive taxes; he even told him what kind of clothes he could wear and what kind he could not.[33] Moreover, in

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31 Abu Al-Hasan An-Nadawiyy, *Rijal Al-Fikr Wad-Da`wa Fi Al-Islam*, 7th ed. (Kuwait: Dar Al-Qalam, 1985) vol.1, p.93.

32 In the recent history of the Middle East president Sadat of Egypt sought a ruling from Sheikh Al-Azhar in order to justify the camp David accords in 1978, and king Fahd of Saudi Arabia sought a ruling from Sheikh `Abd Al-`Aziz Ibn Baz in order to justify asking military intervention from the U.S.A. during the Golf crisis in 1990-91.

33 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *At-Tibr Al-Masbuk Fi Nasihat Al-Muluk* (Cairo: Maktabat Al-Kulliyyat Al-Azhariyyah, 1968) p.7.

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his Persian letters,[34] Al-Ghazzaliyy provided advice for Fakhr Al-Mulk, and criticized Sultan Sanjar Ibn Malik Shah face to face regarding the welfare of the people.[35] Furthermore, Al-Ghazzaliyy served several times as a special envoy between the Caliph and the Sultan.[36]

In addition, Al-Ghazzaliyy, after his embrace of Sufism which could be interpreted as a withdrawal from public life because of the prevailing corruption, did not accept any gifts from the Sultans. In the chapter on the lawful and the forbidden [*al-halal wal-haram*] in *Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din*, Al-Ghazzaliyy discussed extensively the monetary relationship between the Sultans and the people; he concluded by stating that during his time all the monies of the Sultans were acquired unlawfully and thus can not be accepted.[37] Moreover, he called on people to distance themselves from unjust Sultans, and to avoid those who befriend such tyrants or were of assistance to them. Al-Ghazzaliyy held that these were religious duties [*wajib*].[38]

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34 Al-Ghazzaliyy used Arabic And Farsi for writing. His Persian works are few. Some of them we know through translations and secondary sources. It seems that the only major book in Persian that is not translated is *The Al-Chemy Of Happiness* [Kimyay Sa`adat], which is different from the Arabic [Kimya' As-Sa`adah], is the equivalent to *Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din* . An-Nadawiyy referred to the "Persian letters" in *Rijal Al-Fikr Wad-Da`wah Fi Al-Islam* . The Arabic translation of these letters has been made available by Dr. Nur Ad-Din Al Ali: *Fada'il Al-Anam Min Rasa'il Hujjat Al-Islam.*

35 An-Nadawiyy, vol.1, p.191.

36 Ali Al-Qarah Daghi, introduction, *Al-Wasit Fi Al-Madhhab*; by Al-Ghazzaliyy (Cairo: Dar Al-Islah, n.d.) vol.1, p.78.

37 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol.2, pp.135-152.

38 An-Nadawiyy, vol.1, pp.189-193.

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1.i. Al-Ghazzaliyy and the other Schools of Jurisprudence:

In the year Tughrul Beg entered Baghdad there was yet another event of significance for the life of Al-Ghazzaliyy which sheds light upon the circumstances that he endured. It was during this year that a disturbance took place between the Asha`irites [*Asha`irah*][39] and the Hanbalites [*Hanabilah*].[40] As a result of this disturbance, the Asha`irites were barred from attending Friday ceremonies [*Al-Juma`*] and congregational prayers [*Al-Jama`at*].[41]

Al-Ghazzaliyy flourished in this atmosphere of intolerance between the followers of the different schools of theology and jurisprudence within the Sunnite tradition.[42] He himself was considered an Asha`irite[43] and a doctor of the Shafi`ite [*Shafi`iyyah*][44] school of jurisprudence. Out of his concern, he tried to curb this attitude of intolerance through his writings. In *The Revival Of The Islamic Sciences* [*Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din*], Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote with great reverence about the most prominent doctors of jurisprudence: "Ash-Shafi`iyy, Malik, Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Abu

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39 The Asha`irites are theologians who belong to the school of Abu Al-Hasan Al-Ash`ariyy (d.324 A.H./935 C.E.).

40 The Hanbalites are jurisprudents [*fuqaha'*] who belong to the school of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (d.241 A.H./855 C.E.).

41 Ibn Kathir, vol.12, p.66.

42 The scholars who founded these schools never displayed this sort of intolerance. In fact, they were in many cases teachers of one another: Malik Ibn Anas (d.179 A.H./795 C.E.), founder of the Malikite [*Malikiyyah*] school of jurisprudence, taught Ash-Shafi`iyy who in turn taught Ibn Hanbal.

43 For a discussion of whether Al-Ghazzaliyy was indeed an Asha`irite, see page 55.

44 The Shafi`ite school was founded by Muhammad Ibn Idris Ash-Shafi`iyy (d.204 A.H./819 C.E.).

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Hanifah,[45] and Sufian Ath-Thawriyy."[46] The order in which he arranged their names was not chronological: rather Al-Ghazzaliyy arranged them according to the number of their adherents during his own time.[47] Moreover, Al-Ghazzaliyy wanted to emphasize the love and respect that these scholars had for each other; and he wanted the jurists of his time to follow suit. Not only did Al-Ghazzaliyy endorse a policy of tolerance and openness towards other schools of jurisprudence, he also gave priority to some of their rulings over those of Ash-Shafi`iyy. For example, he cited numerous rulings of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal.[48] In addition, he accepted the ruling of Abu Hanifah, agreeing that Ash-Shafi`iyy's position in the case of divorce had a touch of exaggeration [*takalluf*].[49]

Al-Ghazzaliyy also praised Abu Hanifah for refusing to accept a governmental office that could have made him responsible for all the money of the Caliphate. This refusal led the Sultan to whip Abu Hanifah twenty times in public. This praise absolves Al-Ghazzaliyy of the charge that he disgraced Abu Hanifa without justification. Now Al-Ghazzaliyy had been accused of disgracing Abu Hanifah by Sultan Sanjar. These accusations were certainly incompatible with

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45 Abu-Hanifah, Al-Nu`man Ibn Thabit (d.150 A.H./767 C.E.) founded the Hanafite school of jurisprudence. It is known as the school of personal opinion [*ra'y*]. His student, Abu Yusuf (d.182 A.H./799 C.E.), was a major contributor to this school.

46 Ath-Thawriyy, Sufian Ibn Sa`id Ibn Masruq (d.162 A.H./778 C.E.). Unlike the other schools, his school of law does not exist any more.

47 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din* (Beirut: Dar Al-Ma`rifah, n.d.) vol.1, p.24.

48 Al-Qarah Daghi, vol.1, p.163.

49 Al-Qarah Daghi, vol.1, p.162.

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the position of Al-Ghazzaliyy as stated above; furthermore, he categorically denied such accusations. In fact, they were based upon insults found in copies of Al-Ghazzaliyy's *Al-Mankhul Min Ta'liqat Al-Usul*. However, these insults were forgeries, inserted into his book when it was copied.[50] Furthermore, whenever he mentioned Abu Hanifah's name in the above book, Al-Ghazzaliyy added a supplication (i.e. may Allah be pleased with him) following his name. This supplication was a clear sign of the respect Al-Ghazzaliyy had for Abu Hanifah.[51]

Al-Ghazzaliyy saw that his contemporaries busied themselves studying aspects of jurisprudence that might never be needed during their lifetimes, and preoccupying themselves with the differences between the various schools of jurisprudence. According to Al-Ghazzaliyy, the followers of the different schools of jurisprudence who did such things were unjust to the founders. Instead, Al-Ghazzaliyy suggested, they ought to study medicine in order to be useful.[52]

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50 These were not the only example of forgeries of Al-Ghazzaliyy's work. Al-Ghazzaliyy discovered changes that would render him blasphemous when copies of *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal* and *Mishkat Al-Anwar* were submitted to him for approval [*Ijazah*]. He reported the incident to the head [*ra'is*] of Khurasan who imprisoned, and later on deported the person responsible.

51 Al-Qarah Daghi, vol.1, pp.159-163.

52 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol.1, pp.24-28.

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1.ii. Al-Ghazzaliyy and the Sects of the time:

The relationship between the Sunnites and the Shi`ites[53], especially the Rawafid who lived in the Karakh district of Baghdad was also contentious. Almost every year tension used to escalate on the day of `Ashura'[54] which resulted in killings and destruction on both sides. The establishment of a strong Shi`ite political state in Egypt at the hands of the Fatimids[55] in 358 A.H./968 C.E.[56] strengthened the position of the Shi'ites in Baghdad who, in return, had formally acknowledged the Fatimid rulers in Friday ceremonies. This formal acknowledgement also spread to Damascus, Medina, and Mecca.[57] According to Ibn Al-Athir's *Al-Kamil*, the first

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53 Shi`ites [*shi`ah*] , Arabic for "supporters of", is a general classification that includes all the different sects that have a position toward `Ali Ibn Abu Talib, the fourth Caliph and cousin of prophet Muhammad, different than that of the Sunnites. Some of the Shi`ites argue that `Ali should have been the first Caliph, others adopt an extreme position by claiming that `Ali has divine attributes. Although, Shi`ites started primarily as a political stand, they developed their own theology and jurisprudence.

54 Every year, on the 10th of Muharram, the first Arabic month of the lunar year, the Shi`ites commemorate the martyrdom of Al-Hussayn Ibn `Ali, grandson of prophet Muhammad, and son of `Ali, the fourth Caliph. The Shi`ites commemorate this event by virtually torturing themselves, since they believe that the Shi`ites of Iraq had betrayed Al-Hussayn when he went to Iraq, after they have promised him support in his quest for power.

55 This name is attributed to Fatima, daughter of prophet Muhammad, and wife of `Ali Ibn Abu Talib. In 402 A.H./1011 C.E., the scholars of Baghdad stated that the founder of the Fatimids was `Ubayd Ibn Sa`d Al-Jarmiyy and that he did not descend from the children of `Ali and Fatima. For further details, see Ibn Kathir, vol.11, p.344.

56 Ibn Kathir, vol.11, p.266.

57 Friday prayer [*Al-Jumu`ah* ] is composed basically of two short speeches [*khutab*] and two acts of prostration [*raka`ah*] . The acknowledgement mentioned above takes the form of a supplication [*du`a'* ] for the sake of the ruler (i.e. asking Allah to guide him) which usually takes place at the end of the second speech before the performance of the two prostrations. This *du`a'* for the ruler became a symbol of alliance.

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reconciliation [*sulh*], between the Sunnites and the Shi'ites, took place in 502 A.H./1108 C.E.[58]

Al-Ghazzaliyy was the target of claims that he was a Shi`ite. Sibt Ibn Al-Jawziyy claimed, in *Riyad Al-Afham Fi Manaqib Ahl Al-Bayt*, that Al-Ghazzaliyy was a Shi`ite for awhile, but later on changed his position. According to Dr. Ahmad Ash-Shirbasiyy, who seemed to be in favour of Al-Ghazzaliyy's Shi`ism, the Shi`ites considered Al-Ghazzaliyy one of their teachers knowing that he was a Sunnite. He also added that the Shi`ites believed Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote *Risalah Fi Ism Allah Al-A`zam* or *Sharh Jannat Al-Asma'*, a book that praised `Ali Ibn Abu Talib. Apparently, this book was not written by Al-Ghazzaliyy.[59] In addition, praising and loving `Ali is not restricted to the Shi`ites: the Sunnites' books are full with such notions.

Furthermore, to refute these accusations[60] one could cite Al-Ghazzaliyy's *fatwa* against the cursing of Yazid Ibn Mu`awiyah, who was the caliph at Damascus (reigned 61-63 A.H./680-683 C.E.). The Shi`ites considered Yazid their arch enemy, thinking that he was responsible for the death of Al-Hussayn Ibn `Ali,[61] and thus they curse him. It is not possible that someone affiliated with Shi`ism in

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58 Al-Qarah Daghi, vol.1, p.49.

59 Ahmad Ash-Sharbasiyy, *Al-Ghazaliyy*, (Beirut: Dar Al-Jil, 1975) p.13.

60 They are considered "accusations" because Sunnites have a tendency to think of Shi`ism as a tradition which involves positions that are not in accordance with Islamic Shari`ah.

61 See footnote #54.

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any fashion could issue this *fatwa*.[62] Yet, Ash-Shirbasiyy maintained that this *fatwa* was not enough to acquit Al-Ghazzaliyy from the allegations that he was a Shi`ite. Ash-Shirbasiyy contended that Al-Ghazzaliyy favoured `Ali's opinion over that of Ibn `Abbas, in a ruling in jurisprudence; Ash-Shirbasiyy thought that Al-Ghazzaliyy had personal preference for `Ali.[63] It is obvious that this is a case of an Ad hominem argument.

The above *fatwa* could be considered a proof that Al-Ghazzaliyy was not a Shi`ite but what if he issued this ruling when he was not a Shi`ite? The answer should emphasis the fact that so far there is nothing to substantiate the claim that Al-Ghazzaliyy was ever a Shi`ite. In fact, I could not apprehend why this claim was started.

The sect [*firqah*] that propagated the cause of the Fatimids became known as the Batinites [*Al-Batiniyyah*].[64] Al-Ghazzaliyy listed the names by which they were sometimes known as the Qaramitah, the Qarmatiyyah, the Khurramites, the Khurramadinites, the Isma`ilies, the Seveners, the Babikites, the Muhammirah, and

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62 Badawi, pp.47-49.

63 Ash-Sharbasiyy, pp.13-15

64 The Batinites are a sect that, among other things, believed in an infallible Imam. He is, supposedly, the only one who could interpret the *Shari`ah* [Islamic teachings] and find the esoteric [*batin* and hence *Batiniyyah*] exegesis. They are known by many nicknames which resulted from their internal conflicts and divisions. In addition to the nicknames listed by Al-Ghazzaliyy, others were: Al-Fatimiyyah, Al-Hashashun, Al-Baharah, and Al-Agha Khaniyyah. For more details, see An-Nadwah Al-`Alamiyyah Lish-Shabab Al-Islamiyy, *Al-Mawsu`ah Al-Muyassarah Fi Al-Adyan Wal-Madhahib Al-Mu`asirah* (Riyad: Matba`at Safir, 1989) pp.45-52, 395-398.

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the Ta`limites.[65] Each of these names emphasized certain aspects of this sect: the founders of the different factions, their beliefs, and, in some cases, the time and place in which they were active.[66] The Batinites posed a threat to the Caliphate and to the Sunni creed. In addition , they had resorted to political assassination.[67] Among those who were killed at their hands was Nizam Al-Mulk[68] (d.485 A.H./1092 C.E.),[69] the vizier for Alp Arslan and Malik Shah. He established the famous Nizamiyyah colleges[70] which were named after him, and assigned Al-Ghazzaliyy to head the Nizamiyyah at Baghdad.[71] Fakhr Al-Mulk, son of Nizam Al-Mulk and vizier for Sanjar in Nishapur, met the same fate as his father in 500 A.H./1106 C.E.[72] Among the many other dignitaries who were systematically assassinated was Abu Al-Qasim[73] who was killed in Nishapur, where

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65 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *"Fada'ih Al-Batiniyyah Wa-Fada'il Al-Mustazhiriyyah," Freedom and Fulfillment*, ed. and trans. Richard J. McCarthy (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980) p.181.

66 The Isma`ilies were Batinites who claimed to be followers of Isma`il Ibn Ja`far As-Sadiq, the Khurramites, from *Khurram* , Farsi for pleasure, advocated hedonism, and the Qaramitah, followers of Qurmut Ibn Al-Ash`ath, established their rule in Al-Bahrayn towards the end of the third century A.H.

67 The English word "assassin" is derived from "Assassin," the Isma`ili sect, from Arabic *hashashin*, hashish-eaters. See *The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary Of The English Language* (New York: Lexicon Publications, Inc., 1989).

68 His name was Al-Hasan Ibn `Ali Ibn Ishaq, Abu-`Ali. He was born in Tus, the same birth place of Al-Ghazzaliyy, in 408 A.H./1017 C.E.

69 Ibn Kathir, vol.12,p.139.

70 Nizam Al-Mulk built a college in each city in Iraq and Khurasan. Those included Baghdad, Balakh, Nishapur, Harat, Asfahan, Al-Basrah, Marw, Tubristan, and Al-Musil. As-Subkiyy, vol.4, p.314.

71 Taj Ad-Din As-Subkiyy,*Tabaqat Ash-Shafi`iyyah Al-Kubra* (Cairo: `Isa Al-Babi Al-Halabi & Co., 1964) vol.6, p.197.

72 Ibn Kathir, vol.12, p.167.

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he was a preacher [*khatib*], in 492 A.H./1098 C.E.[74] He was the son of Imam Al-Haramayn Al-Juwainiyy who was the educator par excellence at the time, head of the Nizamiyyah college at Nishapur, and teacher of Al-Ghazzaliyy. These assassinations have led some Muslim and orientalist scholars to doubt Al-Ghazzaliyy's account of why he left his position at the Nizamiyyah college in Baghdad.[75].

The activities of the Batinites prompted Al-Ghazzaliyy to devote at least seven books and treatises to what appears to be a systematic confrontation of their positions during various stages of his life.[76]

It is understandable that, in this sea of turmoil, struggle, and intolerance, one might not expect any group to be spared. Yet, Watt, an orientalist, said that Christians and Jews had internal autonomy under their heads. He added that "there was practically no religious

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73 Abu Al-Qasim Ibn `Abd Al-Malik [Imam Al-Haramain] Ibn `Abd Allah [Ash-Shaikh Abu Muhammad] Ibn Yusuf

74 Ibn Kathir, vol.12, p.157.

75 See page 142.

76 These books are: 1. *Al-Mustazhiriyy Fi Ar-Rad `Ala Al-Batiniyyah*, also known as *Fada'ih Al-Batiniyyah Wa-Fada'il Al-Mustazhiriyyah*. Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote it in support of the `Abbasid Caliph Al-Mustazhir (d. 512 A.H./1118 C.E.) against the Batiniyyah. 2. *Hujjat Al-Haq*, was written in Baghdad but has been lost. Also, both of *Qwasim Al-Batiniyyah* and *Ad-Darj Al-Marqum Bil-Jadawil*, which was written in Tus, are lost. For more details see Badawi, *Mu'allafat Al-Ghazali*, pp.85-86 & p.159. 3. *Qawasim Al-Batiniyyah*. 4. *Jawab Al-Masa'il Al-Arba` Allati Sa'alaha Al-Batiniyyah Bi-Hamadhan*, Al-Ghazzaliyy, "*Al-Manar*" vol.11 (1908) pp.601-608. 5. *Ad-Darj Al-Marqum Bil-Jadawil*. 6. *Faisal At-Tafriqah Bain Al-Islam Waz-Zandaqah*. 7. *Al-Qistas Al-Mustaqim* , and the section on *Ahl At-Ta`lim* in *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal* which is a critique of their methodology. Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal*, eds. Jamil Saliba and Kamil `Aiyyad, 10th ed. (No city: Dar AL-Andalus,1981) pp.117-129. The above mentioned books are listed in chronological order as they appear in Badawi's *Mu'allafat Al-Ghazali*.

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persecution"; they enjoyed official protection from the Islamic Caliphate until its breakdown at the turn of the century.[77] The presence of Christians and Jews in Khurasan, during the early life of Al-Ghazzaliyy, enticed him to ask questions crucial for his quest for knowledge.[78] In the *Deliverance from Error*, Al-Ghazzaliyy said:

> The thirst for grasping the real meaning of things was indeed my habit and wont from my early years and in the prime of my life. It was an instinctive, natural disposition placed in my makeup by Allah Most High, not something due to my own choosing and contriving. As a result, the fetters of servile conformism [*taqlid*] fell away from me, and inherited beliefs lost their hold on me, when I was quite young. For I saw that the children of Christians always grew up embracing Christianity, and the children of Jews always grew up adhering to Judaism, and the children of Muslims always grew up following the religion of Islam. I also heard the tradition related from the Messenger of Allah- May Allah's blessing and peace be upon him- in which he said: "Every infant is born endowed with the *fitra*:[79] then his parents make

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77 W. Montgomery Watt, *Muslim Intellectual: A Study of Al-Ghazzali* (Edinburgh: The Edinburgh University Press, 1963) p.8.

78 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance from Error*: Jamil Saliba and Kamil `Ayyad, eds., (No City: Dar Al-Andalus, 1981), p.81.

79 Literally, *fitra* means natural disposition. In the above mentioned *hadith* it means that all people are born as Muslims, and hence Islam is the religion of *fitra*.

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> him Jew or Christian or Magian."[80] Consequently I felt an inner urge to seek the true meaning of the original *fitra*, and the true meaning of the beliefs arising through slavish aping of parents and teachers. I wanted to sift out these uncritical beliefs, the beginnings of which are suggestions imposed from without, since there are differences of opinion in the discernment of those that are false.[81]

This mode of questioning and quest for knowledge continued with Al-Ghazzaliyy until the end of his life.

1.iii. The Crusades:

In addition to the internal conflicts and turmoil, the Islamic Caliphate suffered from the invasions of the Crusaders who were known in medieval sources as the Franks [*Al-Firanj /Al-Firanjah*]. They conquered Jerusalem, the third holy Muslim site,[82] in 492 A.H./1098 C.E.[83] Al-Ghazzaliyy neither mentioned the Crusaders in

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80 This is a part of a *hadith* narrated by Al-Bukhariyy in his *Sahih*. The word Magian (*Majusiyy*) means fire-worshipper. This religion was spread in Persia. In Islamic Shari`ah, magians were tolerated based on the assumption that they could have deviated from a people who received a book (i.e. through revelation) [*shubhat kitab*] and thus entitled to this tolerance which is a right for the people of the book [*ahl al-kitab*], Jews and Christians.

81 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Freedom and Fulfillment* [*Al-Mundidh min Ad Dalal*], trans. Richard Joseph McCarthy, S.J. (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980) p.63.

82 Here I refer to the *hadith* of prophet Muhammad in which he allowed Muslims to travel to visit three mosques only: Bayt Allah Al-Haram in Mecca, the mosque of the prophet in Medina, and Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem.

83 Ibn Kathir, vol.12, p.156.

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his writings nor made clear his position regarding them, and this has proved to be problematic for him. Since the turn of this century, Muslim scholars have criticized his stand and have considered it uncharacteristic of a man of the stature of Al-Ghazzaliyy. In his doctoral dissertation, Dr. Zaki Mubarak blamed Al-Ghazzaliyy's Sufism for the absence of any role that he could have played in calling for *Jihad* :

> "Al-Ghazzaliyy had sunk into his retreat [*khalwa*], and was preoccupied with his recitations [*awrad*] not knowing his duty to call for *Jihad.* "[84]

In *Abu-Hamid Al-Ghazzaliyy Wat-Tasawwuf,* 'Abd Ar-Rahman Dimashqiyyah also blames Al-Ghazzaliyy's Sufism. This study lists the positions of most contemporary Muslim thinkers.[85] It seems that the only scholar who tried to explain Al-Ghazzaliyy's position in light of Sufism, without blaming him for it, was Dr. Yusuf Al-Qardawiyy:[86]

> "It could be that the excuse of this honorable Imam was his preoccupation primarily with reformation from

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84 Zaki Mubarak, *Al-Akhlaq 'Ind Al-Ghazzaliyy* (Beirut: Al-Maktabah Al-'Asriyyah, n.d.) p.17. This doctoral dissertation was defended at the Egyptian University on May, 15, 1924. The preface of the publisher, and the introduction of the author, indicate that this dissertation stirred a wave of criticism at the time.

85 'Abd Ar-Rahman Dimashqiyyah, *Abu-Hamid Al-Ghazzaliyy Wat-Tasawwuf* (Riyad: Dar Tibah, 1988) pp 349-356.

86 Al-Qardawiyy, Yusuf Abdullah (1926-?). Dean of the college of *Shari'ah* and Islamic Studies at the University of Qatar, he is one of the most renowned jurists of the Islamic world today

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within, and that internal corruption is responsible for paving [the way] for foreign invasion."[87]

Dr. Al-Qardawiyy acknowledged, however, that Al-Ghazzaliyy's position was "puzzling," especially since Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote about *jihad* in his books of jurisprudence. Dr. Al-Qardawiyy ended his discussion of this issue, by stating "that only Allah knows the reality of his excuse."[88]

It is a fact, however, that Al-Ghazzaliyy did not include a chapter on *jihad* in his major work *Ihya' 'Ulum Ad-Din,* which he used to teach after returning to Baghdad from his travels,[89] which included Jerusalem just before the Crusaders reached it. In addition, he chose to continue the solitary life for about ten years after Jerusalem was captured.

In my opinion, however, Al-Ghazzaliyy's silence on this matter can be seen in a different light. This requires a more careful understanding of the meaning of *jihad.* The literal meaning of *jihad* is "effort," "striving," or "struggle." The translation of *jihad* as "holy war" is incorrect; there is no equivalent use in Arabic language.[90] In the Qur'an and *Hadith*, *jihad* is understood to have more than one meaning. One meaning denotes fighting [*qital*]. The other meaning,

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87 Yusuf Al-Qardawiyy, *Al-Imam Al-Ghazzaliyy Bayn Madihih Wa Naqidih* (Al-Mansurah: Dar Al-Wafa', 1988) pp. 172-174.
88 Al-Qardawiyy, p.174.
89 As-Subkiyy, vol.6, p.200.
90 Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988) pp.70-75.

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which is overlooked by many, is the ethical and moral *jihad*. However, in jurisprudence, all four schools[91] defined the meaning of *jihad* as fighting.[92]

In what might express one of his views toward *jihad*, Al-Ghazzaliyy quoted Abu Ad-Darda', one of the companions of prophet Muhammad, who said: "He who thinks that seeking knowledge is not *jihad*, has a defect in his opinion and reason."[93] Moreover, in *Kitab Al-Adhkar Wa-Ada`awat* [the "Book of Remembrance and Supplication" in *The Revival of Islamic Sciences*,] Al-Ghazzaliyy cited two traditions of prophet Muhammad that elevated the reward for the performance of dhikr [remembrance] to the level of jihad or even better.[94] Performing *dhikr* is mentioned in the Qur'an and the Sunnah in numerous verses and Hadiths. Sufis are distinguished from others in the way they conduct their circle [*halaqah*] of *dhikr*. There is a total rejection by the *Salafiyyah* movement of the *dhikr* that is done in a way similar to dancing [*dhikr ma` al-harakah*]. They base their argument on the fact that there is nothing in Islamic

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91 The Hanifite, the Malikite, the Shafi`ite, and the Hanbalite.

92 `Abdallah `Azzam, *Fi Al-Jihad Adab Wa-Ahkam* (No City; Matbu`at Al-Jihad, 1987) pp.2-3.

93 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, p.9.

94 The first tradition, which starts with "*Ma `Amal Ibn Adam Min `Amal Anja Lahu Min `Adhab Allah Min Dhikr Allah `Azza Wa-Jall*....etc.," had been narrated by Mu`adh Ibn Abu Jabal. Ibn Abu Shaybah and At-Tabaraniyy verified this tradition and said that it has a "good" chain of narrators [*isnaduhu hasan*]. The second tradition, which starts with "*Ala unbi'akum Bi-Khayri A`malakum Wa-Azkaha*...etc.," had been narrated by Abu Ad-Darda'. At-Tirmidhiyy, Al-Hakim and Ibn Majah verified this tradition and said that it has a "sound" chain of narrators [*isnaduhu sahih*]. See Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din*, vol.1, p.295.

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Shari`ah to substantiate such acts. In addition, Ibn Kathir narrates that the people of Baghdad were indifferent to the efforts of jurists, including Ibn `Aqil[95] who tried to mobilize them.[96] Al-Ghazzaliyy must have been aware of what was going around him, and acted accordingly.

Moreover, Al-Ghazzaliyy's correspondence with the authorities and his criticism of their policies which were not in accordance with Islamic Shari`ah are direct applications of a tradition of prophet Muhammad in which he said: "The greatest *Jihad* is [saying] a word of truth in front of an unjust Sultan."[97]

In my opinion, Al-Ghazzaliyy realized that the Islamic Caliphate at the time was corrupt and filled with social and ideological trends that ran against Islamic Shari`ah. I think he was convinced that the disease was within the state, and that the Crusaders were nothing but the symptoms. Al-Ghazzaliyy understood that the core of the issue was moral. To solve this problem, he wanted to educate people and to revive the role of the Shari`ah. But, the period during which Al-Ghazzaliyy withdrew from public life can not be justified in the light of Islamic Shari`ah. Any

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95 `Ali Ibn `Aqil Ibn Muhammad (431 A.H./1039_ 513 A.H./1119 C.E.). He was the head of the Hanbalites at Baghdad and a contemporary of Al-Ghazzaliyy. He was another exception to the prevailing tense relations between the different schools of jurisprudence; his fellow Hanbalites used to blame him for meeting scholars from other schools of jurisprudence. Ibn Kathir, vol. 12, p.184.

96 Ibn Kathir, vol.12, p.156.

97 *"Inna A`zama Al-Jihad Kalimata Haqqin `Inda Sultanin Ja'ir"*

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act that resembles monasticism [*rahbaniyyah*] was rejected by the Qur'an and the Sunnah.[98] The Qur'an considered monasticism an innovation [*bid`ah*] that was not required from the monks (Sura 57:27).

2. His Early Life

His full name was Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ahmad At-Tusiyy [the Tusite], Abu-Hamid,[99] Al-Ghazzaliyy. He bore the title of respect Hujjat Al-Islam [proof of Islam] for the role he played in defending Islam against the trends of thought that existed at the time.[100] He was born in Tus in 450 A.H./1058 C.E. Tus was a city of Khurasan near Meshhad in Iran today. It was composed of two adjacent towns: Nuqan and Tabaran. His father was a wool spinner [*ghazzal*][101] and thus, relative to this profession, Al-Ghazzaliyy acquired this name with a stressed "z". Many medieval

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98 In the Qur'an, there are verses that praises Christian monks for their humbleness and acceptance of Allah's revelation (Qur'an, 5: 82); yet there are also verses that criticize many of them in relationship to financial affairs (Qur'an, 9: 34). In the Sunnah, prophet Muhammad prohibited `Uthman Ibn Maz`un from monasticism saying to him: "Oh `Uthman, monasticism is not required from us; am I not an example for you?" This hadith has been narrated by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in his *Musnad*, 6: 226.

99 This is an honorific title [*kunyah*]. Many Shafi`ite scholars held this *kunyah*, which literally means "father of Hamid." Al-Ghazzaliyy did not have any sons. Murtada Az-Zubaydiyy, *Ithaf As-Sadah Al-Mutaqin Bi-Sharh Asrar Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din*, (Beirut: Dar Ihya' At-Turath Al-`Arabiyy) vol.1, p.18.

100 Taj Ad-Din As-Subkiyy, *Tabaqat Ash-Shafi`iyyah Al-Kubra*, `Abd Al-Fattah Muhammad Al-Hilw and Mahmud Muhammad At-Tanahiyy, eds., (Cairo: Matba`at `Isa Al-Babi Al-Halabi & Co., 1968) vol.6, p.191.

101 As-Subkiyy, vol.6, p.193.

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scholars accepted this form of Al-Ghazzaliyy's name.[102] Those who say that the correct form is "Al-Ghazaliyy" with unstressed "z", base their judgement on the idea that "Al-Ghazaliyy" is derived from the word Ghazalah, supposedly, one of the villages that surround Tus. In this case, "Al-Ghazaliyy" would mean the Ghazalite. However, according to Ibn As-Sam`aniyy (d.506 A.H./1112 C.E.),[103] a contemporary of Al-Ghazzaliyy, the people of Tus denied the existence of the village of Ghazalah when he asked them about it.[104] Among those who were also called "Al-Ghazzaliyy"[105] were his brother Ahmad (d.520 A.H./1126 C.E.), and the brother of Al-Ghazzaliyy's grandfather, Ahmad Ibn Muhammad (d.435 A.H./1043 C.E.). The latter also had Abu-Hamid as an honorific title. He was a scholar and teacher of Abu 'Ali Al-Fadl Ibn Muhammad Ibn `Ali Al-Faramdhiyy (d. 477 A.H./1084 C.E.). Al-Faramdhiyy played a major role in shaping Al-Ghazzaliyy's Sufism.[106]

Although Al-Ghazzaliyy was born in Tus, which is rightly considered non-Arabic land, there were voices advocating the possibility that Al-Ghazzaliyy was of Arabic origin.[107] Whether Al-

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102 They include An-Nawawiyy, Ibn Al-Athir, Adh-Dhahabiyy, and Ibn Khallikan. Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Al-Husayniyy Murtada Az-Zubaydiyy, *Ithaf As-Sadah Al-Muttaqin Bi-Sharh Asrar Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din* (Beirut: Dar Ihya' At-Turath Al-`Arabiyy, n.d.) p.18.

103 Ibn Kathir, vol.12, p.174.

104 Ibn As-Sam`aniyy, *The Genealogies* [*Al-Ansab*]: Az-Zubaydiyy, p.18.

105 In this dissertation, I refer to Muhammad as Al-Ghazzaliyy, and to his brother Ahmad, by his first name, as a matter of convenience.

106 As-Subkiyy, vol.6, p.209.

107 Az-Zubaydiyy, vol.1, p.18, and Ash-Sharbasiyy, p.21.

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Ghazzaliyy was an Arab or not does not make much difference. Ibn Khaldun (d. 809 A.H./1406 C.E.) stated "that most Muslim scholars were not Arabs, and in some fields all of them were *`Ajam* [non-Arabs].[108] Such scholars used Arabic in their writings because it was *lingua franca* of their world.

Before his death, Al-Ghazzaliyy's father entrusted him and his brother Ahmad to a Sufi friend. He asked him to spend whatever little money he left behind, to teach them reading and writing. When the money was finished, the Sufi asked them to join a school as students so that they might subsist.[109] According to As-Subkiyy, schools used to provide room, board, and a stipend.[110]

3. His Education and Academic Career

3.i. Formal Education:

As mentioned above, Al-Ghazzaliyy and his brother Ahmad, learned to read and write at the hand of their Sufi trustee. Although no dates are available about Al-Ghazzaliyy's early education, the normal age to begin school was eleven.[111] Al-Ghazzaliyy was eleven in 469 A.H./1069 C.E. It could be during this time that he began his

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108 Ibn Khaldun, *Al-Muqaddimah*, (Beirut: Dar Al-Qalam, 1984), p.543.
109 As-Subkiyy, vol.6, pp.193-194.
110 Al-Qarah Daghi, vol.1, p.69.
111 Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, p.21.

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study of jurisprudence at Tus where his teacher was Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ar-Radhakaniyy. Al-Ghazzaliyy's next station was Jurjan where he wrote *At-Ta`liqah* from the lectures of Abu Al-Qasim Al-Isma`iliyy Al-Jurjaniyy.[112] On his way back to Tus, his belongings including *At-Ta`liqah* were stolen by bandits. Al-Ghazzaliyy followed them and appealed to their commander to return to him the books for which he had "travelled in order to listen, to write and know their contents."[113] The commander laughed at Al-Ghazzaliyy because he claimed to know the contents of the books, yet he was striped of the knowledge the moment they took the books from him. Al-Ghazzaliyy took back his books and decided to memorize them, so he could never be deprived of his knowledge again. Al-Ghazzaliyy's journey to Jurjan must have occurred before 474 A.H./1074 C.E., since he spent three years in Tus memorizing the books he brought back with him before leaving to Nishapur.[114] In 470 A.H./1077 C.E., Al-Ghazzaliyy went to Nishapur, where he studied at the Nizamiyyah, under Imam Al-Haramayn, Al-Juwainiyy, until his death in 478 A.H./1085 C.E. During his stay at the Nizamiyyah, Al-Ghazzaliyy learned and excelled in the Shafi`ite

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112 According to As-Subkiyy, vol.6, p.195, Al-Ghazzaliyy's teacher in Jurjan was Abu Nasr Al-Isma`iliyy. His full name was Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim Ibn Isma`il (d. 405 A.H./1014 C.E.) The actual teacher full name was Isma`il Ibn Mas`adah Ibn Iams`il Ibn Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim Ibn Isma`il (d. 477 A.H./ 1084 C.E.). It is obvious that Abu Nasr was the cousin of Abu Al-Qasim's grandfather. Many orientalists and Muslim scholars copied the mistake of As-Subkiyy. Farid Jabre, S. J. said, in *Mideo*, vol. 1, p.77, that it was Abu Al-Qasim who taught Al-Ghazzaliyy. Badawi, *Mu'allafat Al-Ghazali*, p.4.

113 Scholars, including Al-Ghazzaliyy, used to dictate their books.

114 As-Subkiyy, vol. 6, p.195.

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Jurisprudence, comparative jurisprudence [*`Ilm Al-Khilaf*], fundamentals of jurisprudence [*Usul Al-Fiqh*], fundamentals of religion [*Usul Ad-Din*], logic, and philosophy. In the field of philosophy Al-Ghazzaliyy read Al-Farabiyy (d.345 A.H./950 C.E.) and Ibn Sina [Avicenna] (d.429 A.H./1037 C.E.).[115] Also, he read the letters of the Brethren of Purity [*Ikhwan As-Safa*].[116] Al-Ghazzaliyy ranked very high among the students of the Nizamiyyah; Al-Juwainiyy used to ask Al-Ghazzaliyy to assist in lecturing to the other students, even in his own presence. Al-Ghazzaliyy began writing his books during the life of Al-Juwainiyy, which, according to As-Subkiyy, might have been a source of discomfort to his teacher.[117]

3.ii. Teaching at the Nizamiyyah; the "Spiritual Crisis":

After the death of Al-Juwainiyy, Al-Ghazzaliyy went to the Camp [*Al-Mu`askar*], to see vizier Nizam Al-Mulk, who's court was a meeting place for scholars. There, Al-Ghazzaliyy debated other scholars and won their respect. After about six years at Al-Mu`askar, Nizam Al-Mulk assigned Al-Ghazzaliyy to teach at the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad. He lectured there between 484 A.H./ 1091 C.E. and 488 A.H./1095 C.E.[118] This position won him prestige,

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115 We know this from Al-Ghazzaliyy's writings about them,first in *Maqasid Al-Falasisah* and later on in his critique of philosophy *Tahafut Al-Falasifah.*

116 These are fifty one letters of an underground group of philosophers who called themselves the Brethren of Purity. In these letters they attempted to reconcile philosophy and Shari`ah. Az-Zubaydiyy, p.28.

117 As-Subkiyy, vol. 6, p.196.

118 As-Subkiyy, vol.6, pp.196-197.

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wealth, and "respect that even princes, kings, and viziers could not match."[119] According to the Hanbalite scholar Ibn Al-Jawziyy (d. 597 A.H./1200 C.E.) who studied at the hands of Al-Ghazzaliyy's student judge Ibn Al-`Arabiyy, Al-Ghazzaliyy came to Baghdad directly from Asfahan [*Asbahan*] where the Camp must have been located.[120]

At the Nizamiyyah, several hundred students used to attend the lectures of Al-Ghazzaliyy. Some of those students became famous scholars, judges, and few became lecturers at the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad itself.[121] Also, scholars like Ibn `Aqil and Abu Al-Khattab, among the heads of the Hanbalite school of jurisprudence, attended his lectures and incorporated them in their writings.[122]

The end of Al-Ghazzaliyy's career at the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad was unexpected. The circumstances surrounding this event became known as the "spiritual crisis"[123] of Al-Ghazzaliyy. Al-Ghazzaliyy discussed the reason that prompted him to quit his

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119 Az-Zubaydiyy, vol.1, p.7.

120 Ibn Al-Jawziyy, *Al-Muntazam Fi Tarikh Al-Muluk Wal-Umam*, (Hayderabad: Da'irat Al-Ma`arif Al-`Uthmaniyyah, 1939) vol.9, p.55.

121 They included: Judge Abu Nasr Al-Khamqariyy (d.544 A.H/1149 C.E.): Abu Bakr Ibn Al-`Arabiyy Al-Malikiyy (d.545 A.H./1150 C.E.), who was quoted frequently in criticism of Al-Ghazzaliyy: Abu `Abdullah Shafi` Ibn `Abd Ar-Rashid Al-Jiliyy Ash-Shafi`iyy (d.541 A.H./1146 C.E.), whose lectures were attended by Ibn Al-Jawziyy: Abu Mansur Sa`d Ibn Muhammad Al-Bazzar (d.539 A.H./1144 C.E.), who taught at the Nizamiyyah,: Imam Abu Al-Fath Ahmad Ibn`Ali Ibn Burhan (d.518 A.H./1124 C.E.), who taught at the Nizamiyyah for a short period: and Abu `Abdullah Ibn Tumart, founder of Al-Muwahhidun state in Al-Maghrib, among many others. Ash-Shirbasiyy made a mistake in listing Abu Hamid Al-Isfarayiniyy (d.406 A.H./1015 C.E.), who was one of the heads of the Shafi`ites, among the students of Al-Ghazzaliyy. See Ash-Shirbasiyy, p.32.

122 Ash-Shirbasiyy, p.31.

123 Al-A`sam, p.42: Ash-Shirbasiyy, p.34: Dimashqiyyah, p.43.

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position in his autobiographical work, *Deliverance from Error* [*Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal*], in the section on Sufism. The aim of this book was to show Al-Ghazzaliyy's quest for knowledge. After discussing the methods of Al-Mutakallimun,[124] the philosophers and the Batinites respectively, Al-Ghazzaliyy chose the method of the Sufis as the right method for the acquiring of knowledge. This method had pre-requisites; one should abandon all worldly attachments. Al-Ghazzaliyy thought that, in order to implement this, he should "shun fame, money and to run away from obstacles."[125] He made it clear that any deed that was not for the sake of Allah,[126] was an obstacle. Al-Ghazzaliyy scrutinized his activities, including teaching, and decided that his motivation was not for the sake of Allah.[127] Al-Ghazzaliyy wanted to abandon those obstacles but the temptation was very strong. He spent six months struggling to stop teaching, until he no longer had a choice. Of this Al-Ghazzaliyy said:

> "For nearly six months beginning with Rajab, 488 A.H.[July, 1095 C.E.], I was continuously tossed about between the attractions of worldly desires and the impulses towards eternal life. In that month the matter ceased to be one of choice and became one of compulsion.

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124 Muslim theologians who incorporated logic in their subject matter, which became known as *'Ilm Al-Kalam.*

125 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance*, p.134.

126 I used the word "Allah" instead of "God" because the latter has various connotations, in different religions and cultures, that might not represent the Islamic concept.

127 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance*, p.134.

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> God [*Allah*] caused my tongue to dry up so that I was prevented from lecturing. One particular day I would make an effort to lecture in order to gratify the hearts of my following, but my tongue would not utter a single word nor could I accomplish anything at all."[128]

The fact that Al-Ghazzaliyy could not speak caused him grief, which eventually affected his ability to digest food. Soon Al-Ghazzaliyy's health deteriorated and the physicians gave up any hope and stated that the only way to cure him was by solving his psychological problems. Realizing his impotence, and worsening situation, Al-Ghazzaliyy "sought refuge with Allah who made it easy for his heart to turn away from position and wealth, from children and friends."[129] He distributed his wealth retaining only as much as would suffice him and his children. In public, he declared that he was going to make pilgrimage to Mecca, while in fact, he was planning to go to Syria. Al-Ghazzaliyy had this plan because he was convinced that the Caliph and the scholars of Baghdad would not understand his position; he was afraid that they might prevent him from leaving.[130] Al-Ghazzaliyy asked his brother Ahmad to replace

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128 Algazali, "Deliverance from Error," *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, eds. Arthur Hyman, and James J. Walsh (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1987) p.277.
129 Algazali, *Deliverance*, p.278.
130 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance*, p.137.

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him at the Nizamiyyah,[131] and left Baghdad with the intention never to return.[132]

Although Al-Ghazzaliyy used clear and simple language in describing the reason why he left the Nizamiyyah, there were some contemporary scholars who used Al-Ghazzaliyy's account of that event to "diagnose" his sickness.[133] Al-Ghazzaliyy described in great details his physical and spiritual conditions. It seems that those details invited some contemporary scholars to leave the realm of philosophy to medicine in their attempt to diagnose Al-Ghazzaliyy. Although it is not the aim of this dissertation to define what the job of philosophy is, looking for symptoms in autobiographical works, is not philosophy per se. One can not but criticize such unphilosophical attitudes.

Al-Ghazzaliyy's declared motives for his departure from Baghdad in *Deliverance From Error* have been challenged by two scholars. Duncan Black Macdonald argued that Al-Ghazzaliyy left Baghdad because he felt that he was *persona non grata* with the Sultan Barkyaruq.[134] According to Macdonald, this was because Al-Ghazzaliyy sided with Tutush (d.488 A.H./1095 C.E.), uncle and rival of Barkyaruq. In fact Al-Ghazzaliyy mentioned that this opinion was in circulation in *Deliverance from Error*. This opinion, which goes

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131 Az-Zubaydiyy, vol.1, p.7.
132 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance*, p.137.
133 Ash-Shirbasiyy, p.37.
134 Watt, p.140.

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back in history to the time of Al-Ghazzaliyy, contradicts Al-Ghazzaliyy's account of his relationship with those in authority at the time. It is quite clear, rather, that he was courted by them.[135] Besides, if his only goal was to disappear from Baghdad in order to escape political difficulties, he could have done so without going to the trouble of becoming a Sufi.

The other challenge to Al-Ghazzaliyy's account was set forth by Farid Jabre who claimed that Al-Ghazzaliyy fled Baghdad for fear of assassination by the Batinites.[136] The criticisms of Macdonald's opinion also apply here. In addition, one could argue that if it were true that Al-Ghazzaliyy feared for his life, he should have looked for places located far away from the influence of the Batinites. However, he went to Damascus and Jerusalem which were under the direct influence of the Fatimids. Furthermore, at the end of his journey, Al-Ghazzaliyy returned to Nishapur, which was very close to the strongholds of the Batinites, during the peak of political assassinations.[137] Thus it is untenable that Al-Ghazzaliyy's fear of assassination could have played any role in his departure from Baghdad. His own account, on the other hand, is perfectly comprehensible.

Al-Ghazzaliyy's abandonment of almost everything that he possessed and his choice of the spiritual path of Sufism [*tariqah*]

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135 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance*, p.137.
136 Watt, p.140.
137 Watt, pp.140-143.

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should not come as a surprise. He read the books of Sufis such as Abu Talib Al-Makkiyy's *Qut Al-Qulub* [Food of the Hearts], the books of Al-Harith Al-Muhasibiyy, and the fragments of Al-Junayd, Ash-Shibliyy, and Abu Yazid Al-Bistamiyy.[138] Al-Ghazzaliyy's position was consistent with those of the above mentioned Sufis. He chose their methodology as the one that could best fulfill his quest for knowledge. Al-Muhasibiyy (d. 243 A.H./857 C.E.), for example, withdrew from public life and died in want.[139] Likewise, Al-Junayd (d.298 A.H./910 C.E.), a student of Al-Muhasibiyy, had doubts whether he was worthy to give lectures.[140] Ash-Shibliyy (d.334 A.H./ 946 C.E.), a student of Al-Junayd, was the governor of Dunbawind, canton of Rayy, also renounced the world and asked of the inhabitants immunity for his past conduct. He then submitted his resignation.[141] Al-Bistamiyy (d.261 A.H./874 C.E.) stated that he gained knowledge of the world by means of a hungry belly.[142] Following suit, Al-Makkiyy (d.386 A.H./996 C.E.) advocated self-mortification: he lived for a considerable time on nothing but wild herbs.[143] Their influence on Al-Ghazzaliyy is unmistakable.

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138 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance*, p.131.

139 Ibn Khallikan, *Wafayat Al-A'yan Wa Anba' Abna' Az-Zaman*, trans. B^ Mac Guckin De Slane: The John J. Burns Library, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02167 (Paris: Printed for the Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain And Irland, 1843) vol.1, p.365.

140 Ibn Khallikan, vol.1, p.338.

141 Ibn Khallikan, vol.1, p.511.

142 Ibn Khallikan, vol.1, p.662.

143 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance*, p.131.

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Al-Ghazzaliyy's internal struggle might have been triggered by the visit of Abu Al-Husayn Ardashir Ibn Mansur Al-`Abbadiyy to the Nizamiyyah in 486 A.H./1093 C.E. His preaching, which Al-Ghazzaliyy attended, was so influential that "more than thirty thousand men and women were present at his circles, many people left their livelihood, many people repented and returned to mosques, wines were spilled and instruments of play [i.e. music] were broken."[144]

3.iii. The Journeys of Al-Ghazzaliyy:

It was a part of the path of the Sufi to travel from one place to another and to visit tombs of good people. Visiting cemeteries are intended to help the Sufi purify his soul, since the sight of the graves teaches one a lesson about the temporal and limited nature of this life.

Based upon Al-Ghazzaliyy's account in *Deliverance from Error*, his trip, after leaving Baghdad in 488 A.H./1095 C.E., could be outlined as covering the following cities in chronological order: Damascus (where he stayed "close to two years,"[145]), Jerusalem, Hebron, Mecca and Medina.[146] He later returned to Baghdad[147] in

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144 Ibn Kathir, vol.12, p.144.
145 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance*, p.138.
146 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance*, p.137-139.
147 As-Subkiyy, vol.6, p.200.

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Jumada Al-Akhirah, 490 A.H./June, 1097 C.E.[148] From there he went to Tus and lived in seclusion [*khalwa*], except when he had to attend to family affairs.[149] Al-Ghazzaliyy ended his seclusion, which lasted for eleven years,[150] to teach at the Nizamiyyah of Nishapur[151] in 499 A.H./1106 C.E. His stay in Nishapur was rather short. He returned to Tus where he remained until his death on Monday, Jumada Al-Akhirah, 505 A.H./Dec.18, 1111 C.E.[152]

There have been other accounts of the route Al-Ghazzaliyy took in his journey; they advocate the notion that he visited Alexandria in Egypt on his way to Yusuf Ibn Tashafin, and that he returned when he learned that Ibn Tashafin had died.[153] All other accounts confirm that Al-Ghazzaliyy was in Khurasan, a district in Persia, in 500 A.H./1106 C.E., the year in which Ibn Tashafin died.[154] The idea that Al-Ghazzaliyy was in Egypt may be refuted on two accounts. His student, Ibn Al-`Arabiyy saw him, after returning from his journey, in the wilderness of Baghdad in 491 A.H./1097 C.E. In addition, Al-Ghazzaliyy's account that he was in Nishapur, Khurasan, in Dhu Al-Qi`dah, 499 A.H./July, 1106 C.E.,[155] is a clear indication of the falsity of such claims.

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148 Watt, p.201.
149 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance*, p.138.
150 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance*, p.159.
151 Az-Zubaydiyy, vol.1, p.8.
152 As-Subkiyy, vol.6, p.201.
153 Az-Zubaydiyy, vol.1, p.8.
154 Badawi, p.23.
155 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance*, p.159.

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According to As-Subkiyy, Al-Ghazzaliyy left Baghdad in 488 A.H./1095 C.E., and went to perform pilgrimage in Mecca, before he went to Damascus in 489 A.H./1096 C.E. In Damascus, he stayed for a few days as a *faqir* [literally poor, another way of referring to a Sufi] before heading to Jerusalem, where he remained for awhile. From Jerusalem he returned to Damascus. There he chose the western minaret of the Umayyad mosque as his place of seclusion. From there he returned to Baghdad where he preached, and lectured on his *Ihya' 'Ulum Ad-Din* for awhile.[156] It must be noted that the order of the journey does not correspond to that of Al-Ghazzaliyy.

In *Deliverance from Error*, Al-Ghazzaliyy states that he stayed in Damascus almost two years. He used to spend his days in seclusion and isolation by locking himself inside the minaret of the mosque of Damascus. For the duration of his stay there, he kept himself busy purifying his soul, polishing his morals, and cleansing his heart to make remembrance [*dhikr*] of Allah, in the fashion he grasped from the books of the Sufis.[157]

When Al-Ghazzaliyy left Damascus for Jerusalem, he continued to live in isolation. He used to enter the Rock [*As-Sakhrah*][158]

156 As-Subkiyy, vol.6, pp.197-200.

157 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance*, p.138.

158 This "Rock" is located in the yard of Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. There is a mosque built on that location; it is called Dome of the Rock. Muslims believe that prophet Muhammad travelled from Mecca to Al-Aqsa mosque in a night journey. Qur'an 17:1. From the position of that "Rock", prophet Muhammad ascended to heavens, before returning to Mecca; all this with the help of *Jibril* [Gabriel]. This event is known as the *Isra'* and *Mi'raj*. In

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wherein he locked himself. Then, after visiting the tomb of prophet Ibrahim [Abraham] in Hebron, he went to perform pilgrimage to the Ka`bah[159] in Mecca and to visit Medina, where prophet Muhammad was buried.

At this stage, Al-Ghazzaliyy missed his children.[160] He returned home, to Tus after a brief stay in Baghdad at the Ribat[161] of Abu Sa`id An-Naysaburiyy, in front of the Nizamiyyah.[162] In Tus, he continued to live in seclusion although his seclusion was interrupted from time to time because of family affairs.[163] Eleven years elapsed between Al-Ghazzaliyy's departure from Baghdad to the end of his life of isolation.[164]

Al-Ghazzaliyy's journeys had many consequences. He wrote *Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din* and *Ar-Risalah Al-Qudsiyyah Fi Al-`Aqa'id.* In Hebron, he pledged three things: not to accept money from any Sultan, not to visit any of them, and never to debate any person. Al-Ghazzaliyy fulfilled these pledges. For money, he depended on his estate in Tus; its income provided him with his needs.[165] Most

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contemporary Islamic political thought, this event, among other things, is used to support the idea of the Islamization of Jerusalem. Hence it has a spiritual value that led Al-Ghazzaliyy to visit it in his quest for truth.

159 The Ka`bah is the house that has been built by prophet Ibrahim and his son prophet Isma`il [Ishmael].

160 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance*, p.138.

161 Lodge for the Sufis where they can have free room and board.

162 Al-Qarah Daghi, vol.1, p.122.

163 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance*, p.139.

164 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance*, p.159.

165 Al-Qarah Daghi, vol.1, p.118.

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importantly, he came to know "without doubt [*yaqin*] that the Sufis are the [true] dwellers [*salikun*] on the path of Allah, their conduct is the best, and their method is the best method."[166]

Al-Ghazzaliyy ended his seclusion, in 499 A.H./1105 C.E., at a request from the vizier Fakhr Al-Mulk to teach at the Nizamiyyah of Nishapur.[167] He agreed to return to teaching after "consulting with masters of the hearts[168] who agreed that he could leave his seclusion."[169] To indicate that there was no contradiction between leaving the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad and joining that of Nishapur, Al-Ghazzaliyy said that at the first he taught sciences that brought about fame, but at the latter, he taught knowledge that led to deserting such fame. He justified his move by quoting several verses from the Qur'an,[170] that made preaching, the job of the prophets, a priority, even if discomfort was the consequence. Furthermore, Al-Ghazzaliyy said that the timing of this coincides with the beginning of the fifth century A.H., which he considered a good omen.[171] According to a *hadith*, prophet Muhammad said that Allah sends to this nation [Muslim], at the head of each hundred years, someone to renew [*yujadid*] its religion.[172] Al-Ghazzaliyy believed that he was the renovator [*mujaddid*] of that century.

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166 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance*, p.139.
167 Al-Qarah Daghi, vol.1, p.123.
168 Arabic= *arbab al-qulub*, by which Al-Ghazzaliyy meant the Sufis.
169 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance*, p.159.
170 Qur'an 29: 1, 6: 24, and 36: 11.
171 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Deliverance*, pp.158-159.
172 This *hadith* was narrated by Abu Dawud, Al-Hakim, and Al-Bayhaqiyy.

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The exact duration of Al-Ghazzaliyy's teaching at the Nizamiyyah of Nishapur is not known. It is believed though that he left after the assassination of the vizier Fakhr Al-Mulk Ibn Nizam Al-Mulk, by a Batinite, on the day of `Ashura', the 10th of Muharram, 500 A.H./1106 C.E.[173]

Subsequently Al-Ghazzaliyy returned to Tus, where he built a lodge for the Sufis [*khanaqah*] and a school next to his house. He had about one hundred and fifty students. There were attempts, by vizier Ahmad Ibn Nizam Al-Mulk (d. 544 A.H./1149 C.E.), to convince Al-Ghazzaliyy to return to the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad after the death of its teacher, Ilkiya Al-Harasiyy (d.504 A.H./1110 C.E.), who was Al-Ghazzaliyy's colleague during the days of Al-Juwainiyy. Al-Ghazzaliyy declined the offer.[174]

3.iv. Al-Ghazzaliyy and the Science of Hadith:

Al-Ghazzaliyy has been criticized for his weakness in the science of *hadith*. It appears that in that milieu jurists, like himself neglected to a certain degree this science because they considered the scholars of *hadith* below the level of jurists. Ar-Raziyy (d.313 A.H./925 C.E.) said: "As for the people of *hadith*, they memorize the traditions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and prayers

173 Badawi, p.25.
174 Al-Qarah Daghi, vol.1, pp.134-136.

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be upon him, but they are not capable of reasoning and debate. Every time jurists present them with a question or a problem they fail to answer and get ``puzzled."[175] However, the position of the jurists led scholars of *hadith* to eventually adopt a similar position.

Moreover, there were many scholars who considered devoting one's life to seeking *hadith* and narrating it a worldly activity unless the goal was for the sake of Allah. Abu Talib Al-Makkiyy (d. 386 A.H./996 C.E.) narrated in *Qut Al-Qulub*, which Al-Ghazzaliyy mentioned in *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal* as one of the sources that shaped his thought about Sufism,[176] that Abu Sulaiman Ad-Daraniyy said: "a man who seeks *Hadith*, gets married or travels to find a job is a worldly person".[177] One could only add that if this was the position of the Sufis, the position of Al-Ghazzaliyy should not come as a surprize.

Though Al-Ghazzaliyy was an outstanding scholar in many fields of knowledge, ignoring the Science of *hadith* can not be justified because it led to the inclusion of unsound narrations in his writings. This science [*`ilm mustalah al-hadith*] had developed, as an independent field of study, a century before his birth. At least four major books on *`ilm mustalah al-hadith* were written during that

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175 Muhammad Hasan Hitu, Introduction,*Al-Mankhul Min Ta`liqat Al-Usul*, by Al-Ghazzaliyy (Damascus: Dar Al-Fikr, 1970) p.4.
176 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p.131.
177 Abu Talib Al-Makkiyy, *Qut Al-Qulub* (Dar Sadir: No Place, N.D.) vol.1, p.135.

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time.[178] Moreover, in the last paragraph of his book *Qanun At-Ta'wil*, Al-Ghazzaliyy confessed that his knowledge in the science of *hadith* was little.[179]

In addition, the large number of narrators [*muhaddithun*] indicates the importance of this field which in return explains the criticism to Al-Ghazzaliyy regarding his weakness in narrating *hadith*. According to Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadiyy (d. 463 A.H./1071 C.E.) in *Tarikh Baghdad*, Baghdad was the home of more than five thousand[180] scholars of hadith during the first five centuries A.H.[181]

Like all jurists and scholars of the time, Al-Ghazzaliyy was introduced to the science of *hadith* as part of his education. Yet it appears that he did not study this science as an independent subject. Critics of Al-Ghazzaliyy pointed to this issue as something that undermined his works, especially *Ihya' 'Ulum Ad-Din*, because it

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178 These were 1. *Al-Muhaddith Al-Fasil bayn Ar-Rawi Wal-Wa'i* by Ar-Ramharamziyy (d.360 A.H./964 C.E.) 2. *Ma'rifat 'Ulum Al-Hadith* by Al-Hakim An-Naysaburiyy (d.405 A.H./1014 C.E.) 3. *Al-Mustakhraj 'Ala Ma'rifat 'Ulum Al-Hadith* by Abu Na'im Al-Asbahaniyy (d.430 A.H./1038 C.E.) 4. *Al-Kifayah Fi 'Ilm Ar-Riwayah* by Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadiyy (d.463 A.H./1070 C.E.). See At-Tahhan, p.10.

179 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ma'arij Al-Quds Fi M'rifat An-Nafs* and *Qanun At-Ta'wil* (Cairo: Maktabat Al-Jindi, 1968) p.246.

180 The actual number of entries in *Tarikh Baghdad* were 7831 of which 32 were women scholars. It should be noted that Al-Baghdadiyy did not include the scholars who were still alive at the time which means that the number of scholars was still higher.

181 Munir-ud-din Ahmed, *Muslim Education and the Scholar's Social Status up to the 5th Century Muslim Era in the Light of "Tarikh Baghdad"*, Sami As-Saqqar, trans. and ed. (Riyad: Dar Al-Marrikh, 1981) p.20.

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included "weak"[182] and forged [*mawdu`*] narrations. As-Subkiyy wrote a whole chapter in which he classified all the forged narrations that were without proper *sanad* [chain of narrators], that appeared in the *Ihyā'*. Their number was more than nine hundred.[183] It must be noted that As-Subkiyy, in his verification of these narrations, considered the *matn* [text] of the *hadith* as it appeared in the *Ihya'* as a whole; some of these narrations included parts that are sound. As a practical precaution, in order to be aware of the status of the hadith, one should use an edition of the *Ihya'* that has Al-`Iraqiyy's (d. 806 A.H./1404 C.E.) verification [*takhrij*] in the margin.[184]

The reporting of a "weak" narration, which has many levels, was not rejected altogether by all scholars of *hadith*. Dr. At-Tahhan states that there were scholars who allowed the use of such narration in preaching, but never in *`aqidah* [creed], or in jurisprudence. He added that Ath-Thawriyy and Ahmad Ibn Hanbal were among those who allowed such usage. Moreover, this *hadith* should be narrated in a "weakened" [*tad`if*][185] form.[186] The scholars who rejected the

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182 A *hadith* is considered weak [*da`if*], when it lacks any of the conditions that are necessary to render it *hasan* [good]. An example of these conditions is that the chain of narrators [*sanad*] should not include any one who is not *`adl*, which means "trustworthy," in a regulated sense. A *hadith* that is classified *hasan* is still one degree below the level of a narration that is *sahih* [sound].

183 As-Subkiyy, vol.6, pp.287-388.

184 `Abd Ar-Rahim Ibn Al-Husayn Al-`Iraqiyy, *Al-Mughni `An Haml Al-Asfar Fi Al-Asfar Fi Takhrij Ma Fi Al-Ihya' Min Al-Asfar*.

185 The *hadith* should not be introduced by the clause "prophet Muhammad said", which provides a false impression of a true statement. Reporting a "weak" narration should start with a form close to indirect speech in English grammar (e.g. it has been said/narrated/reported that prophet Muhammad...etc.).

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"weak" narrations altogether include Al-Bukhariyy, Muslim, Yahya Ibn Ma`in (d.233 A.H./835 C.E.), Ibn Hazm (d.456 A.H./1064 C.E.), and Al-Ghazzaliyy's student, the judge, Ibn Al-`Arabiyy. Among the contemporaries, Ahmad Muhammad Shakir, and Muhammad Nasir Ad-Din Al-Albaniyy held the latter position. In *Al-Ba`ith Al-Hathith*, a commentary on Ibn Kathir's *Ikhtisar `Ulum Al-Hadith*, Shakir explained the position of the early Muslim Scholars who permitted the use of "weak" narrations by stating that during the time of those scholars (i.e. Ahmad Ibn Hanbal), narrations were divided into two basic categories, *sahih* and *da`if*. The category of *hasan*, which was advanced by At-Tirmidhiyy (d.279 A.H./880 C.E.), was not yet distinguished from sound narrations. It follows that those scholars were actually permitting the use of the *hasan* not the *da`if*.[187]

It is important to mention that Abu Talib Al-Makkiyy adopted the position of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in narrating "weak" *hadith*. The difference between him and Al-Ghazzaliyy is that he wrote a chapter in *Qut Al-Qulub* in which he defended the use of a *hadith da`if*.[188]

Towards the end of his life, Al-Ghazzaliyy started studying the narrations of prophet Muhammad. He read Al-Bukhariyy's Sahih and Muslim's Sahih.[189] According to Abu Al-Qasim Ibn `Asakir, Al-

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186 Mahmud At-Tahhan, *Taysir Mustalah Al-Hadith* (Riyad: Maktabat Al-Ma`arif, 1981) p.49.
187 Yusuf Al-Qardawiyy, *Kayfa Nata`amal Ma` As-Sunnah An-Nabawuiyyah* (Al-Mansurah: Dar Al-Wafa', 1990) pp.74-75.
188 Al-Makkiyy, vol.1, pp. 176-178.
189 As-Subkiyy, vol.6, p.210.

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Ghazzaliyy studied Al-Bukhariyy's *Sahih* at the hands of Abu Sahl Muhammad Ibn `Abd Allah Al-Hafsiyy. Also, As-Sam`aniyy reports that Al-Ghazzaliyy studied Al-Bukhariyy's *Sahih* and Muslim's *Sahih* at the hands of Abu Al-Fityan `Umar Ibn Abu Al-Hasan Ar-Rawasiyy At-Tusiyy. Furthermore, `Abd Al-Ghafir Ibn Isma`il Al-Khatib Al-Farisiyy (d.551 A.H./1156 C.E.), who visited Al-Ghazzaliyy several times before and after he changed his way of life to Sufism, narrated that it came to his knowledge that Al-Ghazzaliyy studied the *Sunan* of Abu Dawud As-Sijistaniyy at the hands of Abu Al-Fath Al-Hakimiyy At-Tusiyy.[190]

The importance of Al-Ghazzaliyy's study of the science of *hadith* can be found in the question of whether he changed his method again. The answer to this question will be discussed later on in this dissertation.[191]

4. The Creed of Al-Ghazzaliyy:

Creed [*`aqidah*] has been always a sensitive issue in Islamic circles. The only generation of Muslims that was spared differences in opinion in this respect was the companions [*sahabah*] of the prophet.[192] They were considered the ancestors [*salaf*] of the

190 As-Subkiyy, vol.4, p.212.
191 See page 224.
192 Ibn Al-Qaiyyim, *Ijtima` Al-Juyush Al-Islamiyyah*, `Awwad `Abdullah Al-Mu`attaq, ed. (Riyad: Matabi` Al-Farazdaq At-Tijariyyah, 1988) pp.118-131.

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Muslims, and their creed was accepted by virtually every Muslim.[193] Thus, the creed of those ancestors [*`aqidah salafiyyah*] became a reference point when creed was in question. To indicate that there was no problem with creed during the first generation of Muslims, Al-Ghazzaliyy asserted in *Al-Iqtisad fi Al-I`tiqad* that "the companions of the prophet did not discuss, teach or write about creed".[194] Furthermore, Al-Ghazzaliyy added that the companions were preoccupied with jurisprudence.[195]

In addition, Al-Maqriziyy stated in his *Khitat* that if any Arab has asked prophet Muhammad about the divine attributes, it should have been narrated in the books of *hadith*. Furthermore, Al-Maqriziyy added that:

> "if anyone looks carefully in the books of *hadith* and the statements about the companions (*al-athar as-salafiyyah*) he would know that there were neither sound nor weak *hadiths* that a companion of the prophet -peace and prayers be upon him- ever asked him about the meaning of anything that Allah -Exalted be he- has described himself with in

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193 By Muslims here I refer to what became known as "*ahl as-sunnah*" [people of the sunnah]. Also, they are known as "*ahl as-sunnah wal-jama`ah*" [people of the sunnah and the group]. As for the sects and groups that were rooted in Islam and had a different position than that of the above, Al-Baghdadiyy listed seventy major branches of them in an apparent attempt to relate this number to a narration of prophet Muhammad in which he professed that his people will be divided into seventy branches.

194 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Iqtisad Fi Al-I`tiqad* (Cairo: Maktabat Al-Jindi, 1972) p.16.

195 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Iqtisad*, p.20.

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> the Qur'an, despite the fact that the companions were numerous".[196]

There were many examples before and after the time of Al-Ghazzaliyy that reflect the way different schools (e.g. *Al-Asha`irah*)[197] and scholars (e.g. Ibn Taymiyyah), were treated whenever there was any doubt or claims regarding their creed, even if these claims were politically motivated.

I have chosen Ibn Taymiyyah, a leader of the Hanbalite school of jurisprudence who flourished two centuries after Al-Ghazzaliyy and was one of his critics, as an example. He was considered the leader of the *Salafiyyah* school, yet he was accused of incorporating anthropomorphic elements into his *`Aqidah Wasitiyyah*. Two councils were convened to verify the claims about his book. In the first one, which was held in Damascus, he was acquitted of the charges. In the second, which took place in Cairo, he was unjustly convicted and sentenced to prison for an indefinite period.[198]

As discussed above,[199] the Asha`irites, who were almost exclusively Shafi`ites, were denied the right to attend congregational

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196 Muhammad Abu Zahrah, *Tarikh Al-Madhahib Al-Islamiyyah* (Cairo: Dar Al-Fikr Al-`Arabiyy, n.d.) p.98.
197 Followers of Al-Ash`ariyy, Abu Al-Hasan `Ali Ibn Isma`il (260 A.H./873 C.E.-324 A.H./935 C.E.). He was a Mu`tazilite but returned to the method of the *salaf* at later stage in his life and renounced the Mu`tazilites.
198 Merlin Swarz, "A seventh-century (A.H.) Sunni creed: The `Aqidah Wasitiya of Ibn Taymiya," *Humaniora Islamica* 1 (1973): 102.
199 See page 17.

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and Friday prayers because of the way they presented the Islamic creed, and especially in the way they presented the beautiful names [*al-asma' al-husna*] of Allah. Out of more than ninety nine names,[200] the Ash`airites chose to deal with the concept of Allah by using the subject matter of very few of these names because they thought that these names are the most important ones. In *Qawa`id Al-`Aqa'id Fi At-Tawhid*, which is a part of *The Revival of Islamic Sciences*, Al-Ghazzaliyy followed the footsteps of the Asha`irites and used their method of *Kalam* [theological argumentation].[201] It should be noted that Al-Ash`ariyy himself and Al-Baqillaniyy (d.403 A.H./1112 C.E.) followed the path of the *salaf* in the way they understood divine attributes (i.e. literal interpretation of the divine attributes). It was the later Asha`irites who chose to discuss the subject matter of few attributes as representative for their importance, and they adopted the method of metaphorical interpretation [*ta'wil*] in order to avoid questions of anthropomorphism [*tajsim*]. Those who belong to the latter include Al-Ghazzaliyy and Ar-Raziyy.(d.606 A.H./1209 C.E.)[202]

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200 It is a common mistake to restrict the names of Allah to ninety nine names. In fact, there are more than the above mentioned number. Although they are called "names" [*asma'*] as in Qur'an, 7: 180, they are also called adjectives [*sifat*] (i.e. the Merciful). In discussing the verses in the Qur'an that include such "adjectives", one refer to these verses as *ayat as-sifat*.

201 Al-Ghazzaliyy discussed the following subject matters: life and omnipotence [*al-hayah wal-qudrah*], knowledge [*al-`ilm*], will [*al-iradah*], hearing and sight [*as-sam` wal-basar*], and speech [*kalam*]. Al-Ghazzaliyy, "*Qawa`id Al-`Aqa'id Fi At-Tawhid*" *Majmu`at Rasa'il Al-Imam Al-Ghazzaliyy* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-`Ilmiyyah, 1986) vol.2, pp.124-127.

202 Ibn Al-Qaiyyim, p.120.

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The Ash`airites got their method from their rivals, the theologians [*al-Mutakallimun*]. This method, which was intended to defend Islamic Shari`ah against philosophy in the first place, contained several philosophical terms such as the word "essence" [*jawhar*] and "accident" [*`ard*]. It is the use of such philosophical words that upset traditional scholars since the time of Al-Ghazzaliyy. His contemporary, Ibn `Aqil, head of the Hanbalite school at the time, said about this subject:

> "I assure [you] that the companions [of the prophet] died without knowing the [terms] "essence" and the "accident". So, if you would like to be like them you can, but if you think that the method of *al-Mutakallimun* is better than the method of Abu Bakr and `Umar,[203] this would be the worst of your opinions."[204]

Based on his use of the above mentioned method, Al-Ghazzaliyy was "accused" of being an Ash`airite by the Salafiyyah school.[205] There were many Muslim scholars who considered him so; they have used neutral language in classifying him as an Asha`irite. Among those we find the medieval scholars As-Subkiyy and Az-Zubaydiyy who stated that to judge what someone believes belongs to Allah. He also added that after reviewing most of the works of Al-

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203 Abu Bakr, `Abdullah Ibn Abu Quhafah, the first Caliph, and `Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, the second Caliph.
204 Ibn Al-Jawziyy, *Talbis Iblis* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-`Ilmiyyah, 1949) p.85.
205 Dimashqiyyah, p.89.

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Ghazzaliyy and the books of his contemporaries who saw him, he reached the conclusion that Al-Ghazzaliyy "was most probably an Asha`irite".[206] In addition, among the contemporaries we find that Sulaiman Dunya is very supportive of the idea that Al-Ghazzaliyy was an Asha`irite. In fact, Dunya said that Al-Ghazzaliyy advocated Asha`irism in *Al-Iqtisad Fi Al-I`tiqad.*[207]

A rather different opinion came also from a medieval Muslim scholar. This time from Ibn Rushd [Averroes] (d.595 A.H./1198 C.E.) the great critic of Al-Ghazzaliyy. Regarding the Asha`irism of Al-Ghazzaliyy Ibn Rushd stated in *Fasl Al-Maqal Fima Bayn Al-Hikmah Wash-Shari`ah Min Ittisal* that Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained a relative position and that he did not commit himself to any one school and that "he was an Asha`irite with the Asha`irites, a Sufi with the Sufis and a philosopher with the philosophers". Among the contemporaries a similar position is held by Dimashqiyyah who says that Al-Ghazzaliyy was an Asha`irite only when he addressed the general public [*al-`awam*].[208]

A strong position against the Ash`arism of Al-Ghazzaliyy was advanced by George Makdisi. In his article "The Non-Ash`arite Shafi`ism Of Ghazzali,"[209] Makdisi states that Al-Ghazzaliyy was not an Ash`arite for a number of reasons. The first one was that Al-

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206 Az-Zubaydiyy, p.30.
207 Dimashqiyyah, p.94.
208 Dimashqiyyah, pp.94-98.
209 George Makdisi, "The Non-Ash`arite Shafi`ism Of Ghazzali," *Reveu des Etudes Islamiques* 54 (1986) pp.239-257.

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Ghazzaliyy never declared himself an Ash`arite. Yet this argument has the same weight as one saying that Al-Ghazzaliyy never denied being an Ash`arite. The second argument was based on the idea that the deed of the Nizamiyyah college insisted on having the Shafi`ite *Usul Al-Fiqh* as the official position that should be taught. According to Makdisi, Ash-Shafi`iyy founded this method against the method of Kalam. Makdisi also adds that the professors of the Nizamiyyah distanced them selves from the Ash`arites. As for his position towards Al-Ghazzaliyy's *Al-Iqtisad Fi Al-I`tiqad*, Makdisi says, after confirming that Al-Ghazzaliyy followed the Ash`arite method in writing this book, that "this work does not represent Ghazzali's own inner convictions."[210]

In my opinion, the reality about Al-Ghazzaliyy's position regarding the Ash`arite method can be deduced from the "appearances" which for us are restricted to his works, since we do not have access to his "inner convictions". Whether Al-Ghazzaliyy was or was not Ash`arite, he certainly used that methodology. It appears that he used the Ash`arite methodology, or Kalam, but not blindly. In his introduction to *Faisal At-Tafriqah Bayn Al-Islam Waz-Zandaqah*, Al-Ghazzaliyy criticized those Ash`arites who thought that deviating from the method of Al-Ash`ariyy, no matter how little, was heretical.[211] It is rather important to know that Al-Ghazzaliyy

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210 Makdisi, pp.244-249.

211 Al-Ghazzaliyy, "*Faisal At-Tafriqah Bayn Al-Islam Waz-Zandaqah*," *Majmu`at Rasa'il Al-Imam Al-Ghazzaliyy* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-`Ilmiyyah, 1986) p.115.

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referred to Al-Ash`ariyy in his earlier writings as "our teacher" [*shaykhuna*] which could be an important factor in determining the relationship between the two especially if we know that on the same page where Al-Ghazzaliyy quotes Al-Ash`ariyy he quotes another scholar without referring to him as "*shaykhuna*".[212] Towards the end of his life, Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote *Iljam Al-`Awam `An `Ilm Al-Kalam* in which he criticized the method of the Ash`arites and Kalam. In addition there are numerous places in *The Revival of Islamic Sciences* [*Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din*] where he criticized Kalam. In the book of knowledge [*kitab al-`ilm*], which is the first of forty chapters of the *Ihya'*, not only Al-Ghazzaliyy criticized *kalam* but he also listed it along with unacceptable innovations [*bida`*] of which children who were reaching maturity should be protected.[213]

Al-Ghazzaliyy's position on many other controversial subjects (e.g., logic) will be addressed as they unfold in this dissertation. The idea that Al-Ghazzaliyy's theory of knowledge has developed throughout his life, shall provide an explanation, and not necessarily a defence, to many of the raised questions. The following chapters will discuss this idea.

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212 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, p.36.
213 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'* , vol. 1, p. 15.

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Chapter Two

Al-Ghazzaliyy's Theory Of Knowledge As A Student

(465 A.H./1072 C.E.-478 A.H./1085 C.E.)

This chapter deals with Al-Ghazzaliyy's writings as a student and how these writings could be related to his epistemological development during the above mentioned years which ended with the death of his most important teacher Al-Juwainiyy in 478 A.H./1085 C.E. During these years Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote two major books; *At-Ta`liqah Fi Furu` Al-Madhhab* (Notes on the Branches of the [Shafi`ite] School of Jurisprudence) and *Al-Mankhul Min Ta`liqat Al-Usul* (The Sifted from the Notes on the Fundamentals of Jurisprudence).[214] In addition, Al-Ghazzaliyy's later work *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal* (Deliverance from Error) in which he projected in clear terms his thoughts about knowledge during the same period.

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[214] The word *Ta`liqah* is translated by J.G. Hava, S.J. as 'marginal notes' or as 'appendix of a book': *Al-Fara'd Ad-Durriyyah* (Beirut: Dar Al-Mashriq, 1972) p. 495. I think that Al-Ghazzaliyy intended this word, which was used in its singular form '*Ta`iqah* in the title of the first book and in its plural form '*Ta`liqat* ' in the second, to indicate that these notes were taken from the lectures of his teachers (i.e. Al-Isma`iliyy) when he was a student.

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1. *At-Ta`liqah*:

Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote his first book, *At-Ta`liqah*, when he travelled to Jurjan to study at the hands of Abu-Nasr Al-Isma`iliyy. It seems that this book was simply a collection of notes on the lectures that he attended during the above mentioned journey.[215] *At-Ta`liqah* was lost and our knowledge of it is restricted to secondary sources. These sources provide a simple historical account of the book without dealing with its contents except simply mentioning that it was about *fiqh* according to the Shafi`ite school of jurisprudence.[216]

2. *Al-Mankhul*: the question of authenticity:

The only surviving book that could have been written during this period was *Al-Mankhul Min Ta`liqat Al-Usul.* At least one orientalist and one medieval Muslim scholar doubted that *Al-Mankhul* [The Sifted] was written by Al-Ghazzaliyy. The former, Brockelmann, claimed in his *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur* that *Al-Mankhul* was written by one of Al-Ghazzaliyy's students without specifying the reason that led him to such claim. The latter was Ibn Hajar Al-Haytamiyy (d. 973 A.H./1565 C.E.) who said in his book *Al-Khayrat Al-Hisan Fi Manaqib An-Nu`man* that *Al-Mankhul* could not have been written by Al-Ghazzaliyy because it included

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215 As-Subkiyy, vol. 4, p. 195.
216 Az-Zubaydiyy, p. 41.

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harsh criticism of Abu-Hanifah while Al-Ghazzaliyy praised him in *Ihya' 'Ulum Ad-Din* (The Revival of Islamic Sciences). Yet, it seems that Ibn Hajar Al-Haytamiyy was not sure of his position because he narrated a defense of Al-Ghazzaliyy by Hanifites who explained that these insults were committed by Al-Ghazzaliyy when he was a student and thus forgivable.[217] One could only add, as discussed in the previous chapter, that Al-Ghazzaliyy denied insulting the person of Abu-Hanifah and declared all such insults as forged additions to his book.[218] The possibility of altering the works of any scholar at the time was enormous due to the fact that these works were copied manually.

The authenticity of *Al-Mankhul* could be proven beyond doubt from the cross-references that Al-Ghazzaliyy made to *Al-Mankhul* in his book *Al-Mustasfa*, which he wrote after returning to teaching at the Nizamiyyah of Nishapur, at the request of some students of jurisprudence who wanted him to write a book on the fundamentals of jurisprudence [*usul al-fiqh*] that would include "more details than *Al-Mankhul* which is concise and brief."[219]

There remains the question whether *Al-Mankhul* was written before or after the death of Al-Juwainiyy. The historiographers (e.g., As-Subkiyy) maintained that Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote this book during

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217 Badawi, pp. 7-9.

218 Muhammad Hasan Hitu, Introduction, *Al-Mankhul Min Ta'liqat Al-Usul*, by Al-Ghazzaliyy (Damascus: Dar Al-Fikr, 1970) pp. 31-33.

219 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mustasfa Min 'Ilm Al-Usul* (Bulaq: Al-Matba'ah Al-Amiriyyah, 1322 A.H.) vol. 1, p. 4.

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the life of his teacher.[220] On the other hand, there were those who claimed that Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote it after the death of his teacher because Al-Ghazzaliyy used to write a supplication [*du`a'*] right after the name of Al-Juainiyy.[221] This supplication, *rahimahu Allah* (i.e. may Allah be merciful to him) usually indicates that the person who's name was mentioned was diseased. The contradiction between those two positions could be resolved by pointing to the concluding paragraph of *Al-Mankhul* in which Al-Ghazzaliyy stated that "this is the completion of *Al-Mankhul Min Ta`liqat Al-Usul* after omitting the extras." In addition, Al-Ghazzaliyy said that he "restricted [himself] to whatever Al-Juwainiyy -may Allah be merciful to him- has mentioned in his lectures."[222] It is apparent that at least Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote the original text of this book when he attended the lectures of Al-Juwainiyy. The fact that he omitted the "extras" might indicate that he wrote a modified version of this book after the death of his teacher which explains the presence of the above mentioned supplications in the text of *Al-Mankhul.*

It should also be noted that Al-Ghazzaliyy's later works in *usul al-fiqh* (i.e. *Al-Mustasfa*) reflect a different approach to the fundamentals of jurisprudence which exemplified the originality of Al-Ghazzaliyy's writings after the death of Al-Juwainiyy. Accordingly, I would argue that *Al-Mankhul* does not fit into the

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220 As-Subkiyy, vol. 4, p. 225.
221 Hitu, p. 35.
222 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, p. 504.

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works of the later Al-Ghazzaliyy that portrayed an independent scholar and thus it could have been written only at an earlier stage (i.e. as a student).

Moreover, the above position towards Abu-Hanifah was explained in another way. In the introduction to a critical edition of *Al-Mankhul*, Hito showed that Al-Ghazzaliyy was simply reiterating the position of Al-Juwainiyy, his teacher, in *Mughith Al-Khalq Fi Tarjih Al-Qawl Al-Haqq*[223] in which he ranked the Shafi`ite school of jurisprudence higher than that of Abu-Hanifah. Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote a section at the end of *Al-Mankhul* in which he praised Ash-Shafi`iyy and criticized other jurists including Abu-Hanifah.[224] Also, many books (i.e. Al-Baghdadiyy's *Tarikh Baghdad*) which were written during that period included harsh criticism of Abu Hanifah and yet no one denied that these books belonged to their authors.[225]

2.i. *Usul Al-Fiqh*:

The fundamentals of jurisprudence [*usul al-fiqh*], the subject matter of *Al-Mankhul*, deals with the methodology by which the different questions of jurisprudence are answered. Historically, *usul al-fiqh* was the outcome of a struggle between the traditionalists (*Ahl Al-Hadith*) who's methodology was based on a more or less

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223 It should be noted that the originality of this book was doubted. Although it was listed by Ibn Khallikan as one of Al-Juwainiyy's books, it was not listed by Ibn Kathir among the books of Al-Juwainiyy. Ibn Kathir, vol. 12, p. 128.
224 Hitu, p. 32.
225 Hitu, p. 32.

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literal interpretations of the texts of the Shari`ah, and the Hanafite jurists who allowed reasoning to play a more decisive role in determining the laws of the Shari`ah. The latter became known as the rationalists [*Ahl Ar-Ra'y*]. Although tension ran high between both schools, the *Ahl Al-Hadith* agreed with *Ahl Ar-Ra'y* on the necessity of having recourse to reason if the texts of the Shari`ah contained no specific reference to whatever case they had.[226] The dispute between these two schools was not resolved until Ash-Shafi`iyy wrote *Ar-Risalah* in which he reconciled the two positions by establishing the methodology that later on became known as *usul al-fiqh*.[227] It is a commonly accepted fact that all works in *usul al-fiqh* written after *Ar-Risalah* were dependent on it.

Following Ash-Shafi`iyy's lead there were many books written in this field. Of these, Imam Al-Juwainiyy wrote *Al-Burhan* and Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote four books: *Al-Mankhul*, *Tahdhib Al-Usul* (which is lost), *Shifa' Al-Ghalil Fi Bayan Masalik At-Ta`lil*, and *Al-Mustasfa*.[228]

In *Al-Mankhul*, Al-Ghazzaliyy ranked jurisprudence as the most important field of knowledge. Yet, he stated that jurisprudence was a branch [*far`*] that could not be totally apprehended without understanding and mastering the fundamental [*asl*].[229] It is a clear

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226 Taha Jabir Al-`Alwani, *Usul Al-Fiqh Al-Islami*, edrs. Yusuf Talal DeLorenzo and A.S. Al Shaikh-Ali (Herndon: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1990) p. 31.
227 Hitu, pp.3-5.
228 Hitu, pp. 8-9.
229 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, p. 3.

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message that promoted the study of *usul al-fiqh* for those who were interested in studying jurisprudence. In the introduction of *Al-Mankhul*, Al-Ghazzaliyy reduced the sources of knowledge to those declared to be the fundamentals of jurisprudence according to the school he belonged to (i.e. Shafi`ite). Although all schools list the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the consensus of the companions of the prophet as the basic sources for knowledge of the Shari`ah, these schools differed in their position regarding the role of *Ijtihad*. Similar to the position of Al-Juwainiyy, Al-Ghazzaliyy did not consider criteria that were derived from *Ijtihad* as peremptory [*qat`iyy*] and thus could not be considered as part of the fundamentals of jurisprudence; he would still use such criteria in verifying the validity of certain arguments.[230]

In the introduction to *Al-Mankhul*, Al-Ghazzaliyy stated that the fundamentals of jurisprudence aimed at knowing the peremptory proofs regarding the requirements of the Shari`ah. In addition, he defined the sources of which the predications [*muqaddamat*] of the fundamentals of jurisprudence were derived as *`Ilm al-kalam* [scholastic theology][231], *Fiqh* [jurisprudence] and language.[232] It

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230 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, pp. 4-5.

231 *`Ilm al-Kalam*, literally the science of talk or speech, but here it refers to scholastic theology. *`Ilm al-Kalam* is the method originally used in *tawhid* [theology] by Abu Hasan Al-Ash`ariyy. He was followed by his student Ibn Mujahid who in turn was followed by Al-Baqillaniyy and after him by Imam Al-Haramayn Al-Juwainiyy before it reached Al-Ghazzaliyy. Scholars who followed this method became known as *Mutakallimun* [philosopher-theologians]. The inclusion of Aristotelian logic in this method led to sharp criticism and rejection from scholars who belonged to different schools. Rejection of logic and labeling it *haram* [forbidden] is still advocated by many.

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should be noted that these sources are exactly the same as those of his teacher Al-Juwainiyy in his book *Al-Burhan* [The Proof].[233]

The importance of *`Ilm al-kalam* in the development in Al-Ghazzaliyy's thought can be traced to one of its sources: Aristotelian logic. Al-Ghazzaliyy incorporated logic as a distinct subject in his writings. He renamed many Aristotelian logical categories; it seems that he did so in order to overcome the rejection of logic prevailing at the time. In addition, he attempted to show that these logical categories could be derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah.[234] A more detailed discussion of Al-Ghazzaliyy's contribution to logic and its inclusion in *Usul al-Fiqh* will follow when I discuss *Al-Mustasfa Min `Ilm al-Usul*.[235]

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232 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, pp. 3-4.

233 Al-`Alwani, p. 49.

234 One famous example that Al-Ghazzaliyy cited in his book was the Hadith in which prophet Muhammad asked Mu`adh Ibn Jabal when he sent him to Yemen: "What are you going to use for judgment? He answered: the book of Allah. He [the prophet] said: What if you do not find [what you are looking for]? He answered: Then by the Sunnah of Allah's messenger-May Allah's peace and prayers be upon him. Then he said: What if you do not find [what you are looking for]? He [Mu`adh] said: I will use my opinion [ajtahidu ra'yiy]. He [the prophet] said: Praise Allah who guided the messenger of the messenger of Allah." This Hadith was narrated by Ahmad, Abu-Dawud, and At-Tirmidhiyy who stated that the chain of narrators of this Hadith is incomplete. In addition, Al-Bukhariyy said that this Hadith is not sound, but never the less, there were those who considered it sound. Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, p. 331.

235 See this discussion on page 222.

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2.ii. *Al-Qiyas* [analogical reasoning]:

On the question of *qiyas* [analogical reasoning], Al-Ghazzaliyy stated that the companions of the prophet used analogical reasoning without hesitation in solving problems were there is no direct text in the Qur'an and the Sunnah to address them.[236] The context in which Al-Ghazzaliyy presented his arguments to support his position regarding analogical reasoning indicate that he was on the defensive. It is a clear sign that there were those who opposed the use of *qiyas* in the Shari'ah. In fact, Al-Ghazzaliyy discussed the position of the various schools of jurisprudence and sects towards *qiyas*.

In the chapter on analogical reasoning [*kitab al-qiyas*], Al-Ghazzaliyy stated that *qiyas* was divided into purely rational [*`aqliyy*] and into that which was deduced from the Qur'an and the Sunnah [*shar`iyy*].[237] Most of the scholars of jurisprudence accepted both forms of *qiyas*. The Hanbalite school of jurisprudence rejected the *`aqliyy* and accepted the *shar`iyy*. On the other hand, a school like the Dawudiyyah[238] rejected the *qiyas shar`iyy* in favor of the *qiyas `aqliyy*. Moreover, Al-Ghazzaliyy discussed the position of several sects including Al-Mu`tazilah which its leaders either

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236 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, pp. 328-332.

237 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, p. 324.

238 The Dawudiyyah, also known as Az-Zahiriyyah, followers of Dawud Ibn `Ali Ibn Khalaf (d.270 A.H./883 C.E.) who established a school of jurisprudence that only accepted the literal meaning of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

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rejected the *qiyas shar`iyy* totally or most of it.[239] In addition, one should note that the Zahirites were the only school of jurisprudence which rejected *qiyas*. A good example of this rejection can be seen in the writings of Ibn Hazm.

2.iii. Al-Ghazzaliyy's Position on Science and Reason in *Al-Mankhul*:

Al-Ghazzaliyy devoted a chapter in *Al-Mankhul* to a discussion of the nature of the sciences [*Al-Kalam Fi Haqa'iq Al-`Ulum*]. It should be noted that Al-Ghazzaliyy's use of the word "sciences" is general and not restricted to the natural or physical sciences; it covers all subjects of knowledge including those of the Shari`ah . He started this chapter by criticizing the position of the Sophists [*Sufista'iyyah*] regarding knowledge because "they denied the possibility of knowing things in themselves". Al-Ghazzaliyy added that "one should not debate them because they denied sensibles [*al-mahsusat*]".[240] What Al-Ghazzaliyy meant was that the debate would have been purely verbal since the Sophists rejected the senses (i.e. hearing) as sources of knowledge. Thus Al-Ghazzaliyy concluded that there was no point in starting a debate with them in the first place.

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239 An-Nazzam (d.221 A.H./836 A.D.) rejected *qiyas shar`iyy* totally. This position of An-Nazzam is similar to the position of most of Al-Khawarij and most of Ar-Rawafid. Abu Hashim Al-Jubba'iyy rejected most of *qiyas shar`iyy*. Al-Ghazzaliyy, *AL-Mankhul*, pp. 324-326.

240 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, pp. 34-35.

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On the definition of science, Al-Ghazzaliyy listed six different definitions including those of four famous scholars[241] along with his arguments which undermined them all. Al-Ghazzaliyy had a peculiar position towards science: he thought that "science cannot be defined" [*inna al-`ilma la hadda lah*]. Moreover, he explained that science could be known and that "our inability to define [science] does not indicate our ignorance about the same science". To explain his point, Al-Ghazzaliyy said that it would be similar to his being asked to define Musk perfume; while knowing what it is, he would not be able to do so (i.e. provide a definition [*hadd*] of it). In addition, he maintained that science could be distinguished in classification from opinion [*zann*] and skepticism [*shakk*].[242]

Al-Ghazzaliyy divided the sciences or knowledge[243] into eternal [*qadim*] and accidental *[hadith]*. Eternal knowledge is that of Allah (i.e. knowledge which Allah possesses). This knowledge has no beginning and it encompasses all information.[244] Furthermore, "it can not be described neither as acquired nor as necessary [*wala*

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241 They are: Abu Al-Hasan Al-Ash`ariyy, Abu Al-Qasim Al-Iskafiyy (d.452 A.H./1060 C.E.) who was one of Imam Al-Haramayn's teachers, Ibn Fawrak (d.406 A.H./1015 C.E.) and Al-Baqillaniyy whom Al-Ghazzaliyy refer to as the Judge. Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, pp. 36-39.

242 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, p. 40.

243 Al-Ghazzaliyy used science [`*ilm*] and knowledge [*ma`rifah*] to indicate the same concept. Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, p. 38.

244 The scope of Allah's knowledge, whether it encompasses all knowledge including details or not, led Al-Ghazzaliyy to dispute the position of philosophers like Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina who claimed that Allah's knowledge did not comprise details [*juz'iyyat*] and eventually declared their position as sacrilegious.

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yusaf bikawnihi kasbiyyan wala daruriyyan]".[245] Al-Ghazzaliyy divided the accidental knowledge into immediate [*hajmiyy*][246] and theoretical [*nazariyy*]. The *hajmiyy* is that knowledge which one has to [*yadtarru*] know with the beginning of reason [*bi 'awwal al-`aql*], like knowing the existence of the self [*wujud adh-dhat*], pains and pleasures. On the other hand, theoretical knowledge, which is acquired, is the result of sound thinking [*an-nazar as-sahih*].[247]

On the essence of reason [*mahiyyat al-`aql*], Al-Ghazzaliyy listed the definitions of jurists, Sufis and philosophers; he was not critical regarding all of them. Al-Baqillaniyy said that the essence of reason is knowing what is possible and what is not. Al-Ghazzaliyy rejected this definition saying that someone who was unaware of the possible and the impossible could still be rational [*`aqil*]. In addition, Al-Harith Al-Muhasibi said that reason was an instinct [*gharizah*]. This definition was mentioned without any comment. Moreover, Al-Ghazzaliyy listed what he called the philosophers' definition without any comment.[248] He said that the philosophers defined reason as the state in which the brain is prepared for the emanation [*fayd*][249] of

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245 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, p. 42.

246 The root of this word is *hajama* which literally means "came about or attacked suddenly". It seems that Al-Ghazzaliyy here used it to indicate that this kind of knowledge takes place quickly.

247 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, pp. 42-43.

248 Al-Ghazzaliyy's usage of the term "philosophers" comprises Greek and Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Sina and Al-Farabi. Al-Ghazzaliyy provided a more detailed account of the philosophers in *Tahafut Al-Falasifa* [The Destruction of the Philosophers] and *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal.*

249 Emanation [*fayd*] is a neo-Platonic idea that was entertained by various Muslim philosophers and especially by Al-Farabi. The fact that Al-Ghazzaliyy

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the soul. The most important definition here is that of Al-Ghazzaliyy himself. He defined reason as "the qualification which enables the qualified [person] to perceive knowledge and to think about the cognizable".[250]

Al-Ghazzaliyy had a peculiar classification of knowledge. The rank of each aspect of knowledge depended on necessity [*darurah*] and intuition [*badiha*]: the closest to necessity and intuition would be the clearest and thus ranked first. The following are Al-Ghazzaliyy's ten levels of knowledge in the order they appear in *Al-Mankhul*:

1. The knowledge of the existence of the self [*al-'ilm bi-wujud adh-dhat*], pain and pleasure.

2. Knowing the impossibility of the agreement of contradictions.

3. Knowing the sensibles [*al-mahsusat*].

4. The knowledge that results from more than one source reporting the same news [*akhbar at-tawatur*].

5. Understanding a message [*khitab*], and the ability to perceive conditions that indicate shyness, anger and fear.

6. Knowledge of crafts and industries.

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left this notion without comment could be explained by stating that Al-Ghazzaliyy studied philosophy on his own when he was in Baghdad, long after he wrote *Al-Mankhul*. One should be aware of the use of another word to indicate emanation which is *sudur*.

250 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, pp. 44-45.

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7. Knowledge of theories [*nazariyyat*]

8. Knowing of the mission of the messengers [of Allah].[251]

9. Knowledge of miracles.

10. Knowledge that results from narrations [*sam`iyyat*] which is "similar to imitation [*taqlid*]."[252]

Analyzing the above list, one can see that Al-Ghazzaliyy's approach was developmental. He started with the clearest and most necessary notion of knowledge and proceeded in the direction of the more complex. The first level was the realization of the existence of the self which he associated with pain and pleasure. The second level of knowledge was logical necessities. In listing the first two levels of knowledge before the senses, Al-Ghazzaliyy indicated that these two levels were innate. However, in his *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal*, the first two notions were not mentioned. Instead, the senses were ranked first.[253] This shows that Al-Ghazzaliyy was refining his sources of knowledge due to his continued reflection and interest in epistemology. The changes in themselves are clear indications of the developmental aspect of his theory of knowledge.

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251 It should be noted that the eighth level indicates knowledge of the necessity of having messengers and thus differs from the fourth level which is concerned with knowledge that is transmitted from those messengers through multiple chains of narrators.

252 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, pp. 46-48.

253 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 144.

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According to Al-Ghazzaliyy, the fourth source of knowledge, *akhbar at-tawatur*, was a result of a logical necessity and a conventional agreement. The logical necessity came from the notion that it is unlikely for a large number of independent narrators of the same news (i.e. *hadith*) to lie about it.[254] In the language of the scholars of Hadith, the above idea is called "the impossibility of [having] a conspiracy to lie" [*istihalat at-tawatu' `ala al-kadhib*]. The conventional aspect came in answer to the following question: how many narrators were needed in order to render a narration as *mutawatir*?[255] The importance of this source of knowledge could be realized from the fact that Muslim scholars regarded a *hadith* which was considered *mutawatir* on the same level as the Qur'an in terms of certitude

The fifth kind of knowledge was analytical. Al-Ghazzaliyy was not the only one to talk about analytical knowledge that resulted from written texts; he also talked about analytical knowledge that could be derived from facial expressions. While he did not provide examples of the former, he listed shyness, anger and fear as

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254 To qualify for acceptance, those narrators should meet very strict criteria in moral character and memory. At-Tahhan, *Mustalah Al-Hadith*, p. 109.

255 A *hadith* is considered *mutawatir* if it was narrated by at least ten narrators in each generation [*tabaqah*]. In addition, the circumstances of these narrators should be such that it is impossible for them to conspire to lie [*istihalat tawatu'hum `ala al-Kadhib*]. At-Tahhan, *Mustalah Al-Hadith*, pp. 17-18.

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examples of the latter. The sixth and seventh levels could be described as the practical and theoretical knowledge respectively.[256]

The last three kinds of knowledge, which included knowing the mission of the prophets, miracles and knowledge that was based on authority [*taqlid*], were all directly related to religion. *Taqlid* differs from *khabar at-tawatur* in the methodology one adopts in verifying the transmitted knowledge; in the case of *taqlid* there is an uncritical acceptance of knowledge (i.e. Hadith), while in *khabar at-tawatur* one is critical about the methodology of transmitting the Hadith. In addition, *taqlid* or knowledge of miracles could be related to *khabar al ahad* where the number of narrators is less than that of *khabar at-tawatur*. Al-Ghazzaliyy's listing of the knowledge of miracles as a separate entity might indicate his early preoccupation with this idea, although he did not explain his own position until he responded to the Muslim philosophers' notion of causality in *Tahafut Al-Falasifah* (The Incoherence of the Philosophers).[257] By classifying *taqlid* as the last kind of knowledge, Al-Ghazzaliyy hinted that he considered it the least clear on his list. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the first source of knowledge that he gave up before his period of skepticism was *taqlid*.[258]

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256 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, p. 47.

257 For a full discussion of Al-Ghazzaliyy's understanding of causality and miracles see page 130.

258 See Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 77.

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Al-Ghazzaliyy later revised this list that was mentioned in and came up with a list of thirteen categories of knowledge that were used by the philosophers as premises in the section on logic in his *Maqasid Al-Falasifah* (The Aims of the Philosophers) which he wrote in Baghdad when he assumed his professorial position at the Nizamiyyah. Al-Ghazzaliyy listed these categories in the following order:

1. *Al-Uwwaliyyat* (logical necessities): e.g., knowing that "the whole is greater than the part."

2. *Al-Mahsusat* (sensibles): e.g., "the light of the moon increases and decreases."

3. *At-Tajribiyyat* (experimentals): they result from the senses and reason together, e.g., "the fire burns."

4. *Al-Mutawatirat* (knowledge related by a group of narrators): "like our knowledge of the existence of Egypt and Mecca without seeing them."

5. *Al-Qadaya Al-Lati Qiyasatuha Fi At-Tab` Ma`aha* (the cases that include their proofs within): premises that were treated as logical necessities because their proofs were forgotten with time as the premise "two is half four" which originally was known through the proof "the half is one of two parts of a whole that is equal to the other."

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6. *Al-Wahmiyyat* (illusions): like the premise "it is impossible for something to exist if one cannot point to it and it is described as being neither inside nor outside this world."

7. *Al-Mashhurat* (famous): as in the case of "lying is bad." Al-Ghazzaliyy said that this category comprised conventional notions that were good for practical reasons. He added that if there were a man who was rational yet not accustomed to anything, he might reject famous premises.

8. *Al-Maqbulat* (acceptables): premises that were accepted by virtue of the position of the person who provided them (i.e. scholars).

9. *Al-Musallamat* (agreeables): premises that were agreed upon between two parties.

10. *Al-Mushabbihat* (similars): premises that only appeared to be corresponding to *al-Uwwaliyyat*, *at-Tajribiyyat* or *al-Mashhurat* but in reality they were not.

11. *Al-Mashhurat Fi Az-Zahir* (those that appear to be famous): premises that were accepted as true upon hearing them, but rendered false upon reflecting on them.

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12. *Al-Maznunat* (probables): premises that were accepted as true with the "feeling that the opposite is possible."

13. *Al-Makhilat* (imaginatives): premises that were known to be false yet they were influential psychologically.[259]

In *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm Fi Al-Mantiq* (The Criterion of Science in Logic), Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained basically the same list as above except for the addition of a new category which was *Al-Hadsiyyat* (intuitions). He explained the knowledge that resulted from intuition as that which "cannot be proved, cannot be doubted and cannot be shared with others through education." Al-Ghazzaliyy did not provide examples of this kind of knowledge, but he hinted that it is similar to the case of knowledge that is acquired by "taste" *dhawq*. He maintained that one could only lead the student to the path that he chose, but it is up to the student's ability to achieve such knowledge.[260]

Moreover, Al-Ghazzaliyy discussed the differences between the senses, whether they are on the same level or whether some rank higher than others. He cited several positions without stating his

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259 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Maqasid Al-Falasifah*, Sulaiman Dunya, ed. (Cairo: Dar Al-Ma`arif Bi-Masr, 1961) pp. 102-109.
260 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm Fi Al-Mantiq*, Ahmad Shams Ad-Din, ed. (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-`Ilmiyyah, 1990) p. 182.

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own thoughts on this subject. It should be noted that in *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal* (*Deliverance from Error*), which he wrote towards the end of his life, Al-Ghazzaliyy became very clear about this issue; he ranked the senses on different levels in the order of their development and by virtue of this classification they were listed as sources of sensible knowledge.[261]

Al-Ghazzaliyy concluded his classification of knowledge by stating that there were no differences between the sciences once knowledge is acquired, regardless of how difficult the subject of the science was.[262] This view of Al-Ghazzaliyy regarding the equality of the sciences, once they are achieved, is compatible with his position regarding his interchangeable use of the terms "science" and "knowledge".[263] Nevertheless, one could still find contradiction on the surface between the above notion and the fact that Al-Ghazzaliyy listed various levels of knowledge in different texts, a procedure that started with *Al-Mankhul* and continued through out his life. It is rather obvious that in such lists, he classified different categories of sciences leaving the impression that some are more scientific than others. As to the changes in the number of these categories, one can attribute them to the development in his understanding of the concept of science which could be attributed partially to his exposure to philosophy.

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261 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 144-145.
262 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, p. 48.
263 See footnote 243.

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2.iv. The Sources of Knowledge:

Prior to stating his position on the sources of knowledge, Al-Ghazzaliyy cited some positions that were circulating at the time. He started with Al-Hashawiyyah[264] who's view was that the sources of knowledge were restricted to the Qur'an and the Sunnah without any role for reason. Al-Ghazzaliyy said that this position was obviously false.[265] Although one could understand the background of Al-Ghazzaliyy's statement regarding the Hashawiyyah, it was insufficient on his part not to provide a full account of his position. Of course, there is the possibility that Al-Ghazzaliyy thought it was self-evident.

In addition, he listed the ideas of those who restricted the sources of knowledge to the senses, the stance of the Indian philosophers who thought that the sources were thinking and meditation 1 and the position of those who considered inspiration [*ilham*] as the source of knowledge. The latter position was based upon the idea that all knowledge belonged to Allah in the first place and then it is passed to human beings. Furthermore, he mentioned the opinion of Al-Qalanisiyy who restricted the source of knowledge to reason [`aql] without rejecting the senses. For him, the function of

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264 Al-Hashawiyyah was a sect that accepted only the literal meaning of the verses of the Qur'an and Hadiths that mentioned Allah in language that would add corporeal attributes to Allah. They also believed that the recited Qur'an was the actual speech of Allah. Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, p. 49.

265 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, p. 50.

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the senses is to perceive, but it is reason that knows at the time the senses perceive (i.e. light). The meaning of this is that Al-Qalanisiyy saw the senses as tools that cannot comprehend what they perceive on their own. He tried to support his argument by giving an example of a child who perceives the perceptibles without knowing what they are for his lack of reason.[266]

Al-Ghazzaliyy brought the above discussion to an end by asserting that rational discernment [*miz*] was the source of knowledge. He held that there is a level of discernment that belonged to animals which did not yield any knowledge.[267] Al-Ghazzaliyy used the term "rational discernment" to distinguish human discernment from the ability of animals to discern [268]between things following their instincts. In addition, he ranked discernment higher than other faculties in *Al-Mankhul*. In his latter work *Al-Munqidh*, he ranked discernment, which he called *tamyiz*, higher than the senses but lower than reason.[269]

Al-Ghazzaliyy held that there were two ways to acquire knowledge, with or without instruments of mediation [*wasa`it*]. According to Al-Ghazzaliyy, there were three kinds of media: the senses which were the source of the sensibles [*al-mahsusat*], the

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266 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, p. 50.
267 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, p. 50.
268 Al-Ghazzaliyy used the same Arabic term *tamyiz* [discernment] for both human beings and animals.
269 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p, 145.

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"look" of the mind which was the source of the rational [*al-`aqliyyat*] and the consistency of habits [*ittirad al-`adat*] which enables one to know the meaning of messages. The latter was important for Al-Ghazzaliyy in defining the notion of causality and thus explaining miracles which needed two media: reason and habits. Al-Ghazzaliyy used these ideas in proving the possibility of miracles in support of the concept of prophecy. He said that through reason one could find that the miracle is an activity of an inventor and maker who is in control. He added that it was through custom or habit that miracles indicate the veraciousness of the prophet.[270]

2.v. Al-Ghazzaliyy's theory of Language:

In a long section of *Al-Mankhul*, Al-Ghazzaliyy discussed the theories concerning the origin of languages. He listed two major views about how languages evolved. The first advocated the idea that language, like any other knowledge, came from Allah directly. Those who held this view based their thought upon the a verse in the Qur'an which says that Allah had taught Adam all the names.[271] The second opinion asserted that languages were conventional. Those of the first stance refuted the latter position by declaring the word "conventional" paradoxical.

Al-Ghazzaliyy brought this discussion to a culmination by reconciling the two positions together. It could be that language at

270 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, p. 51.
271 "Wa`allama Adama al-asma' kullaha..." Qur'an 2:31

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its beginning was conventional; this conventional beginning could have been made possible by other creatures who were created before Adam. Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained that the above mentioned verse "appeared" to indicate the non-conventionality of language but it was not decisive.[272]

3. *Deliverance from Error [Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal]*:

According to As-Subkiyy, Al-Ghazzaliyy spent about eight years (470 A.H./1077 C.E.-478 A.H./1085 C.E.) in Nishapur with Al-Juwainiyy.[273] At the time Al-Juwainiyy died Al-Ghazzaliyy was at least 20 years old. The importance of these dates and Al-Ghazzaliyy's age stem from an account of Al-Ghazzaliyy's thought in his autobiographical work *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal* which, although written towards the end of his life, included useful information about the development of his epistemology during his early life which fits the frame work of this chapter. At the beginning of *Al-Munqidh*, he describes his state of mind starting with the prime of his youth when he "reached puberty [*al-bulugh*], before becoming twenty", until he became more than fifty years old.[274] It is obvious that this time-frame covers the period when Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote his book *Al-Mankhul Min Ta'liqat Al-Usul.*

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272 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, pp. 70-71.
273 As-Subkiyy, vol. 6, p. 196.
274 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 79.

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In *Al-Munqidh*, Al-Ghazzaliyy showed that early in his life he was aware of the differences between the various religions, sects and schools of jurisprudence. This awareness prompted him to "investigate the creed of every sect and to explore the secrets of every denomination". In addition, he studied the Batinites, Zahirites, philosophers, dialectical theologians [*mutakallimun*], Sufis and Manicheans [*zanadiqa*].[275] Al-Ghazzaliyy realized at a very early stage that one major reason for these differences was authority. For him, it was parents and teachers who were responsible for such differences. Al-Ghazzaliyy saw that "children of Christians were raised as Christians, children of Jews were raised as Jews and children of Muslims were raised as Muslims".[276]

As a result, Al-Ghazzaliyy wanted to prescind from the knowledge that was based on the authority of parents and teachers. He had "a thirst to perceive the reality of things" which led him to breakaway from imitating others. Al-Ghazzaliyy realized that in order to reach truth, he needed to "seek the reality of knowledge, as it is?"[277]

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275 *Zanadiqah* also means atheists, but in generally in medieval sciences it referred to Manicheans who were not atheists.
276 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 78-82.
277 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 82.

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4. Conclusion:

Comparing the language of *Al-Mankhul* to that of *Al-Munqidh*, one finds a big difference. In *Al-Mankhul*, Al-Ghazzaliyy's basic interest in knowledge was mainly as a jurist. He concentrated on technical issues that were part of or related to *usul al-fiqh*. One example of a technical issue was Al-Ghazzaliyy's discussion of the conditions of the narrators of Hadith. He said that the narrator has to be a rational adult Muslim who could be male or female, free or a slave. For a narrator who fit these conditions, only questions of immorality render his/her narration unacceptable.[278] Another issue that Al-Ghazzaliyy dealt with was the position of Islamic Shari`ah towards the Shari`ah of the prophets before Islam. The question that underlines this area of discussion is whether Muslim jurists should consider previous Shari`ah as another source in addition to the Qur'an, Sunnah, consensus of the companions of the prophet, which later on became the consensus of the scholars, and qiyas (analogy). He started by discussing whether prophet Muhammad was following any previous Shari`ah before he became a prophet. After setting forth the positions of several other scholars, Al-Ghazzaliyy brought the issue to a culmination by stating that one cannot consider the Shari`ah of past religions as a source of Islamic Shari`ah because

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278 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, p. 257.

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there was no reference to such notions in the Sunnah of prophet Muhammad.[279]

It should not come as a surprize that, as a student, Al-Ghazzaliyy imitated his teacher Al-Juwainiyy, a position that he acknowledged at the end of *Al-Mankhul*. Although he differed in very few cases from his teacher in *Al-Mankhul*, his originality in *usul al-fiqh* was manifested in his later work *Al-Mustasfa* were logic played a major role in his *usul*.

In *Al-Munqidh*, Al-Ghazzaliyy is preoccupied with truth in it self. He did not refer to jurisprudence or the *usul*. While *usul al-fiqh*, and thus *Al-Mankhul*, was supposed to solve differences in jurisprudence, it was differences in belief that prompted Al-Ghazzaliyy to search for truth. His awareness, during the early stages of his life, of the different creeds of people started him on his first stage of a long journey of systematic skepticism which lasted until the climax of his quest for knowledge during his last days at the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad.

Al-Ghazzaliyy's critical thinking and regard to general questions of truth and knowledge, while apparent in *Al-Munqidh*, is absent from *Al-Mankhul*. The fact that these two books reflected different areas of interest in Al-Ghazzaliyy's early life might appear contradictory. One question that might surface as a result of these

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279 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, pp. 231-234.

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two areas is: how could someone like Al-Ghazzaliyy, who was investigating the general notions of knowledge and their sources as stated in *Al-Munqidh*, proceeded to verify the particular as the case in *Al-Mankhul*?

There could be one answer, I argue, that explains the above mentioned positions. Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained two lines of thought since the days of youth until the last years of his life. The first line of thought, which represents Al-Ghazzaliyy's quest for knowledge, is best illustrated in the following lines from the introduction of *Al-Munqidh*:

> "In the bloom of my life, from the time I reached puberty before I was twenty until now, when I am over fifty, I have constantly been diving daringly into the depths of this profound sea and wading into its deep water like a bold man, not like a cautious coward. I would penetrate far into every murky mystery, pounce upon every problem, and dash into every mazy difficulty. I would scrutinize the creed of every sect and seek to lay bare the secrets of each faction's teaching with the aim of discriminating between the proponent of truth and the advocate of error, and between the faithful follower of tradition and the heterodox innovator."[280]

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280 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment* [*Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal*], Richard Joseph McCarthy, tr. (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980) p. 62.

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Al-Ghazzaliyy reaffirmed the early beginning of this search for truth and the source of this quest for knowledge in the same introduction. He said:

> "The thirst for grasping the real meaning of things was indeed my habit and wont from my early years and in the prime of my life. It was an instinctive, natural disposition placed in my makeup by God [Allah] Most High, not something due to my own choosing and contriving. As a result, the fetters of servile conformism [*taqlid*][281] fell away from me, and inherited beliefs lost their hold on me, when I was still quite young."[282]

Although the above quotations showed the time frame of the first line of thought, which covered Al-Ghazzaliyy's life as a student, it remains that there were no books written by the student Al-Ghazzaliyy, that reflected this independent approach to knowledge and truth. There were many works (e.g. *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal*) by the later Al-Ghazzaliyy that embodied this investigative course that he undertook in pursuit of knowledge and truth in what could be called the area of universals.

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281 For Al-Ghazzaliyy, conformism or *taqlid* meant uncritical acceptance of knowledge and belief at the hands of parents and teachers by virtue of their authority.

282 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom*, p. 63.

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The second line of thought is represented in Al-Ghazzaliyy's works in fields like jurisprudence. Although the first line of thought must have influenced the way Al-Ghazzaliyy approached areas like *fiqh* by having that independent spirit which led him not to be a conformist to previous writings in such fields, one cannot claim that these works were reflecting the first line of thought because they were concerned with particulars. Unlike a reductionist, he addressed these areas of particulars as if there was no relationship between the general notions of knowledge, which he put under investigation, and these particular fields.

The fact that Al-Ghazzaliyy kept working in the particular fields of the Shari`ah indicate that he was never in doubt about the true validity of the premises which were derived from the Qur'an and the Sunna. In fact, he continued lecturing on these subjects even at the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad, when he was going through what I like to call the climax of his mental discourse regarding the first line of thought.[283]

Al-Ghazzaliyy's continuous inquiry into both universals and particulars is interesting because on the surface they seem incompatible. One could see that Al-Ghazzaliyy had an obvious, spontaneous interest in the first. It prompted a good deal reflection throughout his life. The difficulty is in the question: why did he

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283 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 136.

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pursue the second? Part of the answer could be found in Al-Ghazzaliyy's formal education which started with training in the particulars (e.g. *fiqh*). Another partial answer comes from the fact that there was common interest in these particular sciences, especially in jurisprudence. In addition, Al-Ghazzaliyy pursued his interest in the particulars as a teacher who was expected, and thus there is a sense of duty, to lecture on such topics. All of these aspects and probably more provided the motivation for such pursuit of knowledge in the particulars. Moreover, one could think that once Al-Ghazzaliyy achieved universal knowledge, he found that his interest in the particulars was on line with his interest in the universals. In addition, there is a sociological element in this equation, where a scholar in the Islamic world is unlikely to be accepted without being deep rooted and having strong interests in the particulars.

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Chapter Three

Al-Ghazzaliyy's Quest for Knowledge: the First Period of Public Teaching.

(478 A.H./1085 C.E.-488 A.H./1095 C.E.)

This chapter deals with Al-Ghazzaliyy's writings from the time of the death of Al-Juwainiyy in 478 A.H./1085 C.E., until he abandoned his professorial position at the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad in 488 A.H./1095 C.E.

During this period, Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote at least twenty books in addition to the written rulings [*fatawa*] that he issued during the same period. These writings, many of which were lost or remain in manuscript form,[284] covered several subjects including jurisprudence [*fiqh*], debates [*munazarah*] in *fiqh*, fundamentals of jurisprudence [*Usul Al-Fiqh*], philosophy, politics and creed [*`aqidah*]. In this chapter, I shall concentrate on his works in areas that pertain to his quest for true knowledge directly (i.e. philosophy). Others will be treated briefly.

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284 The writings that were lost include *Al-Muntahal Fi `Ilm Al-Jadal, Ma'akhidh Al-Khilaf, Tahsin Al-Ma'akhidh, Al-Mabadi' Wal-Ghayat, Hujjat Al-Haq* and *Qawasim Al-Batiniyyah.* The manuscripts comprise *Al-Basit, Khulasat Al-Mukhtasar Wa Naqawat Al-Mu`tasar, Shifa' Al-Ghalil Fi Al-Qiyas Wat-Ta`lil, Fatawa, Ghayat Al-Ghawr Fi Dirayat Ad-Dawr* and *Al-Ma`arif Al-`Aqliyyah Wa Lubab Al-Hikmah Al-Ilahiyyah.*

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In addition, it is necessary to also treat Al-Ghazzaliyy's *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal* in this chapter. Although this work was written during the second period of public teaching (499 A.H./1106 C.E.-503 A.H./1110 C.E.), it includes one of the most important accounts on his thought during the period leading to his departure from Baghdad. This account covers his skepticism in addition to his analysis of the methodologies of the four "classes of seekers": the dialectical theologians [*Al-Mutakallimun*], the esoterics [*Al-Batiniyyah*], the philosophers and the *Sufis*. The pertinence of these issues to Al-Ghazzaliyy's development during this decade will be examined in detail in this chapter.

1. On *Fiqh*, *Munazarah* and *Usul Al-Fiqh*:

Al-Ghazzaliyy's works in jurisprudence and the related subjects show his continuing interest in this field, an interest which started in his student days. Although these works reflect a certain development in Al-Ghazzaliyy's perspective on jurisprudence, he remained throughout faithful to the Shafi`ite school of jurisprudence.

1.i. On Jurisprudence:

Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote several books on *fiqh*, according to the Shafi`ite school, during the time regarded by Maurice Bouyges as the first period of public teaching (478 A.H./1085 C.E.-488 A.H./1095

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C.E.).[285] These books, which were considered his first writings, include *Al-Basit*, *Al-Wasit*, *Al-Wajiz* and *Khulasat Al-Mukhtasar*. In addition, he issued tens of separate rulings [*fatawa*] in the area of *fiqh*. One hundred ninety of these rulings were gathered in one manuscript which remains unpublished.[286]

Ibn Khallikan stated that Al-Ghazzaliyy borrowed the names of the the first three books, in the same order, from Al-Wahidiyy Al-Mufassir[287] (d.468 A.H./1074 C.E.) who wrote three books on the interpretation of the Qur'an.[288]

These three books of Al-Ghazzaliyy were practically the same as one another. The first in the series was *Al-Basit* [The Simple]. Realizing that this book included unnecessary details and examples which made it difficult for students to read, Al-Ghazzaliyy decided to write a shorter version which he called *Al-Wasit* [The Median]. According to him, *Al-Wasit*, which was written as a textbook, is half the size of *Al-Basit*. In addition, Al-Ghazzaliyy set forth a rule for writing when he explicitly said that "deciding the goal [of a book] should be according to the ability of the student."[289] This rule reflects Al-Ghazzaliyy's exceptional talent as an educator. Later on,

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285 Badawi, p.xvi.
286 Badawi, p. 46.
287 `Ali Ibn Hasan Ibn Ahmad Ibn `Ali Ibn Buwayh Al-Wahidiyy. He died in Nishapur when Al-Ghazzaliyy was studying there, which explains the borrowing.
288 Ibn Kathir, vol.2, p. 114.
289 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Wasit*, Ali Muhyid-Din Al-Qarah Daghi, ed.(Cairo: Dar An-Nasr Lit-Tiba`ah Al-Islamiyyah, 1984) vol. 1, p. 296

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Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote a further abridgement which he named *Al-Wajiz* [The Concise].

The fourth book that Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote on jurisprudence during this period was *Khulasat Al-Mukhtasar* [The Extract of the Compendium]. This book was simply an abridgement of the *Mukhtasar* of Al-Muzaniyy (d. 264 A.H./878 C.E.).[290] Al-Murtada Az-Zubaydiyy stated that Al-Ghazzaliyy did not work directly on the original book of Al-Muzaniyy, but rather on an intermediate work which was also an abridgment written by Al-Juwainiyy (d. 438 A.H./1047 C.E.), father of Imam Al-Haramayn Al-Juwainiyy, teacher of Al-Ghazzaliyy.[291] According to Al-Ghazzaliyy, this book was his smallest contribution to jurisprudence.[292]

The contributions of Al-Ghazzaliyy in *fiqh* are to be expected. After all, his position at the Nizamiyyah school was given only to scholars of the Shafi`ite school of jurisprudence. It was apparent from his writings in *fiqh* that they were intended as text books. Al-Ghazzaliyy dedicated most of his time for teaching and writing. He used his "spare time" to pursue the goal that he designated for himself: his quest for true knowledge.[293]

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290 Abu Ibrahim Isma`il Al-Muzaniyy, a companion of Ash-Shafi`iyy. The full title of his book is *Mukhtasar Min `Ilm Al-Imam An-Nafis Muhammad Ibn Idris*.

291 Abu Muhammad `Abdallah Ibn Yusuf Al-Juwainiyy.

292 Badawi, p. 31.

293 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 95.

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1.ii. On the Methods of Debate:

Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote four books on debates in the field of jurisprudence-- *Al-Muntahal Fi `Ilm Al-Jadal, Ma'akhidh Al-Khilaf, Lubab An-Nazar* and *Tahsin Al-Ma'akhidh* -- were all written as a result of a trend dominant in his time. Concerning that trend, he said in *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm*:

> "Because aspirations during our age were almost exclusively inclined to jurisprudence, I was led to write books in the methods of debate [*Al-Munazara*].[294]

The fact that Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote many books on debate, and that he spent much time in debating others at the "Camp" of Nizam Al-Mulk, show his personal interest in debates which could not be considered, strictly speaking, part of his quest for knowledge. Al-Ghazzaliyy held that unless the debating parties adhered to etiquette of debate [*adab al-munazarah*] as he outlined in his books, these debates would lead to animosity and hatred.[295] It seems that Al-Ghazzaliyy did not consider debate to be a very positive activity. Indeed, when he visited the tomb of prophet Ibrahim [Abraham] in Hebron after his departure from Baghdad, which marked a new era in his thought, Al-Ghazzaliyy despised debating and made a pledge never again to debate any one.[296]

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294 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm*. p. 27.
295 Qadri Hafiz Tuqan, *Al-`Ulum `Ind Al-`Arab* (Beirut: Dar Iqra', 1983) p. 189.
296 Qarah Daghi, vol. 1, p. 118.

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1.iii. On the Fundamentals of Jurisprudence:

On *Usul Al-Fiqh*, Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote two books during the same period: *Al-Mabadi' Wal-Ghayat* and *Shifa' Al-Ghalil Fi Al-Qiyas Wat-Ta`lil*. The first book was lost, and what little information there is about it comes from two references in other writings of Al-Ghazzaliyy. Badawi claimed the subject of *Al-Mabadi' Wal-Ghayat* was *Usul Al-Fiqh*. Such a claim was disputed, but given the scant information, it is virtually impossible to settle the debate regarding even its subject matter.

There are many manuscripts of the second book, *Shifa' Al-`Alil Fi Al-Qiyas Wat-Ta`lil*, which was edited by Hamad Al-Kabisi.[297] Although this book was unique in comparison to other books on the fundamentals of jurisprudence, still it did not rise to the level which *Al-Mustasfa* reached later. The latter incorporated logic as a separate entity, which marked an especially important stage in the development of Al-Ghazzaliyy's thought. A full account of *Al-Mustasfa* will be provided in chapter six.

2. Al-Ghazzaliyy's Skepticism:

In *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal*, Al-Ghazzaliyy stated that he broke away from conformism [*taqlid*] which he understood as accepting knowledge as true based upon the authority of parents and

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297 This book was published by Dar Al-Irshad in Baghdad in 1971. Qarah Daghi, p. 202.

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teachers. He found this authority to be unreliable because it could not be the case that parents and teachers were providing true knowledge while at the same time being responsible for the differences among children (i.e. among the rearing of Jews, Christians or Muslims).[298]

As a result, Al-Ghazzaliyy sought to distinguish between true and false knowledge. To do that, he realized that he should determine the nature of true knowledge. In a statement that reflected his appreciation of mathematics, Al-Ghazzaliyy said that primary knowledge should be indubitable in the same way as mathematics (i.e. ten is greater than three).[299]

Next, Al-Ghazzaliyy scrutinized all his cognitions in search for knowledge that would meet the previous description, but he found himself devoid of any such knowledge except in the case of sensibles [*al-hissiyyat*][300] and the self evident truths [*ad-daruriyyat*].[301] Although these two areas appeared clear and assuring, Al-Ghazzaliyy wanted to make sure that he did not have a false sense of security

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298 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 81-82.

299 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 82.

300 In his translation of *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal, Freedom and Fulfillment*, R. J. McCarthy used "sense-data" to translate "*al-hissyyat*". It was Bertrand Russell who was first to use "sense-data" linguistically to express the contents of sensations. For Russell, there is an element of immediacy associated with the concept of "sense-data" which Al-Ghazzaliyy's idea of sensibles [*hissyyat*] lacks. Thus, I have departed from McCarthy's translation.

301 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment* [*Al-Munqidh*], p. 64.

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like the one he had previously with knowledge that he received from parents and teachers.[302]

With great seriousness, Al-Ghazzaliyy started meditating on sensibles and self evident knowledge. He wanted to see whether he could doubt them. As a result, he concluded:

> "This protracted effort to induce doubt [*tashakkuk*] finally brought me to the point where my soul would not allow me to admit safety from error even in the case of sensibles. It began to give ground to doubt [*tattasi`u lish-shak*] and to say: Whence comes your reliance on sensibles?"[303]

In a rather beautiful style, Al-Ghazzaliyy presented these reflections in the form of dialogue with his personified soul which brought to his attention examples from sight, the strongest of the sensibles, in order to prove that he could not rely on the senses. One example was the case of shadow where sight "looks at shadow and sees it standing still and motionless and judges that motion must be denied. Then, due to experience and observation, an hour later it [the soul] knows that the shadow is moving, and that it did not move in a sudden spurt, but so gradually and imperceptibly that it was never completely at rest". His soul showed him that on this and similar

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302 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 83.

303 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, p. 64. See also, Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 84.

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sensibles, the sense-judge [*hakim al-hiss*] deemed them to be true. But soon, the reason-judge [*hakim al-`aql*] "refutes it and repeatedly gives it the lie in an incontrovertible fashion".[304]

After doubting sensibles, Al-Ghazzaliyy describes himself as provisionally thinking that he could only trust rational data [*al-`aqliyyat*] which belong to primary truths [*al-uwwaliyyat*]. These primary truths would consist of mathematical and logical truths. He said:

> "My reliance on sensibles has also become untenable. Perhaps, therefore, I can rely only on those rational data which belong to the category of primary truths, such as our asserting that 'Ten is more than three' and 'One and the same thing cannot be simultaneously affirmed and denied' and 'One and the same thing cannot be incipient and eternal, existent and nonexistent, necessary and impossible.' "[305]

At this stage, as Al-Ghazzaliyy found himself trusting rational data, a challenge was posed by the sensibles which also showed up as a personified character. It addressed Al-Ghazzaliyy and disputed his acceptance of rational data. Its argument was based upon drawing similarities between his previous acceptance of sensibles and his later approval of rational data as the only trustworthy knowledge.

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304 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, pp. 64-65.
305 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, p. 65.

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Al-Ghazzaliyy's doubt of sensibles was the outcome of the presence of a higher faculty, namely, the judge of reason. Why then could it not be the case that there were yet another judge higher than that of reason which, if manifested, would render reason doubtable? "The sensibles" also argued, even though this other judge was not revealed, this did not indicate the impossibility of its existence.[306]

Al-Ghazzaliyy next described himself as puzzled and not knowing what to say. "The sensibles" reinforced its position by appealing to dreams where it said:

> "Don't you see that when you are asleep you believe certain things and imagine certain circumstances and believe they are fixed and lasting and entertain no doubts about that being their status? Then you wake up and know that all your imaginings and beliefs were groundless and unsubstantial. So while everything you believe through sensation or intellection in your waking state may be true in relation to that state, what assurance have you that you may not suddenly experience a state which would have the same relation to your waking state as the latter has into your dreaming in relation to that new and further state? If you found yourself in such a

306 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 85.

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state, you would be sure that all your rational beliefs were unsubstantial fancies."[307]

Al-Ghazzaliyy considered that the latter state might be the one that the Sufis claim as theirs. They alleged to "see, in their states, conditions that are not compatible with rational data."[308] In addition, he cited a part of a verse from the Qur'an whose meaning could be translated as: "We have removed your veil and today your sight is acute."[309] For Al-Ghazzaliyy, this verse indicated that one would see things differently after death and, thus, life could be nothing but a long dream of which one could wake up only after death.

Al-Ghazzaliyy tried to find a solution to this complex situation, but he could not. He stated that any proof used would consist of primary knowledge that was already doubted. Unable to find an answer, Al-Ghazzaliyy said that he found himself in a state of skepticism which lasted close to two months.[310]

During these two months, Al-Ghazzaliyy described his situation as that of a skeptic who denied the possibility of knowledge, as indicated in the title of this chapter of *Al-Munqidh* : "The Avenues for Sophistry and the Denial of the Sciences" [*Madakhil As-Safsatah*

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307 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, p. 65.
308 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 85.
309 Qur'an, 50: 22
310 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 85-86.

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Wa Jahd Al-`Ulum].[311] He said that he contained this skepticism within himself, giving it neither utterance nor composition.[312] It indeed appears true that he did not allow his skepticism to influence his lectures or writing. Thus, Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained two lines of intellectual activity: the first was in pursuit of true knowledge and the second was within conventional areas of study.

Al-Ghazzaliyy described his state of skepticism as a "sickness", the remedy for which "was not the result of arranging proofs or organizing words." Rather, he claimed that he was healed by "a light [*nur*], that Allah Most High cast into [his] chest". At this stage, Al-Ghazzaliyy regained his trust in logical necessities. He added that "this light was the key to most of the cognitions [*ma`arif*]."[313]

In a language that could only be described as that of Sufism, Al-Ghazzaliyy defended the possibility of knowledge through unveiling [*kashf*], which was the outcome of divine illumination. By *kashf*, he meant attaining knowledge directly (i.e. from Allah). Therefore, he wrote "whoever restricts the unveiling of truth to formulated proofs has indeed strained the broad mercy of Allah."[314]

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311 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 83.
312 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 86.
313 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p.86.
314 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, p. 66.

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3. Skepticism and the Classes of Seekers:

The section on Al-Ghazzaliyy's skepticism in *Al-Munqidh* is extremely important for any attempt to comprehend the development in Al-Ghazzaliyy's thought. This is especially true because he placed this section before the chapter on the classes of seekers [*Asnaf At-Talibin*] in which he described the next phase of his quest for true knowledge in a fragmented frame of time.[315] As such, the section on skepticism forms the background to his assessment of the classes of seekers.

In his search for the methodology that leads for true knowledge, Al-Ghazzaliyy looked into the belief and creed of every sect and group--including Manichaeans[316] [*zanadiqah*], where he sought the background of this position which he considered so bold.[317] Eventually, after being relieved of skepticism, he narrowed his search to four groups: the dialectical theologians, the esoterics,

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315 Al-Ghazzaliyy spent three years studying philosophy and six months in his "spiritual crisis" which took place right before he left the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad at the end of 488 AH/1095 CE. By deducting three and half years, to which one should add the time Al-Ghazzaliyy spent in studying and writing about the dialectical theologians [*Al-Mutakallimun*] and the esoterics [*Al-Batiniyyah*], I would say that Al-Ghazzaliyy's skepticism took place after his arrival at the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad in 484 AH/1091 CE.

316 Another possible meaning for *zanadiqah* is "nihilists", and another is "dualists", for the Manicheans to whom the term *zanadiqah* was frequently used were thoroughgoing dualists.

317 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 79-81.

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the philosophers and the *Sufis*.[318] Before analyzing each of these groups in detail, he listed and described each of them briefly:

> 1. The dialectical theologians [Al-*Mutakallimun*], who claim [*yadda`un*] that they are men of independent judgment and reasoning.
>
> 2. The esoterics [Batinites], who allege [*yaz`umun*] to be the unique possessors of learning and the privileged recipients of knowledge acquired from the Infallible Imam.
>
> 3. The philosophers, who allege [*yaz`umun*] that they are the men of logic and apodictic demonstration.
>
> 4. The Sufis, who claim [*yadda`un*] to be the familiars of the Divine Presence and the men of mystic vision and illumination.[319]

Careful attention to the language that Al-Ghazzaliyy used in this classification reveals that he regarded the four independent groups as actually forming two pairs. He used only two verbs in expressing what the groups had to say. He applied the verb "*yadda`un*" [claim], which is neutral, to *Al-Mutakallimun* and the Sufis, but the verb "*yaz`umun*" [allege], which has a subtle negative tone, to the Batinites

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318 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 89.

319 For this part of *Al-Munqidh*, I have used the translation of McCarthy with slight changes pertaining to the words 'claim' and 'allege'. *Freedom and Fulfillment*, p. 67.

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and the philosophers. It is evident, therefore, that Al-Ghazzaliyy had already taken a position that was favourable to two of the four groups. Furthermore, Al-Ghazzaliyy was convinced that only one of these four groups must have the methodology that leads to true knowledge and if not, he believed that his case was hopeless. He felt that he was compelled to proceed in his quest because there was no way to return to conformism. Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained that once someone becomes conscious of his status as a conformist, it becomes imperative for this person to be independent and to search for true knowledge on his own. It should be noted that Al-Ghazzaliyy exempted from this obligation a conformist [*muqallid*] who is not aware of himself as being one.[320]

4. On Dialectical Theology [*`Ilm Al-Kalam*]:

After going through the period of skepticism, Al-Ghazzaliyy continued his quest for true knowledge. He first considered the dialectical theologians, the first of the classes of seekers [*asnaf at-talibin*].[321] The roots of Dialectical theology [*kalam*], or Islamic Scholasticism as it is sometimes called, emerged early in Islamic history but gained considerable momentum with the introduction of Greek philosophy in the eighth and ninth centuries.[322]

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320 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 89-90.
321 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 89.
322 Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970) p. 56.

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Al-Ghazzaliyy was familiar with the methodology and the notions that *Al-Mutakallimun* [the dialectical theologians] dealt with because of his close ties with the Asha`irites. The latter were the heirs of *Kalam* when the Mu`tazilites surrendered their leadership of Islamic theology to what might be called the Salafiyyah school which was headed by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (d. 241 A.H./855 C.E.).[323] Al-Ghazzaliyy studied *`Ilm Al-kalam*, read the books of their scholars and finally wrote about the subject. What he found was that the aim of *Al-Mutakallimun* differed from his. They aimed at the preservation of the creed of the Sunnites. He was searching for that group which aimed at truth without resorting to conformism, of which *Al-Mutakallimun* were not devoid.[324]

Al-Ghazzaliyy admitted that *Al-Mutakallimun* were successful in attaining their goal which was defending the Shari`ah, but also that they attempted to study the true nature of things. As a result, they researched the notions of substances and accidents, yet without reaching the ultimate goal [*al-ghayah al-quswa*] in this field. Al-Ghazzaliyy explained the latter position by stating that "since that [studying Aristotelian categories] was not the aim of their [*Al-Mutakallimun*] science, their search did not achieve the ultimate goal

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323 The Mu`tazilites and Ahmad Ibn Hanbal were rivals for a long time. The issue at stake was the question whether the Qur'an, being the word of Allah, was created or eternal? The Mu`tazilites, who were politically influential during the reign of Al-Ma'mun (d. 223 AH/833 AD) and the subsequent two caliphs, advocated the notion that the Qur'an was created, a position declared heretical by Ibn Hanbal. Fakhry, pp. 79-80.

324 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 91.

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in it."[325] The interpretation of "ultimate goal" here could be understood in Aristotelian terms. The general meaning of Al-Ghazzaliyy's argument is that the dialectical theologians did not reach complete understanding of the Aristotelian categories.

Al-Ghazzaliyy's conflict with *Al-Mutakallimun* resulted from their appropriation of arguments from the theses of their antagonists. Of this Al-Ghazzaliyy said:

> "But in so doing [protecting religion] they relied on premises which they took over from their adversaries, being compelled to admit them either by uncritical acceptance, or because of the Community's consensus [*ijma`*], or by simple acceptance deriving from the Qur'an and the Traditions. Most of their polemic was devoted to bringing out the inconsistencies of their adversaries and criticizing them for the logically absurd consequences of what they conceded. This, however, is of little use in the case of one [i.e. Al-Ghazzaliyy] who admits nothing at all except the primary and self-evident truths".[326]

It is clear that at this stage Al-Ghazzaliyy restricted his acceptance to primary and self-evident truths and denied the same status to the sources of Islamic Shari`ah: the Qur'an, Traditions and the consensus

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325 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 93.
326 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, pp. 68-69.

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of the companions of the prophet.[327] This fact shows that Al-Ghazzaliyy was consistent in his position. He wanted to find an objective truth that would "provide an effective means of dispelling entirely the darkness due to the bewilderment about the differences dividing men".[328]

5. Al-Ghazzaliyy's Encounter with Philosophy:

According to *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal*, Al-Ghazzaliyy stated that in his quest for true knowledge he started studying philosophy after he was done with *`Ilm Al-Kalam* (which did not provide the remedy for which he was looking). In his introduction to the section on philosophy he outlined his approach to this new field. He wanted to pursue the science of philosophy to a level higher than that of the most knowledgeable in the field. Only then, he argued, could one know the intricate depths of the science.[329]

Al-Ghazzaliyy was aware that he could not rely on secondary sources, such as those of *Al-Mutakallimun*, in order to study philosophy. For him, their books included fragmented philosophical words that were complex and contradictory to one another. Instead, he decided to read books of philosophy directly without the assistance of a teacher. Although he was teaching three hundred

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327 The consensus of the companions of the prophet became, in later generations, the consensus of the scholars [*Ijma` Al-`Ulama'*] at any given time.

328 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, p. 69.

329 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 94.

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students at the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad and writing in the Islamic revealed sciences [*Al-`Ulum Ash-Shar`iyyah*] at the same time, in his spare time Al-Ghazzaliyy was able to master philosophy in less than two years. He continued reflecting on it for almost another year.[330] He reached the level where he became so familiar with the measure of its precisions as well as its deceits, deceptions and delusions, that he had no doubt about his thorough grasp of it.[331]

As a result of his study he wrote two books: *Maqasid Al-Falasifah* [The Aims of the Philosophers] and *Tahafut Al-Falasifah* [The Incoherence of the Philosophers]. It was Al-Ghazzaliyy's intention to write a book which would encompass the thought of the philosophers without criticizing or adding anything to it. This book was to be followed by another (i.e. *Tahafut Al-Falasifah*) that would include his critique of the contents of the first one. It was this latter work that prompted Ibn Rushd[332] to write (around 576 A.H./1180 C.E.), *Tahafut At-Tahafut* [The Incoherence of the Incoherence] which constituted a systematic rebuttal of Al-Ghazzaliyy's critique of this melange of Greco-Islamic Philosophy.[333]

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330 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 94-95.

331 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, p. 70.

332 The full name of Ibn Rushd, who is known in Latin as Averroes, was Abu Al-Walid Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Rushd. He was born in 520 AH/1126 CE and died 595 AH/1198 CE.

333 Fakhry, p. 307.

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Maqasid Al-Falasifah (which according to Brockelmann was written in 488 A.H./1095 C.E.[334]) was a pioneer work in its attempt to deliberately present an objective account of the thought of adversaries without the inclusion of the author's ideas. Al-Ghazzaliyy wanted to introduce philosophy as the philosophers knew it. Of this objective, he said:

> "I thought that I should introduce, prior to the *Tahafut*, a concise account that will include the story of their aims [*Maqasid*] which will be derived from their logical, natural and metaphysical sciences, without distinguishing between what is right and what is wrong, without additions and along with what they believed as their proofs".[335]

The works of Al-Ghazzaliyy began to be translated into Latin before the middle of the sixth/twelfth century.[336] Of these, *Maqasid Al-Falasifah* was so influential in Latin Europe that Fr. Manuel Alonso listed forty four theologians and philosophers, including St. Thomas Aquinas who himself referred to this book thirty one times.[337]

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334 Badawi, p. 53.
335 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Maqasid Al-Falasifah*, p. 31.
336 M. Saeed Sheikh, *Islamic Philosophy* (London: The Octagon Press, 1982) p. 107.
337 Manuel Alonso: "Influencia de Algazel en el mundo latino", *Al-Andalus*, vol. xxiii, Fasc.2, pp. 371-380. Madrid, 1958. See Badawi, pp. 56-58.

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In *Maqasid Al-Falasifa*, Al-Ghazzaliyy divided the sciences of the philosophers into four major categories: mathematical [*Ar-Riyadiyyat*], logical [*Al-Mantiqiyyat*], natural [*At-Tabi`iyyat*] and metaphysical [*Al-Ilahiyyat*].[338] He listed politics, economy[339] and ethics as subdivisions under metaphysics. In *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal*, he listed politics and ethics as major sections along with the first four.[340]

Regarding mathematics, Al-Ghazzaliyy thought that it dealt with geometry and arithmetic. Neither of these subjects contradicted reason [*al-`aql*]. As a result, Al-Ghazzaliyy did not think that he ought to include a detailed account of mathematics in his book.[341] This way of treating mathematics shows that reason was the criterion that Al-Ghazzaliyy applied when he entertained philosophy.

Al-Ghazzaliyy's basic position regarding metaphysics was that most of what the philosophers believed in this field was contrary to the truth [*al-haq*]. The correct ideas were seldom included. On the other hand, in logic he thought that mistakes were very rare. The philosophers only differed with their Muslim counter parts, whom Al-Ghazzaliyy called *Ahl Al-Haq* [people of truth], in the terminology,

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338 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Maqasid Al-Falasifah*, p.31.

339 For "economy", Al-Ghazzaliyy used *tadbir al-manzil*, management of the house, the literal Arabic translation of *oikonomia* in Greek. The contemporary Arabic translation of economy as a science is *Iqtisad*.

340 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 100.

341 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Maqasid Al-Falasifah*, pp. 31-32.

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not in the meanings. As for natural science, he held that it comprised a melange of true and false notions.[342]

Al-Ghazzaliyy's judgement regarding metaphysics needs some clarification. In *Tahafut Al-Falasifah*, he held that there were mistakes in translating the works of Aristotle which led to a distortions and changes in the Arabic texts. These mistakes prompted the Islamic philosophers to interpret the philosophical texts in a fashion that caused conflict amongst themselves. In addition, he restricted his discussion of philosophy to the books of Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina. Since Al-Farabi's metaphysics was basically a melange of Neo-Platonism and Aristotelianism, one can see the roots of Al-Ghazzaliyy's position that what the philosophers believed in this field is contrary to the truth.[343]

Al-Ghazzaliyy defined logic as "the law [*qanun*] that distinguishes a sound premise and analogy from a false one, which leads to the discernment of true knowledge"[344] In addition, he reviewed all the subjects of logic including induction [*istiqra'*]. He held that induction could be correct only if all parts [*juz'iyyat*] were covered; if one part could possibly be different, then induction in this case could not yield true knowledge. To prove his point, he used the following argument:

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342 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Maqasid Al-Falasifah*, p. 32.
343 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Tahafut*, pp. 76-77.
344 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Maqasid Al-Falasifah*, p. 36.

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Every animal is a human being, mare, etc.

Every human being moves his lower jaw when he chews.

Every mare moves its lower jaw when it chews.

And every [animal] other than these two move its lower jaw when it chews.

The conclusion: every animal moves its lower jaws.

Al-Ghazzaliyy said that if one animal differs, as is the case with the crocodile which moves its upper jaws, then the conclusion does not yield true knowledge. So, by parts he means members of the same species or group as in the case of "mare", "human being" and "crocodile". Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained that induction was suitable for matters of jurisprudence [*fiqhiyyat*], but not for true knowledge.[345] This suggests that Al-Ghazzaliyy accepted induction for practical reasons, but not as a source of true knowledge.

In addition to his review of logic in *Maqasid Al-Falasifah*, Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote several books on logic during this period. He wrote *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm Fi fann Al-Mantiq* (The Criterion of Knowledge in the Art of Logic), *Mihak An-Nazar Fi Al-Mantiq* (The Touch-Stone of Reasoning in Logic) and *Mizan Al-`Amal* (The Balance of Action).[346]

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345 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Maqasid Al-Falasifah*, pp. 89-90.
346 Badawi, p. xvi.

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It was argued that the first book, *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm Fi Fann Al-Mantiq*, was the last part of *Tahafut Al-Falasifah*. Unlike Ibn Sina who began his *Al-Isharat Wat-Tanbihat* with a discussion of logic,[347] Al-Ghazzaliyy stated that he was going to write the *kitab* [348] of *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm* at the end of *Tahafut Al-Falasifah*. One can see that whether they comprise one or two books depends on how to interpret the word *kitab*. If it is interpreted as chapter, then there is one book; if it is interpreted as book, then they are two. Regardless of the latter issue, Al-Ghazzaliyy placed *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm* "after" the *Tahafut* in order that those who were already familiar with logic could commence with his criticism of philosophy directly. For those who did not understand the vocabulary that he used in responding to the philosophers, Al-Ghazzaliyy instructed them to start with *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm*.[349]

Despite the fact that Al-Ghazzaliyy wanted his presentation of metaphysics and logic in the *Tahafut* and *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm* to be different from their order in Ibn Sina's *Al-Isharat wat-tanbihat*, Marmura argues that "much of the account of demonstration in the *Mi`yar* seems to be a faithful summary of Avicenna's *Demonstration*

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347 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm*, Ahmad Shams Ad-Din, ed. (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-`Ilmiyyah, 1990) p. 11.
348 The word *kitab* is used in classical Arabic literature to indicate, among many other meanings, either a book or a chapter.
349 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Tahafut Al-Falasifah*, Sulaiman Dunya, ed. (Cairo: Dar Al-Ma`arif, 1972) p. 85.

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[*Al-Isharat*] which in turn is an exposition and an enlargement of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*."[350]

There was yet another purpose for *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm*. Al-Ghazzaliyy intended that the relationship between logic and thought to be analogous to that between meter [*`arud*] and poetry. For him, the theoretical sciences [*al-`ulum an-nazariyyah*], which correspond to "thought" in the above analogy, were not innate but rather acquired [*mustahsalah*]. Al-Ghazzaliyy realized that the process of acquiring knowledge resulted in many mistakes in reasoning which required a criterion for science [*mi`yar lin-nazar*] which corresponds to logic.[351]

One of the most important claims in *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm* was Al-Ghazzaliyy's assertion that, in every person, there were three judges: a sensible judge [*hakim hissiyy*], an illusionist judge [*hakim wahmiyy*][352] and a rational judge [*hakim `aqliyy*]. He declared the rational judge to be the only correct one.[353] This suggests that *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm* must have been written after the end of his two months of skepticism, for only then had he regained his trust in logical necessities.[354]

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350 Michael Marmura, "Ghazali and Demonstrative Science," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* III (1965): 189.

351 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mi`yar*, p. 26.

352 Al-Ghazzaliyy defined the judge of illusion in terms of its false judgement such as denying the existence of a being that one "cannot point to its direction", which indicates a being that is spaceless.

353 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mi`yar*, p. 29.

354 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 86.

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The language that Al-Ghazzaliyy used in his introduction to discuss the above position in *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm* was somewhat similar to the one he used later on in *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal*. In *Al-Munqidh*, Al-Ghazzaliyy portrayed the different faculties, including the senses, discernment and reason according to their natural evolution in the human being. But he did not mention the illusion judge [*al-hakim al-wahmiyy*] and restricted himself to the sensible judge [*al-hakim al-hissiyy*] and the rational judge [*al-hakim al-`aqliyy*].[355] The idea of *al-hakim al-wahmiyy* was not an original idea of Al-Ghazzaliyy. He borrowed the concept, along with that of the imaginative [*khayaliyyah*] and thinking [*mufakkirah*] powers, from the philosophers.[356] He differed from the philosophers, however, by attempting to justify his usage of these concepts through texts of the Shari`ah [the Qur'an and the Sunnah] or even with *Athar*.[357]

The second book on logic, *Mihak An-Nazar Fi Al-Mantiq*, was written as a shorter, refined version of *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm Fi Fann Al-Mantiq* which was not circulated when it was written because it needed some clarification.[358]

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355 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 83-85.

356 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Tahafut*, pp. 252-253.

357 *Athar* indicate narrations about the early generations of Muslims. These *athar* were never considered as part of the Shari`ah. An example of Al-Ghazzaliyy's use of *athar* was an account about Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, on page 32 of *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm*.

358 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mihak An-Nazar Fi Al-Mantiq*, Muhammad Badr Ad-Din An-Na`saniyy, ed. (Beirut: Dar An-Nahdah Al-Hadithah, 1966) p. 145.

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At the end of *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm*, Al-Ghazzaliyy stated his intention to write a book which would provide a criterion for action [*Mizan Al-`Amal*][359] just as *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm* was a criterion for knowledge.[360] Al-Ghazzaliyy reiterated the same concept in his introduction to *Mizan Al-`Amal* where he discussed happiness. For him, there were two conditions for the attainment of happiness: knowledge and action. He said that he intended to discuss the action which leads to happiness in a way that transcended conformism [*taqlid*] in accordance with the conditions he set forth in *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm*, and planned to begin it with a brief summary of the fundamentals of his criterion of knowledge.[361]

Al-Ghazzaliyy stated that happiness consisted in the life hereafter; i.e., the eternal.[362] Thus he revealed his sympathy with the position of the Sufi leaders regarding eternal happiness, who held that happiness should not be thought of merely as the attainment of paradise or the avoidance of hellfire. They considered such aspirations crass, since there was a more honorable aim.[363] Al-Ghazzaliyy explained this aim as unveiling [*kashf*] divine matters through divine inspiration [*ilham*]. He stated, citing the case of the Qur'an, that knowledge is never conveyed directly from Allah to

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359 The literal translation of *Mizan Al-`Amal* is *The Balance for Action.*
360 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mi`yar*, p. 334.
361 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mizan Al-`Amal*, Sulaiman Dunya, ed. (Cairo: Dar Al-Ma`arif Bi-Masr, 1964) p. 179.
362 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mizan*, p. 180.
363 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mizan*, p. 185.

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human beings; this act takes place indirectly (i.e. by angels).[364] The position of the Sufi leaders, however, contradicts the Qur'an which considers seeking paradise or the avoidance of hellfire to be legitimate.[365] By agreeing with the Sufi leaders, Al-Ghazzaliyy's position could be interpreted as contradictory to that of the Qur'an. It should be noted that Al-Ghazzaliyy, under the influence of Sufism, differed with the Qur'an and the Sunnah if these texts are to be taken literally (i.e., in their *Al-Ma'akhidh* sense).

In addition to his emphasis on the correlation between happiness and the noetic elements in *kashf*, as he explained above, Al-Ghazzaliyy said that the happiness of anything lies in its perfection. He understood this perfection, in the case of the human beings, to be perceiving the reality of the intelligibles [*ma`qulat*], as they are in themselves [*`ala ma hya `alayh*], without the interference of illusions and the sensibles.[366] It appears that he was hinting at divine inspiration as a source of knowledge that is not hindered by illusions or sensibles.

Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained that in order to receive this divine inspiration, one should purify his soul from whatever lust he has. After conquering bodily lust and freeing himself from it's slavery, one should start spiritual exercise [*riyadah*].[367] To support his

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364 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mizan*, p. 205.
365 Qur'an, 21:90, and 32: 16.
366 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mizan*, pp. 195-196.
367 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mizan*, pp. 196-197.

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argument on the purification of the soul, Al-Ghazzaliyy quoted a verse from the Qur'an which promises success for the one who purifies her/his soul.[368]

If someone does not receive such divine inspiration, Al-Ghazzaliyy asserted that this person is to be blamed. To explain this, he provided the following metaphorical example:

> "There is nothing in the colored picture to prevent it from being reflected in iron; the veil is in the rust and in the lack of a polisher to clean it."[369]

Similarly, Al-Ghazzaliyy went on to say, not only should one polish the mirror by cleaning the dirt if he would like it to reflect pictures, but he should also face it in the direction of what he would like this mirror to reflect.[370] By "mirror" Al-Ghazzaliyy meant the soul, by "dirt," worldly desires and by "picture," divine knowledge.

Al-Ghazzaliyy believed in the possibility of changing human behavior. He thought that if it was possible to change the nature of animals (i.e. taming them), then one must not deny human beings the same possibility.[371] He stated that human beings have the potential to reach the level were they can acquire truth. If they strive hard enough against their desires, they can reach the level of the angels.

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368 Qur'an, 91: 9.
369 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mizan*, p. 208.
370 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mizan*, p. 218.
371 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mizan*, p. 247.

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And if they allow dirt to accumulate on the mirror of the soul, by following their desires, they join the ranks of the animals.[372]

To change one's character, the person should attain virtue which could be achieved in two ways. The first is through what Al-Ghazzaliyy called human education [*ta`allum bashariyy*] which involves the will and needs time and practice according to the ability of the person involved. The second way takes place through "divine grace [*jawd ilahiyy*] where the human being becomes knowledgeable at birth as `Isa Ibn Maryam [Jesus son of Mary] and Yahya Ibn Zakariyya [John the Baptist] in addition to the other prophets. Also, it was said that this [knowledge] might be given to non-prophets."[373]

Al-Ghazzaliyy's discussion of virtue is clearly Aristotelian in its inspiration, with many concepts that can be traced back to *Nicomachean Ethics*. He stated that the soul has two powers: the rational [*al-`aqliyyah*] and the practical intellect [*al-`aql al-`amaliyy*]. The first one is responsible for receiving "theoretical practical wisdom" [*al-hikmah al-`amaliyyah an-nazariyyah*][374] which he defined as truths that are absolute and do not change because of time or place. The second is the practical intellect which attains

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372 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mizan*, p. 218.

373 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mizan*, p. 257.

374 Aristotle distinguished between "theoretical" and "practical wisdom". Nevertheless, we can see that Al-Ghazzaliyy was inspired by Aristotle's discussion of these two concepts; he departed from Aristotle by bringing these two categories together. See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Martin Ostwald, trans. and ed. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merill Educational Publishing, 1983) pp. 147-173.

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moral wisdom [*al-hikmah al-khuluqiyyah*]. This moral wisdom is related to the lower part of the soul which Al-Ghazzaliyy defined as that which addresses the concerns of the body.[375]

Al-Ghazzaliyy believed that all virtues could be classified under four major categories: wisdom, courage, chastity and justice. He maintained that a virtue is a median [*wasat*] that falls between two vices: excess and deficiency. Similar to the position of Aristotle, Al-Ghazzaliyy exempted justice from the above rule, stating that justice has only one extreme which is injustice.[376]

Mizan Al-`Amal* can be placed in the development of Al-Ghazzaliyy's epistemology by means of his statement about the composition of this book-- namely, that most of what is in *Mizan Al-`Amal is based upon the Sufi way. In response to a previous question about whether Al-Ghazzaliyy's account of Sufism in this book reflects his own belief, he said that he was only reporting it.[377] Nevertheless, one can see his inclination towards Sufism in many places.

Al-Ghazzaliyy ended *Mizan Al-`Amal* in the same way he started it. There was a lengthy yet very important invitation to abandon conformism [*taqlid*]:

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375 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mizan*, p. 265.
376 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mizan*, pp. 264-273.
377 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mizan*, p. 358.

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> "Do not look at the [available] schools [as sources of knowledge], and seek truth through research, so you will have your own school. Do not be like a blind person imitating a leader who guides you to a way, while you are surrounded by a thousand leaders similar to yours, who are telling you that he rushed you into danger and that he misled you away from the right path. You will eventually know the injustice of your leader. There is no salvation except in independence."[378]

Al-Ghazzaliyy added that it would be good enough if the above words lead the reader to doubt his inherited belief, so he may begin searching for truth because "doubts lead to the truth, and he who does not doubt, does not look, and he who does not look does not see, and he who does not see lingers blind and astray."[379]

6. Al-Ghazzaliyy's Critique of Philosophy:

After Al-Ghazzaliyy reported the core of philosophy as he understood it in *Maqasid Al-Falasifah*, he followed with, *Tahafut Al-Falasifah*. The latter was written basically as a critique of the metaphysics of the ancient [i.e. Greek] philosophers.[380] Although Al-Ghazzaliyy mentioned Aristotle's name in particular,[381] he restricted

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378 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mizan*, p. 409.
379 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mizan*, p. 409.
380 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Tahafut*, p. 75.
381 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Tahafut*, p.76.

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his criticism to whatever Al-Farabi (d.339 A.H./950 C.E.)[382] and Ibn Sina (d.428 A.H./1037 C.E.)[383] incorporated in their philosophies.[384] Of the issues they dealt with, he commented on twenty: sixteen in metaphysics and four in the natural sciences.[385] He listed these issues as follow:

1. The refutation of their theory of the eternity of the world.

2. The refutation of their theory of the incorruptibility of the world and of time and of motion.

3. The demonstration of their confusion in saying that Allah is the agent and the maker of the world in His product and act, and the demonstration that these expressions are in their system only metaphors without any real sense.

4. Showing that they are unable to prove the existence of a creator of the world.

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382 The full name of Al-Farabi, who was known in Latin as Alpharabius, was Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Tarkhan Ibn Uzlagh Abu Nasr Al-Farabi. He was born at Wasij, a village near Farab, in 257 AH/870 CE.

383 The full name of Ibn Sina was Abu `Ali Al-Husayn Ibn `Abdullah Ibn Sina. His Latin name was Avicenna. He was born in 370 AH/980 CE.

384 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Tahafut*, pp. 77-78.

385 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Tahafut*, pp. 86-87.

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5. To show their incapacity to prove Allah's oneness and the impossibility of two necessary existents both without a cause.

6. To refute their denial of attributes.

7. To refute their claim that nothing can share with the First its genus, and be differentiated from it through a specific difference, and that with respect to its intellect the division into genus and specific difference cannot be applied to it.

8. To refute their theory that the existence of the First is simple, namely that it is pure existence and that its existence stands in relation to no quiddity and to no essence, but stands to necessary existence as do other beings to their quiddity.

9. To show their incapacity to prove that the First is incorporeal.[386]

10. To prove their incapacity to demonstrate that the world has a creator and a cause, and that in fact they are forced to admit atheism.

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386 Simon Van Den Bergh wrongly translated *Fi ta`jizihim `an bayan anna Al-Awwal laysa bijism* as "To refute their proof that the first is incorporeal." Averroes, *Tahafut At-Tahafut*, Simon Van Den Bergh, trans. and ed. (London: Messrs Luzac and Company, 1954) p. vii.

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11. To show the incapacity of the philosophers to prove what they believe: that the First (i.e., Allah) knows other things besides His own self, and that He knows the genera and the species in a universal way.

12. On the impotence of the philosophers to prove that Allah knows Himself.

13. To refute those who affirm that Allah is ignorant of the individual things which are divided in time into present, past, and future.

14. To refute their proof that heaven is an animal moving in a circle in obedience to Allah.

15. To refute the theory of the philosophers about the aim which moves heaven.

16. To refute the philosophical theory that the souls of the heavens observe all the particular events of this world.

17. The denial of a logical necessity between cause and effect.

18. The impotence of the philosophers to show by demonstrative proof that the soul is a spiritual substance.

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19. Refutation of the philosophers' proof for the immortality of the soul.

20. Concerning the philosophers' denial of bodily resurrection.[387]

Al-Ghazzaliyy declared these philosophers blasphemous on three counts: "their saying that all substances [*jawahir*] are eternal, that Allah does not know particular accidents involving people and their denial of the resurrection of bodies." He held that these three issues "do not fit Islam in any fashion".[388]

In this vein, modern and contemporary scholars have questioned the nature of Islamic philosophy: exactly what is Islamic about it?[389] The only answer, I think, that could reconcile the various positions regarding this issue is the notion that this philosophy is Islamic only in the cultural sense, not in the religious sense. It is Islamic as a product of the Islamic civilization. Thus, "Islamic" in the cultural sense could be applied to every contribution to knowledge that took place anywhere in the land of Islam during

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387 Averroes, *Tahafut At-Tahafut*, pp. vii-viii. I have used Bergh's translation of these twenty issues with some modifications.

388 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Tahafut*, pp. 307-309.

389 An example of this is Leaman's statement:"It is a shame that Islamic philosophy as a topic of interest is at present largely confined to orientalists [e.g. Goldziher, Müller, Munk, Nöldeke, Renan and De Boer] rather than philosophers. The former often have concerns and interpretive methods which are not shared by the latter, and vice versa." See Oliver Leaman, *An Introduction to Medieval Islamic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) p. xi.

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that era, including that of a Jew like Musa Ibn Maymun [Maimonides] or a Christian like Yahia Ibn `Adi.[390] It would be inappropriate to call it Arabic philosophy, since this would imply that those who contributed to it were Arabs; it would be Arabic only in the sense that it was written in the Arabic language. As a matter of fact, those who used Arabic did so because it was *Lingua Franca*. Ibn Khaldun (d. 808 A.H./1406 C.E.) stated in his *Muqaddimah* that in the majority of the sciences, most scholars were non-Arabs [`*Ajam*] except in very rare cases, and in some fields, they were all non-Arabs.[391]

Al-Ghazzaliyy sought to develop a philosophy that is Islamic in its very essence. He knew that in order to do that, he had to establish and verify the epistemology upon which this body of thought depends. In short, this process can be described as an attempt to Islamize knowledge.

In addition to his criticism of the twenty questions that he listed in the introduction of *Tahafut Al-Falasifah*, Al-Ghazzaliyy argued against the methodology and general acceptance of metaphysics by the philosophers in the Islamic world. This is of particular interest because of the original goal that he established for

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390 Yahia Ibn `Adi, also known as the Logician [*Al-Mantiqiyy*], was a tenth century Jacobite theologian and philosopher. He translated Aristotle's *Poetica*, *Sophistica*, *Topica*, and possibly *Metaphysica*. He was credited with a translation of Plato's *Laws*, a commentary on *Topica* and parts of *Physica VIII* and *Mytaphysica*, and the whole of *De Generatione*. In addition, he wrote a series of original philosophical treatises. Fakhry, *History*, p. 28.

391 Ibn Khaldun, *Al-Muqaddimah* (Beirut: Dar Al-Qalam, 1984) pp. 543-545.

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himself; he was still looking for a method that would lead to true knowledge.

His first argument was that the philosophers (i.e. Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina) acquired their thought through habitually communicated conformism [*taqild sama'i ilfi*]. According to Al-Ghazzaliyy, they simply moved from one mode of conformism to another without verification. His second argument was psychological: they accepted Greek philosophy because of the fame of names like Socrates, Hippocrates, Plato and Aristotle.[392] The third was based upon Aristotle's criticism of all his predecessors including Plato, his own teacher, which Al-Ghazzaliyy thought was an indication of an incoherent metaphysical system. In his last argument, Al-Ghazzaliyy accused the philosophers of using the accuracy of logic and mathematics to create a false impression of a sound generalization which would encompass metaphysics because he held that metaphysics lacked precise proofs.[393]

Regarding the fairness of Al-Ghazzaliyy's position, I think that he was consistent in the first point which was directed at the Islamic Philosophers; he rejected conformism or uncritical acceptance of any set of thought including that of Shari'ah. The originality of these philosophers is still a disputed issue. On the second point, I would reiterate the position of Dunya who defended, in his commentary on

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392 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Tahafut*, pp.73-74.
393 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Tahafut*, pp. 76-77.

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the *Tahafut*,[394] the philosophers' order of subjects and thus there is no problem with beginning either with math or logic. Yet, Dunya did not rule out the possibility that Al-Ghazzaliyy had a debate with some philosopher who gave him the impression that the philosophers were entrenching themselves behind a shield of logic and math.[395] The third point is a clear case of a false *ad hominem* argument.

One issue in particular, the seventeenth concerning causality, is especially noteworthy. Long time before David Hume, Al-Ghazzaliyy said that, in his opinion, "the conjunction [*al-iqtiran*] between what is conceived, by way of habit [*fi al-`adah*], as cause and effect is not necessary [*laysa daruryyan*]".[396] He provided a list of pairs that were usually thought of as cause and effect by the philosophers (e.g., fire and burning, light and sunrise, diarrhea and laxatives). For him, the conjunction between them was a result of the sequence in which they were created by Allah, not because this conjunction was necessary in itself. Moreover, he thought that it was possible for either one of these pairs [i.e. fire or burning] to exist without the other.[397] He did not see any logical contradiction since these pairs are the phenomena of nature and nature as such, according to the

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394 Dunya, "Commentary"; *Tahafut*, by Al-Ghazzaliyy, pp. 76-77.
395 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Tahafut*, p. 77.
396 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Tahafut*, p. 239.
397 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Tahafut*, p. 239.

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philosophers' own admission, does not belong to the realm of of necessity but to that of possibility, which may or may not exist.[398]

Al-Ghazzaliyy criticized the philosophers' proof of causality because it was limited to observation [*mushahada*] which depends on the senses [i.e. sight], a source of knowledge that he could not accept on its own merit. Thus Al-Ghazzaliyy's position regarding causality is consistent with his theory of knowledge. Using the example of fire and burning, he said that "observation could only prove that burning took place when there was fire, and not by fire". He held that inert and lifeless objects such as fire are incapable of action and thus cannot be the agent.[399] To prove his point that fire is not the agent [*al-fa`ilah*] that causes burning, Al-Ghazzaliyy used a proof, which is Neoplatonic in its tone, from the arguments of the philosophers. They held that accidents [*a`rad*] and incidents [*hawadith*] emanate, at the time of contact between "bodies", from the provider of forms [*wahib as-suwar*] whom they thought to be an angel.[400] Accordingly, one cannot claim that fire is the agent of burning. In addition, Al-Ghazzaliyy argued that the agent "creates" burning at the time of contact between a cotton ball and fire with his will [*bi'iradatihi*].[401]

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398 In *Tahafut At-Tahafut* Ibn Rushd (Averroes) considered Al-Ghazzaliyy's concept of causality a denial of the efficient cause, which led him to accuse Al-Ghazzaliyy of Sophistry. Sheikh, p.98.

399 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Tahafut*, p. 240.

400 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Tahafut*, p. 242.

401 This particular concept influenced Nicolaus of Autrecourt who argued that "this consequence, namely, 'fire is close to flax and there is no impediment, hence the flax will be consumed,' is not evident by an evidence deduced from the first principle." See, Harry A. Wolfson, "Nicolaus of

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Al-Ghazzaliyy reduced the problem of causality to that of "will" which makes it rationally possible for the agent, whom he held to be Allah, not to create burning even though there is contact.[402]

Al-Ghazzaliyy's presented this theory of causality in order to allow room for the existence of miracles [*mu`jizat*] that were associated with prophets, without resorting to allegorical interpretations as the philosophers did.[403] One of the miracles that he chose as an example, was that of prophet Ibrahim [Abraham].[404] The story was that the people of Ibrahim attempted to punish him for breaking their idols by throwing him into fire but no burning took place. In the Qur'an it was Allah's will that the fire would not harm Ibrahim.[405] Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained that Allah was the agent [*fa`il*] of every action, either directly or indirectly [i.e. by the angels].[406] This deprivation of lifeless objects [i.e. fire] from being the agent can be interpreted as Al-Ghazzaliyy's defence of Allah's omnipotence and free will. Indeed, Ibn Sina held that Allah is the

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Autrecourt and Ghazali's Argument Against Causality," *Speculum* (1969), pp. 234-238.

402 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Tahafut*, pp. 242-243.

403 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Tahafut*, p. 236.

404 This miracle was wrongly disputed by Ilai Alon as the only miracle to be mentioned by Al-Ghazzaliyy in *Tahafut Al-Falasifah* when he discussed causality. Ilai Alon, "Al-Ghazali on Causality", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 100. 4 (1980) p. 402. Al-Ghazzaliyy mentioned three other miracles of Moses, Jesus and Muhammad in chronological order, although he only mentioned the name of Moses in addition to that of Ibrahim which disqualifies Alon's claim. Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Tahafut Al-Falasifah*, p. 236.

405 Qur'an (21: 69). The verse reads: "*Qulna ya naru kuni bardan wa salaman `ala Ibrahim* ". The meaning of it is "We [Allah] said, O Fire! Be cool and peace for Ibrahim"

406 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Tahafut*, pp. 243-247.

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supreme essential efficient cause which indicates that the world is a necessary product of His essence (i.e. He cannot but create the world).[407]

The conclusion that Al-Ghazzaliyy reached after studying philosophy was that this science did not fulfill the aim of his search. In addition, he stated that "reason [*`aql*] is not capable of attaining all the goals nor can it solve all problems".[408] Al-Ghazzaliyy used reason in showing the limitations of reason in his criticism of philosophy, and as such he was paving the way for a source of knowledge other than that of reason. Al-Ghazzaliyy's position towards reason had resemblance to the course Kant took in showing the limitations of reason, although in a different way since Kant attempted to reconcile the position of the rationalists and the empiricists (i.e. Descartes and Hume).[409] Eventually, as it will be shown below in the section on Sufism, Al-Ghazzaliyy wanted to establish a faculty higher than that of reason which drew on the same source of knowledge as prophets. This stance of Al-Ghazzaliyy was an attempt to place prophecy above reason, a position which was antagonistic to that of the Muslim philosophers who raised reason above prophecy.

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407 Marmurah, p. 186.

408 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 117-118.

409 In addition to the above similarity between Kant and Al-Ghazzaliyy, although not identical there are other mutual interests of both thinkers. Kant states in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that he was seeking to provide room for faith and morality, a position that is celebrated in much of Al-Ghazzaliyy's writings.

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It has been suggested that Al-Ghazzaliyy was affected in a more substantive way by his review and subsequent critique of philosophy. One of his students, Abu Bakr Ibn Al-`Arabiyy, asserted that his teacher "entered inside the philosophers and wanted to exit but couldn't".[410] In addition, among contemporaries, Badawi holds that Al-Ghazzaliyy was always faithful to philosophy and that he was an Aristotelian for some time before he ended up a neo-Platonist.[411] However, the findings of Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, who studied the works of Al-Ghazzaliyy from a philological point of view and used philosophical terms as a criterion of authenticity in his writings shed doubt upon these interpretations. She said that the common mediaeval philosophical terms (which were mostly Neoplatonic, but to a certain extent also Aristotelian,) were entirely absent from those books by Al-Ghazzaliyy which scholars accepted as authentic books written by him. Only in those of his books which dealt with description or refutation of philosophical doctrines, such as his *Maqasid*, *Tahafut*, *Mihakk An-Nazar*, *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm* and to a lesser degree also *Mizan Al-`Amal*, did this terminology appear. Moreover, after stating that Al-Ghazzaliyy was well versed in philosophical doctrines and knew their technical terminology better than any Muslim theologian before him, she added:

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410 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Naqd Al-Mantiq* (Cairo: Maktabat As-Sunnah Al-Muhammadiyyah, 1951) p. 56.

411 Badawi, *Dawr Al-`Arab Fi Takwin Al-Fikr Al-Awrubbiyy* (Al-Kuwait: Wakalat Al-Matbu`at, 1979) pp. 203-205.

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> "Yet here is a most astonishing linguistic fact that in a large number of his books including his major works, there is nowhere any use of a single philosophical term, even when Al-Ghazzali deals with typical metaphysical subjects and not in the usual orthodox way."[412]

It should be noted here that Lazarus-Yafeh excluded some books whose authenticity was disputed. She maintained that these books, which did include philosophical terms, could have been possibly written by one of three groups. First, admirers who wanted to expound Al-Ghazzaliyy's ideas while at the same time incorporating philosophical notions from other sources that they admired as well; second, unknown authors who wanted their own books to survive by attributing them to famous scholars; third, enemies of Al-Ghazzaliyy who wanted to paint a distorted picture of him. Nevertheless, Lazarus-Yafeh admitted that the authenticity of books should not be based only on stylistic or linguistic criteria.[413]

7. Al-Ghazzaliyy's Search Continued; the Confrontation with the Esoterics [*Al-Batiniyyah*]:

When he was done with the philosophers, Al-Ghazzaliyy turned to the *Batiniyyah* who flourished during his life time. Not only was he interested in their methodology, but he also found himself

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412 Lazarus-Yafeh, p. 249.
413 Lazarus-Yafeh, pp. 255-257.

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confronting them politically. The Caliph requested that Al-Ghazzaliyy write a book about the veracity of their belief, showing that the Batinites were perceived as a threat to the central government in Baghdad. Upon this request from the Caliph, which Al-Ghazzaliyy considered a motivation from without added to the original one from within, he sought the Batinites's books and treatises. Moreover, he asserted that, during that time, he was already aware of some of their newly invented vocabulary and statements, which were different from those of their predecessors.[414]

In preparation for his research in this area, Al-Ghazzaliyy collected and organized the Batinite's statements and views. His presentation of these views prompted one of his contemporaries, whom Al-Ghazzaliyy referred to as "one of the people of truth" [*ba`d ahl al-haq*], to denounce what he called an exaggeration [*mubalaghah*] in the extent Al-Ghazzaliyy took in reporting their belief. He held that Al-Ghazzaliyy helped the Batinites to a degree that they themselves could not match.[415] Al-Ghazzaliyy reacted to this criticism by saying that it could have been correct if the beliefs of the Batinites were not already known. However in this case their views had been previously disseminated.[416]

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414 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 118. For further information on this historical period see p. 22.

415 Al-Ghazzaliyy narrated that a similar criticism was directed by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal toward Al-Harith Al-Muhasibiyy when the latter responded to the Mu`tazilah. Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 118-119.

416 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 118.

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In addition, Al-Ghazzaliyy said that the Batinites claimed that no authors [*musannifun*] at the time understood their arguments. Hence, Al-Ghazzaliyy found it appropriate to explain their arguments before criticizing them, an approach similar to his treatment of the philosophers. Al-Ghazzaliyy said that he did not want anyone to think that he criticized the Batinites without understanding them.[417]

According to the Batinites, there was a need for learning and a teacher, yet not every teacher was equipped to disseminate knowledge which could be acquired only through the infallible [*ma`sum*] teacher or Imam. Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained that the cause of the Batinites flourished because those who argued against the principles advocated by the Batinites were "ignorant." He thought that their premises were true but their conclusion was false. Al-Ghazzaliyy found that the problem was in arguing against the true premisses rather than the false conclusion.[418] He added that one should question the knowledge that they claim to have acquired, and he did. Not only they could not answer his questions, they did not understand them in the first place, and that was exactly why they would return to the notion that only the infallible Imam would know the answer. Al-Ghazzaliyy based his discourse with the Batinites upon numerous historical occurrences.[419]

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417 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 118-119.
418 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 120.
419 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 127.

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Al-Ghazzaliyy criticized the Batinites in several books written during the different stages of his life beginning with the first period of public teaching. He wrote the first, *Al-Mustazhiriyy*, at the request of the Caliph Al-Mustazhir, (after whom it was named). This was followed by *Hujjat Al-Haq* (The Proof of the Truth), which was written as a direct response to the arguments of the Batinites which he encountered in Baghdad. After leaving his position at the Nizamiyyah, he wrote *Mufassil Al-Khilaf* (The Clarifier of the Disagreement) which was written in reaction to their statements in Hamadhan and *Ad-Darj Al-Marqum Bil-Jadawil* (The Annotated Scroll with Tabulars) which was written in answer to their allegations in Tus.[420] In addition, Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote *Al-Qistas Al-Mustaqim* (The Correct Balance) which was intended as an indirect response to the Batinites by presenting an alternative source of knowledge other than their Infallible Imam. Al-Ghazzaliyy's last written expose' of the Batinites, which took place during the second period of public teaching, was in *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal* where he devoted a chapter to criticizing them for the last time.[421]

There is an account in *Al-Munqidh* where Al-Ghazzaliyy characterized the position of the Batinites as part of the philosophy of Pythagoras. Al-Ghazzaliyy probably held Aristotle in high regard

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420 Many scholars, have had a problem translating the title of this book. I think that the problem arose from their reading the stressed 'd' of *Ad-Darj*, which means a scroll, with a *dummah* and thus it became *Ad-Durj* which means a small cabinet. 'Scroll' makes more sense than 'cabinet'.

421 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 127.

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because he criticized Pythagoras. Al-Ghazzaliyy learned of this account of Aristotle from the writings of a secretive philosophical group called *Ikhwan As-Safa'* (the Brethren of Purity).[422] It appears that Al-Ghazzaliyy did not see the strong relationship between the Batinites and *Ikhwan As-Safa*. However, the first four chapters of the forty-fourth letter reveal that both of them had the same strategy for disseminating their belief.[423] In fact, it was argued that the Brethren were connected with the Batinite propaganda against the Abbasid caliphate.[424] Once he recognized the truth about the Batinites, Al-Ghazzaliyy cleared them from his path and continued his march in pursuit of truth[425]

8. Al-Ghazzaliyy Becoming a Sufi:

Sufism, or Islamic mysticism as it is sometimes referred to, was the last class of seekers that Al-Ghazzaliyy considered in his quest for true knowledge. He said that after his completion of the study of the other sciences, he came to study *turuq as-sufiyyah* (the ways of

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422 *Ikhwan As-Safa'* was a secret association of philosophers. It was established at Basrah in 373 A.H./983 C.E. with a branch in Baghdad. They wrote fifty two treatises which were presented as an Encyclopedia. These covered mathematics, logic, metaphysics, mysticism, astrology, magic and the natural sciences. The Brethren of Purity were eclectic in their philosophy with borrowings from Greek, Indian, Persian, Jewish and Christian sources. Sheikh, *Islamic Philosophy*, pp. 32-41.

423 *Rasa'il Ikhwan As-Safa wa Khillan Al-Wafa* (Dar Beirut: Beirut, 1983) vol. 4, pp. 14-40.

424 Sheikh, *Islamic Philosophy*, p. 33.

425 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 128-129.

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the Sufis). He knew that their way could only be realized through knowledge and activity together. By knowledge, Al-Ghazzaliyy meant the theoretical aspect of the Sufi way and by activity its application.[426] Concerning the relationship between theory and practice, Al-Ghazzaliyy offered an example in which he said that there is a great difference between knowing the definition of health and being healthy. Analogous to this is the gap between knowing what the reality of *zuhd* (asceticism)[427] is and being an ascetic.[428]

Soon Al-Ghazzaliyy realized that the theoretical part of Sufism was much easier than its application. He started acquiring knowledge of the Sufi 'way' through reading the books of Sufis such as *Qut Al-Qulub* (The Food of the Hearts) by Abu Talib Al-Makkiyy (d. 388 A.H./998 C.E.) and the books of Al-Harith Al-Muhasibiyy (d. 243 A.H./857 C.E.). He also studied the known fragments of Al-Junayd (d. 297 A.H./909 C.E.), Ash-Shibliyy (d. 334 A.H./945 C.E.) and Abu Yazid Al-Bustamiyy (d. 264 A.H./877 C.E.) among others.[429]

None of Al-Ghazzaliyy's books ever mentioned the names of his Sufi mentors. In the references to his direct contact with the Sufis,

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426 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 130.

427 According to Al-Wakil, there was only one verse in the Qur'an where a noun participated in the same root of the word *zuhd*. In Qur'an 12: 20, it was the word *zahidin* which Al-Wakil thought it to be negative because it meant making little of things which are the bounty of Allah, and thus *zuhd* could not be associated with something positive. `Abd Ar-Rahman Al-Wakil, *Hadhihi Hia As-Sufiyyah* [This is Sufism] (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-`Ilmiyyah, 1984) p. 136.

428 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 132.

429 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 130-132.

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he only referred to them by means of general terms such as the *arbab al-qulub wal-mashahadat* (men of hearts and vision) whom he consulted about his return to teaching later on in Nishapur.[430] Specific references to the names of his Sufi mentors can be found in books of Sufis as Ibn `Ajibah who stated in his commentary on *Fusus Al-Hikam* of Ibn `Ata' As-Sakandary, that Al-Kharraz was Al-Ghazzaliyy's mentor.[431] In addition, As-Subkiyy reported that Al-Faramdhiyy influenced Al-Ghazzaliyy's Sufism.[432] It should be noted that Al-Faramdhiyy was placed in a *silsilah* (a chain of Sufi mentors) after Abu Al-Qasim Al-Jurjaniyy[433] under whom Al-Ghazzaliyy studied jurisprudence and wrote *At-Ta`liqah*.[434]

Al-Ghazzaliyy attained whatever could be acquired about the 'way' of the Sufis through learning and listening [*bit-ta`allum as-sama`*]. He realized that they possessed special knowledge that could only be achieved through what the Sufis call *dhawq* (tasting),[435] *hal*

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430 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 159.

431 Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn `Ajibah Al-Hasaniyy, *Iqaz Al-Himam Fi Sharh Al-Hikam* (Cairo: Abd Al-Hamid Ahmad Hanafi, No Date) p.28.

432 As-Subkiyy, vol. 6, p. 209.

433 J. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971) p. 262

434 As-Subkiyy, vol. 6, p. 195.

435 Sufis use the word *dhawq*, literally tasting, metaphorically to indicate that there is a kind of knowledge that transcends the physical reality and which is available only through immediate experience. Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained that this kind of knowledge cannot be expressed linguistically. In *The Varieties of Religious Experiences*, William James used "ineffability" to express the inadequacy of language to express the knowledge involved in mystical experiences. Ralph W. Clark, *Introduction to Philosophical Thinking* (St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1987) p. 67.

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(state, as in "ecstatic state")[436] and the changing of one's character (i.e. becoming moral).

At this stage and before proceeding to show the impact of studying Sufism on his life, Al-Ghazzaliyy asserted that he had acquired true belief [*iman yaqiniyy*] in Allah, the prophecy and the day of judgment. He added that these three fundamentals of faith were firmly established in his soul, not because of any specific formulated proof, but because of numerous reasons, circumstances and experiences.[437]

In order to be on the right Sufi 'way' and to gain eternal happiness, Al-Ghazzaliyy concluded that he had to sever his ties with worldly things; he had to shun fame and money and to flee from distracting attachments. He scrutinized his conditions and found himself devoid of activities that could be useful in the hereafter. Not even the best of these activities, his teaching, was for the sake of Allah which he considered the criterion for success. He said his teaching had been motivated by fame. Al-Ghazzaliyy realized that he was about to fall into Hell fire if he did not act fast.[438]

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436 *Hal* is the ecstatic state which is achieved by the Sufi through constant *dhikr* (recollection of the name and attributes of Allah). It is in this state that a Sufi starts receiving transcendental knowledge. If the Sufi can maintain such a *hal*, which denotes a sense of temporality, it evolves to become a *maqam* which indicates that the Sufi took a permanent metaphorical residence in transcendental noetic conditions.

437 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 133-134.

438 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 134.

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Al-Ghazzaliyy spent six months, starting Rajab 488 A.H./1095 C.E., trying to abandon all things that were not for the sake of Allah. This included his position at the Nizamiyyah which was to no avail. He was torn apart by worldliness on the one hand and the motivations for the hereafter on the other. Eventually, he developed an impediment of speech which prevented him from teaching. This impediment caused him sadness which, in turn, brought with it a new problem; Al-Ghazzaliyy could not digest food or drink. When he realized his weakness and his inability to make a decision, he sought refuge in Allah who facilitated his abandonment of "fame, money, wife, children and friends."[439]

Al-Ghazzaliyy knew that neither the Caliph nor his friends would approve his plans to leave Baghdad and to settle in Ash-Sham.[440] In addition, he was sure that none of the scholars of Iraq would understand the religious aspect of his plight. All of this led Al-Ghazzaliyy to plan his departure from Baghdad as if he were going to Mecca in order to perform pilgrimage. Al-Ghazzaliyy distributed his wealth, keeping only enough to sustain him and his children and left Baghdad with the intention never to see it again. Thus concluded Al-Ghazzaliyy's first period of public education.[441]

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439 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 136.

440 There are two places identified by the name, Ash-Sham. One is the area covered by Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria. In the second instance, it is used as a synonym for Damascus. Al-Ghazzaliyy used it in the latter sense.

441 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 137.

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9. Al-Ghazzaliyy's Epistemology in His Writings on *`Aqidah* [Creed]:

According to Bouyges, Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote four books on *`aqidah* [creed] towards the end of his first period of public teaching: *Al-Iqtisad Fi Al-I`tiqad* (The Median Course in Creed), *Ar-Risalah Al-Qudsiyyah Fi Qawa`id Al-`Aqa'id* (The Jerusalemite Treatise in the Fundamentals of Beliefs), *Qawa`id Al-`Aqa'id* (The Fundamentals of Beliefs) and *Al-Ma`arif Al-`Aqliyyah Wal-Asrar Al-Ilahiyyah* (Rational Knowledge and Divine Secrets).[442] Thus, I cannot conclude this chapter without some mention of his thought regarding *`aqidah*. Indeed, his writings on *`aqidah* help to define Al-Ghazzaliyy's epistemology as he conceived of it just before he left Baghdad.

According to Badawi, *Ar-Risalah Al-Qudsiyyah Fi Qawa`id Al-`Aqa'id* and *Qawa`id Al-`Aqa'id* are the same book and, as is indicated by the first title, this book must have been written originally as part of *Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din* in Jerusalem after Al-Ghazzaliyy left Baghdad.[443] For this reason such a book belongs to the following chapter. As for the fourth book, *Al-Ma`arif Al-`Aqliyyah Wal-Asrar Al-Ilahiyyah*, it is still in manuscript form and we know of it only through secondary sources. It includes five chapters: on utterance

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442 Badawi, *Mu'allafat*, p. xvi.
443 Badawi, *Mu'allafat*, pp. 89-92.

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[*nutq*], on Kalam and the Mutakallim, on speech [*al-qawl*], on writing and on the desired goal [*al-gharad al-matlub*].[444]

Unfortunately, therefore, I am confined to discussing only the first book, *Al-Iqtisad Fi Al-I`tiqad*, which has a short, yet very important introduction in relation to the topic of Al-Ghazzaliyy's epistemology. The main themes of this book are the proof of the existence of Allah and his attributes (in which he followed the method of the Asha`irites[445]), the proof of the prophecy of Muhammad, and discussion of other articles of faith.[446] In the section before the last in this book, Al-Ghazzaliyy discussed the need of designating a ruler [Imam]; he proved the necessity of having a ruler by reason as well as from the texts of the Shari`ah.[447] He ended this book with a section that summarized his position towards all other religions, sects and groups that were predominant at the time.[448]

In the introduction to *Al-Iqtisad*, Al-Ghazzaliyy asserted that there could be no contradiction between the Shari`ah and reason [*la mu`anadata bayna ash-shar` al-manqul wal-haq al-ma`qul*]. He

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444 Badawi, *Mu'allafat*, pp. 93-97. These chapter titles suggest this book might shed considerable light on Al-Ghazzaliyy's philosophical positions at this time in general and his philosophy of language in particular. A thorough study of this work of Al-Ghazzaliyy would be most desirable.

445 For more details on Al-Ghazzaliyy's relationship to the Asha`irites see page 55.

446 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Iqtisad*, p. 13.

447 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Iqtisad*, pp. 195-201.

448 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Iqtisad*, pp. 205-213.

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classified all other positions into two categories: those who restricted themselves to conformism [*taqlid*] which he described as a deficiency [*tafrit*]; and, the philosophers and the extremists among the Mu`tazilites who relied on reason only. The latter position he regarded as an excess [*ifrat*]. For Al-Ghazzaliyy, neither reason nor Shari`ah suffices on it's own, for the right group is that which brings reason and Shari`ah together. Al-Ghazzaliyy explained his position by the following metaphor:

> "Reason is similar to a healthy vision and the Qur'an is similar to the bright sun. The one who seeks guidance in one of them without the other is certainly among the stupid. If he thinks that the light of the Qur'an suffices him without reason, then he is comparable to the one who exposes himself to the light of the sun with his eyelids shut, then there is no difference between him and the blind, for [the existence of] reason with Shari`ah is like light upon light."[449]

Thus, one can say that it was Al-Ghazzaliyy's intention in *Al-Iqtisad* to present a "median" account of Islamic creed, which is the meaning of the title of this book, with the help of reason.

In *Al-Iqtisad*, Al-Ghazzaliyy restricted himself to the use of six sources of premises. These sources were listed as follow:

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[449] Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Iqtisad*, pp. 7-8.

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1. The sensibles [*al-hissiyyat*]: Al-Ghazzaliyy here defined the sensibles as that which is perceived through external and internal "witnessing" [*mushahadah*]. Examples of external are accidents [*a`rad*] like sounds and colors and internal like the presence of pain or joy.

2. Pure Reason [*al-`aql al-mahd*]: an example of this kind of knowledge is reaching the conclusion that there could be no third predicate to those in the premise, "the world is either eternal or accidental."

3. Knowledge related by several sources [*At-Tawatur*]: such as the testimony of the existence of certain prophets (i.e. Moses).

4. Premises that comprise other premises that are dependent upon the above three sources.

5. The Shari`ah [*as-sam`iyyat*].

6. Premises derived from the beliefs of opponents in arguments against them because they cannot deny them, even if there is no proof of it's validity.[450]

It should be noted that Al-Ghazzaliyy criticized the Mutakallimun for their usage of arguments that resemble the sixth category above

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450 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Iqtisad*, pp. 25-27.

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which he considered conformism [*taqlid*].[451] In addition, the fact that he "restricted" himself to the use of these six sources is a clear indication that a complete list is available in a previous book. In fact, *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm* is the last book during the first period of public teaching to include a comprehensive list of the sources of knowledge; subsequent books (i.e. *Mihak An-Nazar* and *Al-Iqtisad Fi Al-I`tiqad*] included partial lists only. *Mihak An-Nazar* included seven sources of "knowledge and belief"; primary knowledge, internal "vision" [*al-mushahadat al-Batinah*], external sensibles, experimentals, knowledge related by many groups [*tawatur*], imagination and famous premises.[452]

Al-Ghazzaliyy listed in *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm* four sources that yield indubitable knowledge; pure rational logical necessities [*al-uwwaliyyat al-`aqliyyah al-mahdah*], the sensibles, the experimentals and intuition [*hads*]. His list differed from that of the philosophers in *Maqasid Al-Falasifah* only in the addition of intuition as a source of indubitable knowledge. He held that the knowledge acquired through intuition cannot be proved, cannot be denied, and cannot be taught. It must be for this reason that he did not include intuition in the sources of premises in *Al-Iqtisad*. Al-Ghazzaliyy stated that the only thing that can be done to the student who is seeking intuitive knowledge is to direct him to the same path which led those before him to intuitive knowledge. This guidance does not

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451 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 92.
452 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mihak*, pp. 57-65.

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guarantee intuitive knowledge; the student's mind should be perfect in terms of strength and clarity in order to be able to have intuition. Although he held intuition to be a source of indubitable knowledge, Al-Ghazzaliyy said that one cannot use arguments from intuition in debates; one should share the experience. For him, this concept of sharing is similar to "tasting."[453] The latter analogy is a clear indication of Al-Ghazzaliyy's use of the Sufi language which is a mark of the new direction that he chose to follow.

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453 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mi`yar*, pp..178-182.

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10. Conclusion:

Al-Ghazzaliyy's writings during this period, which lasted for a decade, reflect one of the most important stages in his intellectual development. He broke with conformism which dominated his work as a student, and began a systematic inquiry of the schools of thought that were available at the time in search for true knowledge and sources of it.

Al-Ghazzaliyy encountered many schools of thought in his quest for true knowledge. Eventually, he restricted the possibility of finding such knowledge to four "classes of seekers": the dialectical theologians [*al-Mutakallimun*], the Batinites, the philosophers and the Sufis whose methodology he finally accepted. A careful study of the language that Al-Ghazzaliyy used to describe these four groups reveals that he narrowed them to two only; the Batinites and the philosophers in one group, and the *Mutakallimun* and the Sufis in the other. The choice of words reflects a subtle approval of the latter group.

When Al-Ghazzaliyy became a teacher at the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad, he started studying philosophy in his search for true knowledge as part of a systematic approach in which he was attempting to study all sects, religions and schools of thought in search of true knowledge. According to him, he could not find such knowledge in all the traditional subjects of philosophy; the only two

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exceptions were logic and mathematics. Although he was critical of philosophy, we shall see in the following chapter that he adopted many positions from the works of the philosophers [e.g., Al-Farabi].

One of the most important contributions of Al-Ghazzaliyy during this period is his position on logic. He wrote several books which he intended as a criterion for science. He held in *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm* that every person has three judges: a judge of sensibles, a judge of illusions [*hakim wahmiyy*] and a judge of reason. It is the addition of a "judge of illusion" here that contributes to the development of his genetic epistemology even though he would drop it later on in *Al-Munqidh*.

Another contribution was in the subject of debate. In what seems to be a reaction to a trend of public debates between the various schools of jurisprudence at the time, Al-Ghazzaliy wrote four books in which he outlined the etiquette of debate [*adab al-munazarah*] without which an unhealthy atmosphere of animosity and hatred would arise. He realized that these debates, in which he participated at the Camp of Nizam Al-Mulk, were motivated by material gains and, therefore, he made a pledge later on never to engage in such activity again.

Al-Ghazzaliyy's search for indubitable knowledge led him to reject all knowledge that was based on authority [e.g., parents, teachers] which he blamed for the differences among people. He defined this knowledge in terms of mathematical certitude [e.g., on

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the same level of certitude that is found in 'ten is greater than three']. He scrutinized all his cognition in search for knowledge that would meet the previous description; he thought for a while that the sensibles and the self evident truths are conforming to the level of certitude that he was looking for. Nevertheless, meditating upon such knowledge he found that he could doubt them, and thus he found himself devoid of any indubitable knowledge. As a result, he found himself doubting all sources of knowledge including reason which was based upon the possibility of the existence of a higher faculty which he defined in terms of its relation to reason [i.e. the faculty above reason (*malakah fawqa al-`aql*)]. In fact, he underwent the most genuine and dramatic experience of skepticism in the history of thought. This state of doubt continued for the duration of two months and eventually ended by divine illumination.

The first thing that Al-Ghazzaliyy regained after he emerged from his state of doubt was his trust in logical necessities. According to him, this would not have been possible without divine illumination which he considered a source of knowledge that he called *kashf* and which he described as acquiring knowledge directly (i.e. from Allah). Evidently, this latter source of knowledge forms the backbone of Sufi epistemology; he would expand on this concept during his first period of withdrawal from public life which I will deal with in the following chapter.

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Chapter Four

Al-Ghazzaliyy's Quest for Knowledge: the Years of Seclusion.

(488 A.H./1095 C.E.-499 C.E./1106 C.E.)

This chapter deals with the works Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote following his first withdrawal from public life, a period which extended from the time he brought his first teaching career to an end at the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad in 488 A.H./1095 C.E. and until his return to public teaching at the Nizamiyyah of Nishapur in 499 A.H./1106 C.E. This period of seclusion was marked by a long journey in which Al-Ghazzaliyy left Baghdad for Damascus from which he went to Jerusalem, then to Hebron for a short visit and eventually to Mecca and Medina before he decided to return to his homeland.[454]

During this time, Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote twenty eight books, letters and treatises[455] of which four were written in Farsi: *Kimya*

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454 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 137-138.

455 These are: 1. *Ihya' 'Ulum Ad-Din*, 2. *Kitab Fi Mas'alat Kul Mujtahid Musib*, 3. *Jawab Ila Mu'ayyad Al-Mulk Hinama Da'ahu Limu'awadati At-Tadris Bin-Nizamiyyah*, 4. *Mufassil Al-Khilaf*, 5. *Jawab Al-Masa'il Al-Arba' Al-Lati Sa'alaha Al-Batiniyyah Bihamadhan*, 6. *Al-Maqsad Al-Asna Sharh Asma' Allah Al-Husna*, 7. *Risalah Fi Ruju' Asma' Allah Ila Dhat Wahidah 'Ala Ra'y Al-Mu'tazilah Wal-Falasifsah*, 8. *Bidayat Al-Hidayah*, 9. *Al-Wajiz*, 10. *Jawahir Al-Qur'an*, 11. *Al-Arba'in Fi Usul Ad-Din*, 12. *Al-Madnun Bihi 'Ala Ghayri Ahlihi*, 13. *Al-Madnun Bihi 'Ala Ahlihi*, 14. *Ad-Darj Al-Marqum Bil-Jadawil*, 15. *Al-Qistas Al-Mustaqim*, 16. *Faisal At-Tafriqah Bayn Al-Islam Waz-Zandaqah*, 17. *Al-Qanun Al-Kulli Fi*

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Sa`adat (The Alchemy of Happiness),[456] *Zad Akhrat* (The Pack for the Hereafter, which Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote as a simplified version of the preceding book to make it more accessible to the general public), *Ayyuha Al-Walad* (O Child) and *At-Tibr Al-Masbuk fi Nasihat Al-Muluk* (The Golden Ingot for Advising Kings). The latter two are translated into Arabic.[457] Of these twenty eight books, two are in manuscript form,[458] five lost[459] and another two of disputed authenticity.[460] In addition, two works that are usually listed separately were originally sections of other books: *Risalah fi Ruju`*

At-Ta'wil, 18. *Kimya Sa`adat*, 19. *Ayyuha Al-Walad*, 20. *Nasihat Al-Muluk*, 21. *Zad Akhrat*, 22. *Risalah Ila Abi Al-Fath Ahmad Ibn Salamah Ad-Dimamiyy Bil-Musil*, 23. *Ar-Risalah Al-Ladunniyyah*, 24. *Risalah Ila Ba`d Ahl Ahl `Asrih*, 25. *Mishkat Al-Anwar*, 26. *Tafsir Yaqut At-Ta'wil*, 27. *Al-Kashf Wat-Tabyin Fi Ghurur Al-Khalq Ajma`in*, 28. *Talbis Iblis*.

456 This book is different from the Arabic one which has the same title: *Kimya' As-Sa`adah*. Badawi stated that Bouyges doubted the authenticity of the Arabic book. The latter position led Badawi to list the Arabic book in the section designated for books that their authenticity could not be verified. Mediaeval historians like Al-Murtada Az-Zubaydiyy listed the Arabic book separately. The original book in Farsi is believed to be the equivalent of *Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din* (The Revival of Islamic Sciences) which was written in Arabic. For further information, see Badawi, *Mu'allafat*, pp. 172-178 and 275-276.

457 Badawi, *Mu'allafat*, pp. 188-189.

458 These are *Zad Akhrat* and *Al-Wajiz*.

459 These are *Fi Mas'alat Kul Mujtahid Musib*, *Mufassil Al-Khilaf*, *Ad-Darj Al-Marqum Bil-Jadawil*, *Tafsir Yaqut At-Ta'wil* and *Talbis Iblis*. It should be noted that Ibn Al-Jawziyy (d. 597 A.H./1200 C.E.), who studied at the hands of Judge Ibn Al-`Arabiyy, one of Al-Ghazzaliyy's students, wrote a book with the same title as the latter book: *Talbis Iblis* (The Devil's Concealment of Truth). In this book, which I believe it be influenced by the original *Talbis Iblis*, one could see that Ibn Al-Jawziyy used the same example in the introduction that was used previously by Al-Ghazzaliyy in the introduction of *Al-Iqtisad*. Nevertheless, Ibn Al-Jawziyy followed the method of the scholars of Hadith which is different from the approach of Al-Ghazzaliyy. For further information see Abu Al-Faraj `Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Al-Jawziyy Al-Baghdadiyy, *Talbis Iblis*, Muhammad Munir Ad-Dimashqiyy Al-Azhariyy, ed. (Cairo: Maktabat Al-Mutanabbiyy, No Date) p. 1.

460 These are *Nasihat Al-Muluk* and *Al-Madnun Bihi `Ala Ghayri Ahlih*.

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Asma' Allah Ila Dhat Wahidah `Ala Ra'y Al-Mu`tazilah Wal-Falasifah (A Treatise Concerning Allah's names Indicating One Essence According to the Opinion of the Mu'tazilites and the Philosophers) which is the third chapter of *Al-Maqsad Al-Asna Sharh Asma' Allah Al-Husna* (The Sublime Aim in the Interpretation of Allah's Beautiful Names)[461] and *Al-Arba`in Fi Usul Ad-Din* (The Forty in the Fundamentals of Religion) which is the third section of *Jawahir Al-Qur'an* (The Jewels of the Qur'an).[462]

In addition to the traditional subjects that he used to cover in his writings, Al-Ghazzaliyy started expressing his deep conviction in the Sufi way. His writings were either direct representations of this new line of thought, or indirect as in the texts (e.g., exegesis of the Qur'an) he wrote with the spirit of Sufism during his years of seclusion. It is the aim of this chapter to discuss the impact of his acceptance of Sufism on his epistemology. Of the many books that he wrote during this period, only about seven of them can be related directly to the development in his theory of knowledge. These are: *Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din* (The Revival of Islamic Sciences), *Al-Maqsad Al-Asna Fi Sharh Asma' Allah Al-Husna* (The Sublime Aim is the Interpretation of Allah's Beautiful Names), *Bidayat Al-Hidayah* (The Beginning of Guidance), *Jawahir Al-Qur'an* (The Jewels of the Qur'an), *Al-Qistas Al-Mustaqim* (The Just Balance), *Ar-Risalah Al-Ladunniah*, and *Mishkat Al-Anwar* (The Niche for Lights).

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461 Badawi, *Mu'allafat*, p. 137.
462 Badawi, *Mu'allafat*, p. 149.

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These books form a consistent unified whole with "unveiling" [*kashf*] forming the highest source of knowledge. We shall see that "unveiling" takes more than one form [e.g., vision] but always aiming at peremptory transcendental knowledge. Thus, the following discussion of these books aims at showing Al-Ghazzaliyy's consistency during this period.

1. *Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din*:

The first book that was written in seclusion was *Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din* (The Revival of Islamic Sciences), a voluminous encyclopedic work.[463] In this book, Al-Ghazzaliyy held that the highest forms of knowledge are had in Sufism and that all other forms are subordinate. He argued for the priority of Sufi knowledge along several different fronts, namely the science of action [*`ilm al-mu`amalah*], sociology of knowledge, the division of the sciences, the intellect, dialectical theology [*kalam*], philosophy, creed [*`aqidah*] and dreams. However, as we shall see, his newly attained vision produced an enthusiasm which led him to set forth several flawed arguments and claims in support of his position. Some of these flaws were overcome in his later writings, as we shall see.

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463 The edition of Dar Al-Ma`rifah, without the indexes or appendixes, has 1,700 pages.

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1.i. On the Science of Action [*`Ilm Al-Mu`amalah*]:

As the title of this book indicates, Al-Ghazzaliyy wanted to revive the Islamic Sciences, an intention which he clearly states in the first few lines of the introduction.[464] The concept of "revivification" should be understood as an act directed towards something which is dead or dying. In this case, he was referring to the Islamic sciences which became distanced from the original aims of the Shari`ah [*maqasid ash-shari`ah*]. He saw that Muslim scholars, especially in Jurisprudence, preoccupied themselves with trivial and useless details, forgetting the spirit of the Shari`ah. The *Ihya'* represents an attempt to reconnect *Fiqh* with the aims of the Shari`ah.

In the introduction to the *Ihya'*, which is considered Al-Ghazzaliyy's most important work, he stated that the necessary knowledge for attaining happiness in the hereafter [*`ilm al-akhirah*] is divided into two sections: the science of action [*`ilm al-mu`amalah*] and the science of "unveiling" Divine knowledge [*`ilm al-mukashafah*]. He restricted the subject matter of *Ihya' Ulum Ad-Din* to the science of action because, as he put it, he had no permission to disclose *`ilm al-mukashafah* in any books, even though it is the goal to which seekers aspire. He said that his position had to resemble

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464 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya' Ulum Ad-Din* (Beirut: Dar Al-Ma`rifah, No Date) vol. 1, p. 1

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that of the prophets[465] who related this science using metaphoric language because people are not equipped to understand this subject. He added that the science of action is the guide [i.e. a prerequisite] to *`ilm al-mukashafah*.[466]

Al-Ghazzaliyy divided the science of action into two sections: exoteric science [*`ilm zahir*] and esoteric science [*`ilm batin*]. Furthermore, he divided each of these two sections into two subdivisions. These four sections formed the basis for the format of *Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din* which comprises, in his words, four quarters: the Acts of Worship [*`ibadat*], the Social Ethics [*`adat*], the Matters that are Dangerous [*muhlikat*] and finally the Things that are Conducive to Salvation [*munjiyat*].[467] Each of these four quarters includes ten chapters. A general overview of this book can be obtained from a list of the headings of the chapters:

The quarter on the Acts of Worship:

1. The Book of Knowledge [*Kitab Al-`Ilm*]

2. The Articles of Faith [*Qawa`id Al-`Aqa'id*]

3. The Mysteries of Purity

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465 Al-Ghazzaliyy based his position upon a Hadith that was narrated by Abu Ad-Darda' and in which prophet Muhammad said: "Scholars are the heirs of prophets" [*Al-Ulama' warathat al-anbiya'*]. This Hadith was verified by Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhiyy, Ibn Majah and Ibn Hayyan in his *Sahih*.

466 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol. 1, pp. 3-4.

467 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol. 1, pp. 2-3.

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4. The Mysteries of Prayer

5. The Mysteries of Alms giving

6. The Mysteries of Fasting

7. The Mysteries of Pilgrimage

8. The Rules of Reading the Qur'an

9. On the Invocations and Supplications

10. On the Arrangement of *Awrad*[468] According to the Different Times.

The quarter on Social Ethics:

1. The Ethics of Eating

2. The Ethics of Marriage

3. the Ethics of Earning a Livelihood

4. On the Lawful and the Forbidden

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[468] *Wird* (plural *awrad*) is one or more form of recollection of Allah [*dhikr*]. In a Sufi order, the novice [*murid*] is assigned certain *wird* to perform by his own Sufi master. Nabih Amin Faris translated the title of the tenth chapter of the first quarter as "On the Office of portions", a translation which does not reflect the subject matter of this chapter. Al-Ghazzaliyy, The Book Of Knowledge [of *Ihya' Ulum Ad-Din*], Nabih Amin Faris, ed. and trans. (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1962) p. 3.

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5. The Ethics of Companionship and Fellowship with the Various Types of Men

6. On Seclusion [*al-`uzlah*]

7. The Ethics of Travel

8. On Audition [*sama`*] and passion [*wajd*][469]

9. On Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil

10. The Ethics of Living as Exemplified in the Virtues of the Prophet.

The quarter on the Matters that are Dangerous:

1. On the Wonders of the Heart

2. On the Discipline of the Soul

3. On the Curse of the Two Appetites -the Appetites of the Stomach and of the Sex

4. The Curse of the Tongue

5. The Curse of Anger, Rancor and Envy

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[469] Faris translated *wajd* as "grief". See Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, p. 4. I think that *wajd* is an ecstatic expression of the psychological "state" [*hal*] of a Sufi, which is the outcome of listening to poetry or singing. This "state" could be either that of grief or joy depending on the theme in the songs or poetry. In addition, a Sufi can induce such a "state" but in this case it is called *tawajud*.

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6. The Evil of the World

7. The Evil of Wealth and Niggardliness[470]

8. The Evil of Pomp and Hypocrisy

9. The Evil of Pride and Conceit

10. The Evils of Vanity.

The quarter on Those Things That are Conducive to Salvation:

1. On Repentance

2. On Patience and Gratitude

3. On Fear and Hope

4. On Poverty and Asceticism

5. On Divine Unity and Dependence

6. On Love, Longing, Intimacy and Contentment

7. On Intentions, Truthfulness and Sincerity

8. On Self-Examination and Self-Accounting

9. On Meditation

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470 Faris translated *bukhl* as avarice. See Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, p. 5.

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10. On Death.

After listing the contents of the *Ihya'*, Al-Ghazzaliyy outlined the specific aims of each of the four quarters. More important than the aims themselves is the language that Al-Ghazzaliyy used to describe these aims. More than once, he mentioned the "mysteries", "secrets" and the "hidden" elements that were neglected in previous studies and which he now intends to resolve or clarify.[471] It is clear that this language which is different from previous works of Al-Ghazzaliyy, can be attributed to his new intellectual "state"!

The first quarter, on the acts of worshipping, began with the book of knowledge [*Kitab Al-`Ilm*] as its first chapter. It is rather peculiar to include such a chapter, let alone assign it priority, among other chapters on subjects such as prayer, alms giving and pilgrimage. The use of Jurisprudence [e.g., the details of prayer] is not essential to the aim of the *Ihya'*; knowing that students at the time were interested in jurisprudence, Al-Ghazzaliyy included it in his book to attract them.[472] Evidently he was aiming at presenting his newly "acquired" understanding of knowledge and the method or "way" to achieve it. He was convinced that people at the time were inclined to accept as science what he described metaphorically as the "peels instead of the pulp".[473] One can interpret these "peels" as the

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471 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, p. 5.
472 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol. 1, p. 4.
473 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol. 1, p. 2.

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useless or harmful sciences, and the "pulp" as the peremptory knowledge [*yaqin*] that is unveiled to the Sufi.

The aim of discussing knowledge at the beginning of the *Ihya'* is intended to show the knowledge that is required of everyone. It is obvious that Al-Ghazzaliyy is referring to a hidden knowledge that cannot not be derived from conventional sources of knowledge (e.g. the senses, reason). He wanted the seeker to transcend worldly affairs which construct a barrier that prevents one from achieving the knowledge that Sufis claim to have acquired. He asserted that attainment of this knowledge can be promoted by "self-mortification, discipline, and through purifying the heart by freeing it from the affairs of this world, as well as through emulating the prophets and very virtuous people [*awliya'*] so that it may be revealed to every seeker in proportion to what Allah has allocated [*rizq*] for him, rather than in proportion to the seeker's efforts and labours [*jahd*]. Yet diligence in it is indispensable for self-mortification which is the sole key to guidance."[474]

The book of knowledge [*Kitab Al-`Ilm*] comprises seven sections: 1. On the value of knowledge, instruction and learning. 2. On the branches of knowledge which are *fard `ayn*;[475] on the branches of knowledge that are *fard kifayah*;[476] on the definition of

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474 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, p. 100.
475 Divinely ordained, and binding for every individual Muslim.
476 Divinely ordained, and binding for the Muslim community as a whole. Therefore this collective obligation can be discharged for the community by

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jurisprudence and dialectical theology [as disciplines] in the science of religion; and on the science of the hereafter and that of this world. 3. On what is popularly but erroneously considered to be part of the science of religion, including a discussion of the nature of blameworthy knowledge. 4. On the defects of debate and the reasons why people have engaged in dissension and disputation. 5. On the qualities of the teacher and the student. 6. On the deficiency of knowledge, the [drawbacks] of the learned, and the characteristics distinguishing the scholars of the science of the hereafter from those of the science of this world. 7. On reason, its value, categories, and what has been said concerning it [in tradition].[477] Of these seven, sections one, two and seven are of special importance in the development of Al-Ghazzaliyy's epistemology.

1.ii. The Sociology of Knowledge:

In the first section of the book of knowledge, Al-Ghazzaliyy discussed the importance of knowledge and ranked the scholars, after the prophets, who were second to none.[478] The implication of this hierarchy can be explained as an attempt by him to place revelation as the first source of knowledge and reason second. This position was his response to the philosophers who placed reason above prophecy in their epistemological hierarchy.

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the actions of some, and is not necessarily binding for each individual member.

477 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, p.9.

478 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol. 1, p. 5.

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Moreover, he raised the question of the definition of man whom he distinguished from animals by virtue of having the faculty of reason. In addition, he stated that the human being was created only for the sake of acquiring knowledge [*lam yukhlaq illa lil`ilm*].[479]

Al-Ghazzaliyy discussed the knowledge or science that could be rendered *fard `ayn* and he found that there were twenty different positions regarding this issue. He mentioned only four groups along with their positions regarding *fard `ayn*. The *Mutakallimun* said that this science must be dialectical theology, the jurists maintained that *fiqh* was the *fard `ayn*, the scholars of Hadith stated that it was the knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and the fourth group was the Sufis who while being different from the other three positions, did not comprise one single position in their understanding of *fard `ayn*. One group of Sufis stated that it is the knowledge of one's "state" [*hal*] and position [*maqam*] in relation to Allah. Other Sufis thought it to be the knowledge of sincerity and the afflictions of the soul, as well as being able to distinguish between the followers of Allah and the followers of Satan.[480] A third group of Sufis said that it was the esoteric science whose acquisition is required only of the qualified, select few, who accordingly did not accept the exoteric meaning of *fard `ayn* which would have made it imperative upon everyone to learn this particular science.[481] The last Sufi position

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479 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol. 1, p. 7.
480 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol. 1, p. 14.
481 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, pp. 30-31.

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was that of Abu-Talib Al-Makkiyy who understood it in terms of what later on became known as the five pillars of Islam.[482]

In principle, Al-Ghazzaliyy accepted Al-Makkiyy's view but he stressed the idea that this *fard `ayn* is what he called earlier *`ilm al-mu`amalah* [the science of action]. Moreover, while Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained the same notion as the basis for his science of action, it must be said that he devised a timetable for the acquisition and application of the science that is *fard `ayn* taking into consideration the conditions surrounding the person who was on the path of acquiring such knowledge.[483] I found that his accounts in this paragraph are almost copied *ad verbum* from Al-Makkiyy's *Qut Al-Qulub*.[484] In fact, one can see the influence of this book on a wide range of topics in the *Ihya'*.

1.iii. On the Division of the Sciences:

In the second section of the book of knowledge, Al-Ghazzaliyy divided knowledge into two sections; *`ulum shar`iyyah* [sciences of the Shari`ah] and the *ghayr-shar`iyyah* [non-Shari`ah] such as medicine and mathematics. According to him, the latter sciences are

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482 These are: bearing witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is his prophet, prayer, regular alms giving, fasting the month of Ramadan and pilgrimage to the House of Abraham [*Al-Ka`bah*] in Mecca. These five pillars were part of a Hadith that was narrated on the authority of Ibn `Umar by both Al-Bukhariyy and Muslim. Thus, this Hadith is rendered *muttafaq `alayh* [agreed upon] which is the highest level of certitude of a sound Hadith.

483 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya`*, vol. 1, p. 14.

484 Abu Talib Al-Makkiyy, *Qut Al-Qulub* (Cairo: Dar Sadir, 1892) pp. 129-130.

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fard kifayah. Nevertheless, he criticized unnecessary studies in these sciences such as the branches of mathematics that do not have practical applications. As for the sciences of the Shari`ah, he held that they were concerned with two subjects; the first pertains to life in this world which is covered by jurisprudence, and the second addresses issues related to the hereafter. He described the second as the science of the states of the heart [*`ilm ahwal al-qalb*] which forms the subject matter of the *Ihya'*.[485]

Al-Ghazzaliyy stated that jurisprudence cannot extend its jurisdiction to the affairs of the heart, and whenever the knowledge that leads to the hereafter is compared with jurisprudence, the superiority of the former is evident. He divided the science that leads to the hereafter into two parts: the science of unveiling[486] [*`ilm mukashafah*] and the science of action [*`ilm mu`amalah*]. According to him, *`ilm al-mukashafah* is the science of esoteric [*`ilm al-batin*] which is the aim of all sciences. Furthermore, *`ilm al-mukashafah* is the science concerned with those who are favoured by Allah. It stands for a light which shines in the heart when it is cleansed and purified of its blameworthy qualities [e.g., pride, the love of this world] which prevent the attainment of such light. Al-Ghazzaliyy provided a long list of the truths that are attained through this light. He said:

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485 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol. 1, pp. 16-17.

486 Revelation [*kashf*] here means unveiling knowledge that is usually withheld from human beings. This concept is different from [*wahy*] which is restricted to prophetic revelation.

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"Through this light is revealed the truth of several things, whose names were known, and to which illusions were attached. Through it, these truths are clarified until the true knowledge of the essence of Allah is attained together with that of His eternal and perfect attributes, His works and wisdom in the creation of this world and the hereafter as well as the reason for His exalting the latter over the former. Through it also is attained the knowledge of the meaning of prophecy and prophet, and the importance of revelation. Through it is obtained the truth about Satan, the meaning of the words angels and devils, and the cause of the enmity between Satan and man. Through it is known how the Angel appeared to prophets and how they received the [divine] revelation. Through it is achieved the knowledge of the kingdom of heaven and earth, as well as the knowledge of the heart and how the angelic hosts have confronted the devils. Through it is gained the knowledge of how to distinguish between the company of heaven and the company of the Devil, a knowledge of the hereafter, Paradise, and hell, the punishment of the grave, the bridge [*as-sirat*] across the infernal fire, the balance of the judgment day, and knowledge [of the day] of reckoning."[487]

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487 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, pp. 46-47.

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Al-Ghazzaliyy argued that those who attain such knowledge, in addition to others, take different positions regarding their significance. Some consider all the kinds of knowledge mentioned above as mere examples; others hold that some of these kinds of knowledge are mere patterns while the rest of these kinds are identical with the realities indicated by their names. Others hold that the limit to which our knowledge of Allah can reach is knowledge of the inability to know Him. In addition, there are those who claim great things on the subject of knowing Allah while others maintain that we cannot go beyond what all the common people [*al-`awam*] have reached, namely, that Allah exists [*mawjud*], that He is omniscient and omnipotent, that He hears and sees, and that He speaks.[488] I find it rather hard to believe that the latter position corresponds to that of common people since the language is clearly Asha`irite.

Furthermore, Al-Ghazzaliyy explained *`ilm al-mukashafah* as that science whereby the veil is removed so that the truth regarding these things becomes as clear as if it were seen by the eye, leaving no room for any doubt. Man would be capable of such a thing had not "rust and rot resulting from the filth of this world accumulated over the surface of the mirror of his heart".[489] He asserted that the science of the road of the hereafter is the knowledge of how to

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488 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book Of Knowledge*, p. 48.
489 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, p. 48.

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cleanse the surface of this mirror from the filth that prevents the knowing of Allah, His attributes, and His works. Such cleansing is possible through desisting from lust and emulating the prophets in all their states. Thus, to the extent the heart is cleansed and made to face the truth, to that same extent will it reflect His reality. To reach this level of knowledge, one should go through discipline [*riyadah*], learning and instruction. These sciences are not recorded in books and are not discussed by those who were blessed with this grace except among his own circle of intimates who along with him partake of them through discourses and secret communication.[490] Moreover, he believed that *`ilm al-mukashafah* is an occult science [*`ilm khafi*] and that there were references to it in a Hadith that was judged by Al-`Iraqiyy to be *da`if*.[491]

The second part, namely, the science of action [*`ilm al-mu`amalah*], is the science of the states of the heart. Al-Ghazzaliyy provided two lists of states: the first is a list of praiseworthy states such as that of sincerity [*al-ikhlas*], and the second is a list of blameworthy states such as the fear of poverty. He stated that the knowledge of these states [i.e. of morals] comprises the way to the hereafter which is a must [*fard `ayn*] for every one. He argued that such knowledge is more important than jurisprudence which he called the exoteric science [*`ilm az-zahir*]. To support his argument, he stated that the scholars of *fiqh*, including Ash-Shafi`iyy and Ibn

490 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, pp. 48-49.
491 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol. 1, p. 20.

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Hanbal, used to study the science of the hereafter [*`ilm al-akhirah*] at the hands of the scholars of esoteric knowledge [*`ulama' al-batin*] whom he also described as the people of the hearts, namely, the Sufis.[492]

The relationship between the studies of the Shari`ah and Sufism according to Al-Ghazzaliyy can be understood from an account of Al-Junayd and As-Sari,[493] his Sufi teacher. Al-Junayd said:

> "Once upon a time my teacher As-Sari asked me saying, 'When you leave my place whose company do you keep?' I said, 'Al-Muhasibiyy's.' To which he replied, 'Well have you chosen! Follow his learning and culture, but avoid his affectation in speech and his refutation of the theologians.' Upon leaving I overheard him say, 'May Allah make you first a scholar of Hadith and then a Sufi rather than a Sufi first and then a scholar of Hadith'."[494]

Al-Ghazzaliyy asserted that he who studies the science of Hadith and the Shari`ah before he turns to Sufism comes off well; he who takes to Sufism before learning the Shari`ah exposes himself to danger.[495] This position can be interpreted as an attempt by Al-Ghazzaliyy to

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492 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol. 1, p. 21.
493 Abu Al-Hasan Ibn Al-Mughallis As-Saqatiyy (256 A.H./870 C.E.).
494 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, p. 52.
495 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, p. 52.

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weigh Sufism with the balance of the Shari`ah. Apparently, his adherence to such criterion was not without loopholes. Ibn Al-Jawziyy criticized him for breaking the laws of jurisprudence more than once to accommodate Sufi doctrines and actions.[496]

1.iv. On the Intellect [*Al-`Aql*]:

The seventh section in the book of knowledge is concerned with the intellect [*al-`aql*]: its noble nature, its definition, and its division. Al-Ghazzaliyy said that it is superfluous to show the noble nature of the intellect because it is the source and fountainhead of knowledge as well as its foundation. He described the relationship between knowledge and the intellect, using a Neoplatonic theme, as that between light and the sun. He found sufficient evidence for the nobility of the intellect in the fact that it is the means of happiness in this world and the hereafter. In addition, he maintained that the nobility of the intellect is something known by instinct.[497]

Moreover, Al-Ghazzaliyy attempted to support his argument regarding the nobility of the intellect by citing verses from the Qur'an and reports from the Sunnah, as was his practice. The first of these is a verse that in literal translation reads "Allah is the Light [*Nur*] of the Heavens and Earth. His Light is like a niche [in which there is a lamp--the lamp encased in glass--the glass, as it were, a

496 Ibn Al-Jawziyy, *Talbis Iblis*, p. 166.
497 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, p. 221.

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glistering star]."[498] He interpreted the word, light, as intellect so that the nobility of intellect was established by its likeness to the Divine light.

In addition, he related a Hadith (which is considered "weak") that the intellect was the first thing that was created by Allah. This creation, however, proved to be problematic in Al-Ghazzaliyy's view. He questioned the nature of the intellect according to this Hadith. Because it is the first thing to be created, he held that the intellect must be either an accident [*`arad*] or an essence [*jawhar*]. But how could an accident be created before bodies? Again, if it is an essence, how could it have pure existence which is spaceless [*min ghayri tahayyuz*]?[499] Al-Ghazzaliyy did not provide an answer to these questions here; he argued that the answer belongs to the science of "unveiling" [*`ilm al-mukashafah.*][500] The meaning is that one has to follow the Sufi path in order to achieve such knowledge.

Al-Ghazzaliyy provided answers to these questions in *Faisal At-Tafriqah Bayn Al-Islam Waz-Zandaqah* [The Decisive Marker between Islam and Disbelief] which was written at a later stage, though during the same period. In this book, Al-Ghazzaliyy held that the first creation [i.e. intellect, *`aql*] cannot be an accident; he thought

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498 Qur'an, 24:35.

499 This idea is similar to Descartes' regarding the mind which "does not need space nor is dependent on any material thing." Descartes, *Discourse on the Method and the Meditations*, John Veitch, tr. (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1989) p. 31.

500 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol.1, p. 83.

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that it must be an angel that is called intellect. Moreover, in a language that reflects Al-Farabi's influence, he argued that this name [i.e., intellect] is given to the angel because it is his essence [*jawhar*] to conceive himself and other things without the need of a teacher.[501] It is lamentable that he had to resort to this Farabian idea in order to solve a problem which resulted from his inappropriate knowledge of the Hadith.

Another influence of Al-Farabi can be seen in the following argument. Al-Ghazzaliyy's interpretation of this Qur'anic verse, namely, that light in "Allah is the light" is interpreted as intellect means that Allah is the intellect of the Heaven and the Earth (i.e. the universe). Not only is this a clear departure from the Sunni approach to the attributes of Allah and thus the interpretation of such verses,[502] but the meaning, if combined with the Hadith about the intellect being the first creation, becomes that the Intellect (i.e Allah) created another intellect. This idea, although reconstructed, is reminiscent of Al-Farabi's cosmology which is Neoplatonic in its essence.

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501 Al-Ghazzaliyy, "*Faisal At-Tafriqah Bayn Al-Islam Waz-Zandaqah*", *Majmu`at Rasa'il Al-Imam Al-Ghazali* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-`Ilmiyyah, 1986) vol. 3, p. 125.

502 Ibn Kathir related in his *Tafsir* the interpretation of several prominent scholars from among the first generation [*As-Salaf*] of Muslims and the subsequent generation [*Al-Khalaf*], including Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Anas Ibn Malik, Ubayy Ibn Ka`b and As-Sadi. The meaning of the term "light" in this verse revolves around the notion of guidance [i.e. Allah is the guide of the inhabitants of the Heavens and Earth]. See, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir* (Beirut: Dar Al-Jil, 1988) vol. 3, p. 280.

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In addition, Al-Ghazzaliyy held that the term 'intellect' is applied to several things; he found that there are four distinct meanings to this term that are related to knowledge. The first is the quality which distinguishes man from animals and enables him to understand the theoretical sciences [*nazariyyah*], and to learn the abstract [*fikriyyah*] disciplines. He held that the intellect is an instinct whereby, as a natural disposition, some animals are capable of grasping the theoretical sciences, except that Allah, as a matter of fact, imbued man alone with these sciences. He added that "the relationship of this instinct, [namely, the intellect], to the sciences is similar to that of the eye to vision; while the relationship of the Shari`ah to the intellect in so far as it leads to the unfolding of the sciences is like that of the light of the sun to seeing."[503]

The second meaning of intellect [*`aql*] is explained in terms of its application to logical necessities. Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained that this kind of knowledge "is present even in the infant who discerns[504] the possibility of possible things [*ja'izat*] and the impossibility of impossible things [*mustahilat*], such as the knowledge that the two

503 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, pp. 226-227.

504 It should be noted that at a later stage in *Al-Munqidh*, Al-Ghazzaliyy considered "discernment" the second level in the epistemological development of man; this level is higher than the sensibles and is possible to children who are seven years old. The knowledge of the "*ja'izat*" and the "*mustahilat*" belong to a higher level, namely, that of reason. See Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 145.

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are greater than the one and that the one individual cannot be in two different places at the same time."[505]

In the third place the word intellect is applied to empirical knowledge. Al-Ghazzaliyy said that this knowledge "is acquired through experience, in the course of events." To explain the relationship between empirical knowledge and the intellect he said that he who is taught by experience is called intelligent [*`aqil*].[506]

In the fourth place the term intellect is used when "the power of the instinct develops to such extent that its owner will be able to tell what the end will be, and consequently he will conquer and subdue his appetite which hankers for immediate pleasures". Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained that this is another quality that distinguishes man from animals.[507]

Al-Ghazzaliyy concluded that "these four forms of knowledge are inherent in the intellect by nature, and come to light when some cause which will bring them out takes place." According to him, this knowledge is latent in that instinct and later appears as if there is no external influence. He illustrated this notion by comparing it to "the water in the earth: it appears on digging and collects at the bottom of the well. The senses discern that nothing new was brought to the well [in this process]."[508] In addition, he cited verses in the Qur'an

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505 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, p. 227.
506 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, p. 227.
507 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, p. 228.
508 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, pp. 229-230.

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which indicate that every human being is born with an inherent knowledge of reality. He held that belief is instilled by nature in the human soul, but because of passing time, some people forgot all about it, others forgot it for a while, but finally remembered it. Moreover, he cited another group of verses which include an invitation for recalling and remembering the understanding that the human being was endued with. He stated that "there are two kinds of remembrance: the one is to recall a picture which once existed in one's mind but has since disappeared, while the other is to recall a picture which is inherent in one's mind by nature [*fitrah*]." In addition, he argued that "these facts are evident to him who exercises his insight, but are abstruse to him who is given to blind imitation and conformism.[509]

Al-Ghazzaliyy held that people differ in their intellectual capabilities only in regard to the second field of knowledge, namely, knowing logical necessities such as what is possible or impossible. As far as the intellect is concerned, it follows a course of development that begins at the age of discernment [*tamyiz*] and reaches its completion at age forty.[510] It might not be just a coincidence that he was about forty years old himself when he wrote these words. It is quite possible that he believed that he reached the prime of his intellectual capabilities as manifested in the *Ihya'*.

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509 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, pp. 230- 231.
510 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol. 1, p.88.

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1.v. On Dialectical Theology [*Kalam*]:

Al-Ghazzaliyy's position regarding *Kalam* and philosophy in the *Ihya'* seems to be stricter than any other book, even those that were written later on [i.e. *Al-Munqidh*]. For him, "whatever *Kalam* offers by way of useful evidence is contained in the Qur'an and the Sunnah; anything else is either reprehensible argumentation which, as will be seen, is an innovation [*bid`ah*], or mere wrangling by dwelling or distinctions or amplification through the array of different opinions, most of which are drivel and nonsense." Nevertheless, he stated that although *Kalam* would be considered heresy at the time of the prophet, circumstances changed and it became *fard kifayah*.[511]

1.vi. On Philosophy:

Regarding philosophy, Al-Ghazzaliyy held that it is not a science in itself but comprises four parts: the first includes geometry and arithmetic which are permissible, unless there is reason to fear that they might lead a person to blameworthy sciences.[512] He did not discuss the reasons that led him to take such a position, and thus I find no justification for his position. Perhaps he was carried off by a fervor of Sufi attitude that rendered many things irrelevant to the way of the hereafter. It should be noted that this remark is not normal for Al-Ghazzaliyy and does not reflect his general position

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511 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, p. 53.
512 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol. 1, p. 22.

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regarding arithmetic, geometry and the exact sciences. He did not in general see a contradiction between these sciences and the Shari`ah. Rather, he described their relation in neutral language.

The second part of philosophy is logic, which Al-Ghazzaliyy defined as the study of proofs, definitions and their conditions. He maintained that both are included in *Kalam*.[513] Moreover, he cited a Hadith which indicates that those who deal with logic will be unable to perform good deeds. Al-`Iraqiyy held that this Hadith is fabricated and that it has no origin [*la asla lah*] in the Sunnah.[514] Such a narration is an indication that there were people who circulated fabricated Hadith in order to prove a point or to defend a position. This Hadith proved to be problematic for someone like Al-Ghazzaliyy; his position towards logic in his earlier and later works shows an acceptance that is different from the one in the *Ihya'*.

The third part of philosophy is metaphysics which Al-Ghazzaliyy regarded as the science that addresses the existence of Allah and his attributes. He held that this science is also contained in *Kalam*. He compared the position of the philosophers in respect to this science to that of the Mu`tazilites who represented a branch of *Kalam*. He described the contribution of the philosophers in this field either as blasphemous or innovation. On the other hand he described the contribution of the Mu`tazilites as invalid [*batil*].[515]

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513 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol. 1, p. 22.
514 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol.1, p. 41.
515 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol.1, p. 22.

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Physics is the fourth part of philosophy, some parts of which contradict the Shari`ah, religion and truth, and are, therefore, folly. These are not sciences and may be classified as such. The other parts of physics are concerned with the different substances: their properties, transmutation, and change. Al-Ghazzaliyy compared the contribution of the philosophers in physics to medicine but failed to see any practical application for this study and thus declared it useless.[516]

In this classification, Al-Ghazzaliyy elevated the knowledge of the esoteric [*`ilm al-batin*] which is the domain of the Sufi to the highest possible rank compared to the other sciences. He intentionally restricted the importance and role of the jurists to this world and advised many of them to seek a profession that would benefit the Muslims instead of wasting their time in studying minute details in jurisprudence that are of no benefit. In addition, he undermined the contribution of the dialectical theologians and declared *Kalam* as a veil that prevents the *Mutakallim* from achieving peremptory knowledge since they do not have recourse to *`ilm al-mukashafah*.[517] If this was his attitude towards jurisprudence and *Kalam*, it should come as no surprise that his position towards the philosophers was that of rejection. It seems

516 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, p. 54.
517 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol. 1, pp. 22-23.

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that Al-Ghazzaliyy was caught at this stage with an enthusiasm for the Sufi path which dwarfed the importance of other sciences.

Al-Ghazzaliyy aim in discussing knowledge at the beginning of the *Ihya'* is to identify the science that is required of everyone. Clearly, he is referring to a science that is hidden and which cannot be attained through sources of knowledge such as reason. He wanted the seeker to realize that worldly affairs constitute a barrier that prevents one from achieving the knowledge that Sufis claim to have acquired, and, therefore, he needs to look with disdain at worldly things. Al-Ghazzaliyy asserted that attainment of this knowledge can be promoted by "self-mortification, discipline, and through purifying the heart by freeing it from the affairs of this world, as well as through emulating the prophets and very virtuous people [*awliya'*] so that it may be revealed to every seeker in portion to what Allah has allocated [*rizq*] for him, rather than in proportion to the seeker's efforts and labours [*jahd*]. Yet diligence in it is indispensable for self-mortification which is the sole key to guidance."[518]

Like all Sufis, Al-Ghazzaliyy believed that one needs a Sufi guide to help prepare him to receive divine illumination. Nevertheless, the *Ihya'* was intended as a manual that describes what the novice needs to achieve such knowledge. He concluded the Book of Knowledge by defending the position of the Sufis who were accused of disparaging the intellect and reason as well as the rational

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518 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, p. 100.

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and the reasonable. He said that the reason for such accusations is that "men have transformed the term intellect or reason [*`aql*] and the term rational or reasonable [*ma`qul*] to indicate argumentation and debate over contradictions and requisites, things that have to do with dialectical theology [*Kalam*]. Consequently, the Sufis could not tell that men have used this terminology in ways different than the original meanings; it has not been possible to remove that from their minds in view of its current and well-established usage. As a result they disparaged reason and rationalism."[519] The later position of the Sufis can be interpreted as a reaction to what might be described as a wave of rationalism that prevailed during the golden age of Islamic civilization which is manifested in the writings of the philosophers, the *Mutakallimun* and the *Mu`tazilah* in addition to others.

1.vii. On Creed [*`Aqidah*]:

Al-Ghazzaliyy reiterated his position on the acquisition of knowledge through out the *Ihya'*. In the chapter on *Qawa`id Al-`Aqa'd* [The Fundamentals of Belief] he said that one is not required to do research or to arrange proofs in order to achieve knowledge; the only thing that he has to do is to follow the path of the hereafter and to preoccupy himself with discipline and self-mortification. Only then will "the doors of guidance open and reveal the truths of this creed through divine light which strikes the heart." He added that this knowledge is possible because there is a verse in the Qur'an in

519 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, p. 235.

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which Allah promises guidance for those who strive to act virtuously.[520] Therefore, he interpreted the possibility of knowledge through divine illumination as a fulfillment of the latter promise."[521]

1.viii. On Dreams:

In the chapter on the reality of poverty and mysticism [*zuhd*] where he advocated that intentional poverty is a condition that enables the ascetic who embraces poverty [*al-faqir az-zahid*][522] to know things that are not permitted for those who are preoccupied with money whether rich or poor. One of the most important issues here is that he adopted dreams as another source of knowledge. He related a Hadith of the prophet in which he said: "True vision is a part of forty six parts of prophecy".[523] He commented on this ratio and said that it is not possible to know the reason behind it; he held that any attempt to do so will be nothing more than guessing.[524] In another section in the *Ihya'*, he discussed other conditions that pertain to such vision [e.g. purification]. In this section, Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained that he could only talk about the nature of

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520 Qur'an, 29: 69.

521 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol. 1, p. 94.

522 The term *faqir* [poor] was used as a synonym for "Sufi" in Sufi literature.

523 This hadith, "*Ar-Ru'ya as-salihah juz' min sittah wa'arba`in juz' min an-nubuwwah*", was related by Al-Bukhariyy from the narration of Abu Sa`id. There is another version of this Hadith in which the prophet says: "The vision of the believer is a part of forty six parts of the prophecy." This latter version was related by both Al-Bukhariyy and Muslim in their collections of *Sahih* from the narrations of Abu Hurayrah, `Ubadah Ibn As-Samit and Anas Ibn Malik. It is apparent that this Hadith is ranked *Muttafaq `Alayh*, the highest rank among the narrations that are considered correct.

524 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol. 4, p. 194.

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dreams through the use of examples because this subject belongs to *`ulum al-mukashafah* which should not be discussed.[525]

It seems that Al-Ghazzaliyy's position on the possibility of attaining peremptory knowledge through dreams is substantiated by sound traditions, which is not the case with those on poverty. His arguments regarding poverty are filled with traditions that are "weak" and several others that are fabricated [*mawdu`*]. I think that he failed to cite sources in the Shari`ah to support his position regarding intentional poverty. In addition, Ibn Al-Jawziyy criticized him for adopting this position which he considered contradictory to both the Shari`ah and reason.[526] Thus, if intentional poverty, which is supposed to be an action that brings one closer to the possibility of acquiring peremptory knowledge, is against the Shari`ah, how could some one claim that he has a true vision?

1.ix. Conclusion:

Al-Ghazzaliyy had to rethink his position regarding all fields of knowledge upon his acceptance of the Sufi path as the only way that leads to the attainment of peremptory knowledge. He used this Sufi knowledge as the criterion to be used when considering the various subjects that he used; the variety of these subjects made it rather difficult to reconcile all of them within the framework of his epistemology.

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525 Al-Ghazzaliyy. *Ihya'*, vol. 4, p. 504.
526 Ibn Al-Jawziyy, *Talbis*, pp. 176-178.

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Al-Ghazzaliy held that there exists a faculty higher than reason in which knowledge is "unveiled" to the Sufi. Through this faculty one can achieve knowledge directly from Divine sources. He did not discuss the nature of this knowledge, claiming that he had no permission to reveal it, and that language is not suitable to express such experience. Yet, in order to qualify for this Divine knowledge, one should lead a disciplined and an immaterial life leading to self-mortification. The *Ihya'* is written primarily as a guide that contains the science of action which is a prerequisite to the attainment of Divine knowledge.

The positions Al-Ghazzaliyy took in the *Ihya'* show that he was carried away by Sufism. His positions regarding many subjects [e.g., logic, *kalam*] contain flaws. In some cases in his later works, these flaws were overcome by corrected arguments.

2. *Al-Maqsad Al-Asna Fi Sharh Asma' Allah Al-Husna*:

The writings that followed the *Ihya'* continued to reflect Al-Ghazzaliyy's position towards reason and other sources of knowledge. In the introduction of *Al-Maqsad Al-Asna Fi Sharh Asma' Allah Al-Husna* [The Sublime Aim in the Interpretation of Allah's Beautiful Names] he emphasized the inability of reason to attain transcendental knowledge, namely, knowledge of Allah and the reality of his attributes. He added that such knowledge, which he acquired through "unveiling" [*mukashafah*], does not conform to the

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ideas on this subject that were presented by the scholars before him. He knew that it is rather a difficult task to change the customs and beliefs that people are accustomed to. Nevertheless, he believed that whoever has "seen" the Truth and knows Allah, cannot but convey such knowledge.[527]

3. *Bidayat Al-Hidayah*:

In *Bidayat Al-Hidayah* [The Beginning of Guidance], Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote a chapter on the gradual introduction of guidance. The introduction of this chapter[528] is an exact repetition of a similar text in his *Qawa`id Al-`Aqa'id* which stresses discipline and self-mortification as prerequisites for the attainment of peremptory knowledge. This introduction is another proof of the consistency during this period regarding the method or the "path" that Al-Ghazzaliyy advocated for the attainment af knowledge.

4. *Jawahir Al-Qur'an*:

In another book, *Jawahir Al-Qur'an* [The Jewels of the Qur'an], Al-Ghazzaliyy asserted the position that one could have a true vision, as a source of knowledge, while asleep. He argued, similar to his position in the *Ihya'*, that this form of knowledge is the equivalent of

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527 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Maqsad Al-Asna Sharh Asma' Allah Alhusna*, Muhammad Mustafa Abu Al-`Ula, ed. (Cairo: Maktabat Al-Jindi, 1968) pp. 5-6.
528 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Bidayat Al-Hidayah*, Muhammad Al-Hajjar, ed. (Damascus: Dar As-Sabuni, 1986) pp. 27-29.

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one forty-sixth of prophecy.[529] Moreover, he held that such knowledge is always revealed in metaphorical language that represents transcendental knowledge. Since not everyone knows the meaning of these metaphors only those who posses knowledge of the hidden relationship between this world and the other one can interpret them. Once again, he asserted that to unveil the secrets of the other world one should resort to discipline and self-mortification.[530]

In another section in *Jawahir Al-Qur'an*, Al-Ghazzaliyy pointed to insight [*basirah*] as a source of knowledge. He said: "it appeared to me through clear insight and beyond doubt, that man is capable of acquiring several sciences that are still latent and not existent."[531] The meaning of this statement is that he perceived sciences other than those existing at the time. These sciences are latent, yet they are within reach of human beings. Though the concept of latent sciences which are not discovered yet is an interesting idea in itself, the emphasis here is on his use of insight as source of knowledge which is consistent with his position in the *Ihya'*.[532]

There is yet another book that is of considerable importance to the problem of knowledge, namely, *Al-Qistas Al-Mustaqim* [The Just

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529 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Jawahir Al-Qur'an*, Muhammad Mustafa Abu Al-`Ula, ed. (Cairo: Maktabat Al-Jindi, 1964) p. 31.
530 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Jawahir*, pp. 33-34.
531 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Jawahir*, p. 28.
532 Al-Ghazzali, *The Book of Knowledge*, p. 231.

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Balance]. Although this book could be considered primarily as polemic against the Batinites, Al-Ghazzaliyy also shows his ability to critique the arguments commonly used in Kalam and jurisprudence. In the course of pursuing this critique, he presents strong arguments on the role of reason in Islam and defines the limits of personal opinion [*ra'y*] and analogy [*qiyas*].[533]

In his argument against opinion, Al-Ghazzaliyy provided an example from the doctrines of the Mu`tazilites in which they argued that "Allah is obliged to order the best for His servants." He said that if they are asked to establish this, they have recourse only to opinion that they judge to be good by means of their intellects by analogy between the Creator and His creation and by likening His wisdom to theirs. Al-Ghazzaliyy assessed their opinion and found it to be false according to the rule of concomitance [*mizan at-talazum*] which he derived from the Qur'an, saying:

> "If the best was obligatory for Allah, He would have done it.
>
> It is known that He has not done it.
>
> This demonstrates that it is not obligatory, for He does not neglect that which is obligatory."[534]

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533 D.P. Brewster, trans. and ed., *Al-Qistas Al-Mustaqim*, by Al-Ghazali (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1978) p. xx.
534 Al-Ghazali, *Al-Qistas*, pp. 97-98.

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He added that if the Mu`tazilites do not admit that "Allah has not done it", he would reply that if He had done that which was best He would have created them in Paradise and would have left them there.[535] One of the most important aspects that can be derived from such arguments, is Al-Ghazzaliyy's ability to paint Aristotelian logic with Islamic color.

In his criticism of analogy Al-Ghazzaliyy used an example from the Mujassimah who believe that Allah has a body. They said: "He [Allah] is an agent and an artisan and by analogy with other agents and artisans [who have bodies] He has a body." Al-Ghazzaliyy considered this analogy false. He held that it is called the Great Rule [*al-mizan al-akbar*] and that it runs like this:

"Every agent has a body.

The Creator is an agent.

Hence He has a body."

According to him, the problem in this analogy is not with the second premise which he accepted; it is the validity of the first premise that he questioned. He said that the Mujassimah derived the first premise from two sources: induction [*istiqra'*] and the extended categories [*al-qismah al-muntashirah*]. He stated that induction, in this case, consists of examining all the classes of agents [e.g., the

535 Al-Ghazali, *Al-Qiatas*, p. 98.

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shoemaker, the tailor, the carpenter] and finding that they all have bodies. Accordingly, the Mujassimah concluded that every agent has a body. Al-Ghazzaliyy found this generalization to be incomplete, since they did not examine every agent including Allah. In addition, he asserted that induction cannot provide a certain conclusion.[536]

With regard to the use of extended categories, Al-Ghazzaliyy provided an example where one of the Mujassimah says:

> "I have examined the attributes of agents and found them to possess bodies. This is because of their existence as agents or, alternatively, because of their very existence, or for some other reason."[537]

Then he sets aside all categories [*aqsam*][538] and state that they possess bodies because of their existence as agents. Al-Ghazzaliyy described this position as an extended category and considered it to form a false analogy. It is based on the method of induction, which Al-Ghazzaliyy previously criticized, because in the example, it begins

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536 Al-Ghazali, *Al-Qistas*, pp. 101-102.

537 Al-Ghazali, *Al-Qistas*, p. 103.

538 Dar Al-Kutub Al-`Ilmiyyah published an Arabic edition of *Al-Qistas Al-Mustaqim* in which the word *aqsam* [categories] was substituted with *ajsam* [bodies]. I find Brewster's translation to be more accurate for two reasons. First, it does not make sense to "set aside all bodies and to state that they possess bodies". The second reason is that Brewster cited the source [i.e. Chelhot's printed text of 1959, which was based on the printed text of Cairo, 1900, revised according to the readings of the manuscripts of the Euscurial and Kastamonu dated 544 A.H.] that he used for his translation, while the Arabic edition does not cite any manuscripts and thus resembles the many uncritical editions that flood the market. See Brewster, Introduction, *Al-Qistas Al-Mustaqim* by Al-Ghazali, p. xxii.

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with a premise that is derived from examining the attributes of agents and finding them to possess bodies. It then sets aside all categories [*aqsam*] and states that they possess bodies because of their existence as agents. Therefore, I find the position of assigning a special category for the extended category is rather ambiguous.[539]

The spirit of *Al-Qistas Al-Mustaqim* and Al-Ghazzaliyy's stance on the syllogism prompted Brewster to compare him to Bernard Lonergan:

> "The function of the syllogistic expression is not to eliminate but to facilitate the occurrence of the reflective act of understanding...Inversely, when a man pronounces a judgement on the value of deciding to believe, it is not because of a syllogism, not even because he accepts the premises of a syllogism but only because the syllogism has to grasp the virtually unconditioned in his acceptance of the premises."[540]

He concluded *Al-Qistas* by asserting his position regarding the relationship between reason and revelation. He said that what is intelligible [*al-ma`qul*] should be measured against that which is transmitted [*al-manqul*, i.e. the Qur'an and the Sunnah]. This

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539 Al-Ghazali, *Al-Qistas*, p. 103.
540 Brewster, Appendix III, *Al-Qistas*, by Al-Ghazali, p. 124.

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statement is a clear indication of the supremacy of the Shari`ah over reason in the eyes of Al-Ghazzaliyy.[541]

5. *Ar-Risalah Al-Ladunniyyah*:

In *Ar-Risalah Al-Ladunniyyah*,[542] Al-Ghazzaliyy appeared to be defending "metaphysical transcendental knowledge [*al-`ilm al-ghaybiyy al-ladunniyy*] upon which elite Sufis depend [for knowledge]." In terms of certitude, he ranked this kind of knowledge higher than that which is acquired through conventional education.[543] This position was based upon the source of knowledge [i.e., Allah] and not its mode [e.g. rational vs. Shar`iyy]. Regarding the relationship between the rational sciences and those of the Shari`ah, he stated that he who really *knows* both fields finds that the distinction that divides them into two fields disappears in many cases. He considered many rational sciences to be part of the Shari`ah and many of the sciences in the field of the Shari`ah to be part of the rational sciences.[544]

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541 Al-Ghazali, *Al-Qistas*, p. 111.

542 Literally, *Ladun* means "at" or "at the place or hands of". In the title of this and every Sufi treatise it is used in relation to a verse mentioned in the Qur'an (18: 65) the meaning of which is: "So they [prophet Moses and his attendant] found one of Our servants, on whom We had bestowed mercy from Ourselves and whom We had taught knowledge from Our own presence [*ladunna*]." Thus, Sufis are striving to acquire this kind of knowledge which Al-Ghazzaliyy calls *al-`ilm al-ghaybiyy al-ladunniyy*, directly from Allah. It is apparent that an accurate concise translation is not possible. For a translation of the meaning of this particular verse in the Qur'an, see Abdullah Yusuf Ali's *Ma`ani Al-Qur'an Al-Karim* (Lahore: Sheikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1934).

543 Al-Ghazzaliyy, "*Ar-Risalah Al-Ladunniyyah*", *Majmu`at Rasa'il Al-Imam Al-Ghazali* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-`Ilmiyyah, 1986) vol. 3, p. 87.

544 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ar-Risalah Al-Ladunniyyah*, p. 96.

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Nevertheless, he held that all sciences are important because science indicates the existence of knowledge, and ignorance is the absence of it. Moreover, he maintained that knowledge corresponds to the soul and ignorance to the body. He said that bodies are finite and not equipped to hold the many sciences unlike the soul which accepts all knowledge without any obstacle.[545]

Al-Ghazzaliyy elaborated on the sources of human knowledge which he limited to two: human and divine [*rabbani*]. He considered the first as a known path which all intelligent people accept. Knowledge in this source is achieved in two ways: from without which is formal learning, and from within which is thinking. He held that knowledge exists in potentiality inside the souls and defined learning as the process which brings knowledge out of potentiality into actuality. To explain his idea he used an analogy, writing:

> "The sciences are concentrated in the souls in potentiality, similar to the seeds in earth... Learning is seeking to bring out that thing from potentiality to actuality, while teaching *is* bringing it out. The learner's soul imitates that of the teacher and tries to get close to it because the scholar is similar to the peasant in benefiting others, and the learner is similar to the earth in gaining benefit. The science in potentiality is similar to the seed, while in

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545 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ar-Risalah Al-Ladunniyyah*, p. 90.

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> actuality is the plant. Once the learner's soul is perfected [through education] it becomes similar to a fruitful tree."[546]

Moreover, once the basics of any science are learned, the soul uses intuition [*hads*] to reach that which is required. At this stage an insight brings out the knowledge that exists in his soul from potentiality to actuality.[547] The idea that what is in potentiality comes to actuality by some agency, is Aristotelian. Aristotle said: "For from the potentially existing the actually existing is always produced by an actually existing thing, e.g. man from man." In addition, two words that Al-Ghazzaliyy used in his analogy, namely, "seed" and "earth" were used by Aristotle in his analogy in the *Metaphysics* which corresponds to the same notion.[548] These similarities indicate the possibility that Al-Ghazzaliyy was aware of this particular concept in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.

The second source of knowledge [i.e. divine] was also divided into two kinds: revelation [*wahy*] and inspiration [*ilham*]. Concerning revelation, Al-Ghazzaliyy believed that it is restricted to prophets and that it is no longer available after the death of prophet Muhammad. Regarding inspiration, he stated that unlike revelation where knowledge is presented in clear terms, inspiration constitutes

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546 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ar-Risalah Al-Ladunniyyah*, p. 102.
547 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ar-Risalah Al-Ladunniyyah*, p. 103.
548 Aristotle, "*Metaphysics*", *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, Richard McKeon, ed. (New York: Random House, 1941) 1049a1- 1049b35/pp. 827-829.

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hints of the same kind of knowledge which is called prophetic [*nabawiyy*] in the first case and *ladunni* in the second. Another major difference between these two forms of knowledge is that revelation is known through Allah, while inspiration is known through the emanation of the universal intellect [*al-`aql al-kulliyy*]. Al-Ghazzaliyy held that the *ladunniyy* knowledge is a condition for the attainment of wisdom which is sufficient; one does not have to go through formal education in order to achieve knowledge.[549] This latter position, which was common among the Sufis, was criticized by Ibn Al-Jawziyy.[550] Moreover, in *Ayyuha Al-Walad* [O Child], Al-Ghazzaliyy considered learning or reading subjects such as poetry, *kalam*, grammar and medicine, unless it is done for the sake of Allah, a waste of time that will be regretted.[551]

6. *Mishkat Al-Anwar*:

Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote *Mishkat Al-Anwar* (The Niche for Lights) towards the end of this period of seclusion. The *Mishkah* was written as a reply to someone who asked him to disseminate the secrets of divine illumination, along with the interpretation of the verses of light [e.g. Allah is the light of Heavens and Earth]. His answer to this request was that such knowledge is restricted to the few. In addition, he related the position of some Sufis who held that

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549 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ar-Risalah Al-Ladunniyyah*, pp. 105-107.
550 Ibn Al-Jawziyy, *Talbis*, p. 150.
551 Al-Ghazzaliyy, "*Ayyuha Al-Walad*", *Majmu`at Rasa'il Al-Imam Al-Ghazali* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-`Ilmiyyah, 1986) vol. 3, pp. 154-155.

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disclosing the divine secret is blasphemous [*Ifsha' sir ar-rububiyyah kufr*]. Nevertheless, he was willing to reveal some of this knowledge metaphorically through hints, signs and symbols. Moreover, he held that it is in Allah's hands to allow the hearts to understand the meaning of these metaphors.[552] The latter idea indicates that he considered the heart [*al-qalb*], which he distinguishes from the physical one, as a source of knowledge. According to him, the heart has an "eye" for knowledge which is sometimes referred to as intellect, soul and human spirit. He defined it as that "which differentiates the intelligent [human being] from the nursing infant, the animal and the insane."[553]

Al-Ghazzaliyy argued that the intellect moves from being insightful in potentiality [*bil-quwwah*] to that of actuality [*bil-fi`l*] when the light of wisdom shines. It is this kind of illumination that allows the "eye" of the heart to perceive the realities of the other world [*`alam al-malakut*] in a fashion analogous to the function of the physical eye in the sensible world [*`alam ash-shahadah*]. He went as far as to describe those who settle for knowledge of the latter world is merely as beasts [*bahimah*].[554]

In relation to this noetic illumination, Al-Ghazzaliyy distinguished five levels of spirits with each corresponding to a level

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552 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mishkat Al-Anwar*, `Abd Al-`Aziz `Izzid-Din As-Siyarawan, ed. (Beirut: `Alam Al-Kutub, 1986) pp. 115-118.
553 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mishkah*, p. 122.
554 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mishkah*, pp. 129-131.

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of knowledge. The first of these is the sensible spirit [*ar-ruh al-hassas*] which is responsible for receiving whatever comes through the five senses. This spirit is possible for both animals and infants. The second spirit is the imaginative [*ar-ruh al-khayaliyy*] which is responsible for storing the sensibles and presenting them to the intellect whenever there is need. He maintained that this one is possible for children and some animals. An example of this is a dog which is hit with a stick, it runs away upon seeing the same stick again. This is an example of conditioned learning, the subject of which is sense objects. The third is the intellectual spirit [*ar-ruh al-`aqliyy*] with which subjects other than the sensibles and imagination are perceived [e.g., generalizations]. This spirit is the essence of adult human beings; it is not possible for children or animals, neither any other level beyond this one. The fourth one is the thinking spirit [*ar-ruh al-fikriyy*] which is responsible for generating knowledge from pure intellectual sciences. The fifth is the holy prophetic spirit [*ar-ruh al-qudsiyy an-nabawiyy*] which is restricted to prophets and some pious people [*awliya'*]. Al-Ghazzaliyy argued that it is through this spirit that divine knowledge is acquired. Most importantly, he held that the lower levels [e.g. intellectual] are not equipped to attain such knowledge.[555]

Towards the end of the *Mishkah*, he addressed those who sought retreat in the world of reason. He argued that the possibility

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555 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mishkah*, pp. 165-166.

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of having a faculty higher than that of reason is similar to the possibility of reason being a faculty higher than the level of discernment and senses.[556] The meaning of this is that reason does exist regardless whether someone does not posses it [i.e. his/her faculties are on the level of the sense or discernment]; by the same token, a noetic faculty which is higher than reason [i.e. prophetic] also exists.

In addition, he believed that through the faculty which ranks higher than reason, elite Sufis are capable of acquiring ultimate knowledge from the same source as the prophets, and therefore, they do not need assistance from them.[557]

As a devout Sufi, Al-Ghazzaliyy concluded *Mishkat Al-Anwar*, by an invitation to strive for divine knowledge which could only be hampered by waves of lust and worldliness.[558] As a matter of fact, his last surviving book to be written during this period, namely, *Al-Kashf Wat-Tabyin Fi Ghurur Al-Khalq Ajma`in* [Unveiling and Explanation of the Deception of all Creation], was an attempt to detail the areas where people need to change their worldly behavior.[559] In addition, when he brought his seclusion to an end by returning to public teaching teaching, the declared motives indicate that it was

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556 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mishkah*, pp. 166-167.
557 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mishkah*, pp. 170-171.
558 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Mishkah*, pp. 172-173.
559 See Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Kashf Wat-Tabyin Fi Ghurur Al-Khalq Ajma`in* (Cairo: Matba`at Mustafa Muhammad, No Date). This book is printed in the margin of *Tanbih Al-Mughtarrin* by `Abd Al-Wahhab Ash-Sha`raniyy.

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consistent with the principles that led him to abandon public teaching in the first place; he asserted that both were for the sake of Allah.

7. Conclusion:

Al-Ghazzaliyy emphasized in his writings the limited capability of reason and that "unveiling" [*kashf*] is the only source of knowledge that is absolutely capable of attaining indubitable transcendental knowledge. In the *Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din* [The Revival of Islamic Sciences], he stressed the superiority of Sufi knowledge over that which is attained by conventional sources of knowledge. This Sufi knowledge which he referred to as *`ilm al-mukashafah* is the aim of intellectual activity, yet he stated that such knowledge should not be revealed to the public. Therefore, the subject of the *Ihya'* is that knowledge which leads to "unveiling" [*kashf*], namely the science of action [*`ilm al-mu`amalah*]. By action, he means self-mortification and discipline which form a prerequisite for attaining peremptory transcendental knowledge. In addition, he held that "unveiling" [*kashf*] is possible through the faculty higher than reason. The aim of this position is to show the limitations of reason which cannot achieve peremptory knowledge. This position is reinforced by listing prophecy as the highest level in relation to the attainment of knowledge which is followed by the scholars in what might be considered Al-Ghazzaliyy's response to the Muslim philosophers who ranked reason as the highest faculty. Finally, he added in the *Ihya'*

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another form for the attainment of peremptory knowledge, namely, vision.

Similar to his position in the *Ihya'*, Al-Ghazzaliyy continued in *Al-Maqsad Al-Asna Sharh Asma' Allah Al-Husna* [The Sublime Aim in the Interpretation of Allah's Beautiful Names] to stress the limitations of reason and its incapability to attain peremptory transcendental knowledge. The only way to achieve such knowledge is through "unveiling" [*kashf*]. It is obvious that these two notions are consistent with Al-Ghazzaliyy's epistemology in the *Ihya'*.

As to *Bidayat Al-Hidayah* [The Beginning of Guidance], there are whole sections which are identical with *Qawa`id Al-`Aqa'id* which is considered a part of the *Ihya'* and therefore it adds to the consistency of Al-Ghazzaliyy's epistemology during this period. In these sections he asserted the notion of discipline and self-mortification as prerequisites to the attainment of peremptory knowledge.

In *Jawahir Al-Qur'an* [The Jewels of the Qur'an] which corresponds to his position in the *Ihya'* and *Bidayat Al-Hidayah*, Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained the notion of discipline and self-mortification as conditions for the attainment of transcendental knowledge. He held that transcendental knowledge can be revealed through true vision in metaphorical language.

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In *Ar-Risalah Al-Ladunniah*, Al-Ghazzaliyy discussed the notion of "metaphysical transcendental knowledge [*al-`ilm al-ghaybiyy al-ladunniyy*] which is accessible to elite Sufis only. This kind of knowledge can be attained through inspiration [*ilham*].

The last book dealing with the epistemology of Al-Ghazzaliyy during the first period of seclusion is *Mishkat Al-Anwar* [The Niche for Lights]. He reiterated his position regarding the existence of a faculty higher than reason. According to him, elite Sufis are capable of attaining knowledge directly from the same source, similar to prophets.

Although Al-Ghazzaliyy introduces different sources [e.g., inspiration, insight] for the attainment of knowledge, these six books emphasize Sufism as the common theme and, therefore, this period of seclusion reflects a unified epistemology.

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Chapter Five

Al-Ghazzaliyy's Quest for knowledge: the Second Period of Public Teaching

(499 A.H.-1106 C.E./-503 A.H./1110 C.E.)

This chapter deals with Al-Ghazzaliyy's writings during the second period of public teaching at the Nizamiyyah of Nishapur which lasted for about four years. After spending more than a decade in seclusion, he realized that there was nothing that could justify his withdrawal from public life, especially when he could see that the society at large was astraying from the straight path, and was, therefore, in desperate need for reformation. He knew that by attempting to play the role of a reformer, he would win the animosity of many people if not all. Nevertheless, realizing that this return to public life was taking place at the turn of the sixth century A.H. (Dhu Al-Qi`dah, 499 A.H.), he was convinced that he was going to be the expected reformer [*mujaddid*] in accordance with a Hadith of the prophet in which he said that Allah will send a reformer to the Muslim nation [*ummah*] at the turn of each century to revive its religion.[560] Al-Ghazzaliyy's decision to leave his seclusion was made

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560 This Hadith (*Inna Allaha Ta`ala Yab`athu Lihadhihi Al-Ummah `Ala Ra'si Kulli Mi'ata Sanah Man Yujaddidu Laha Dinaha*) was verified by Abu Dawud, Al-Hakim and Al-Bayhaqiyy. See Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 159.

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in consultation with prominent Sufis; it was also supported, he argued, by many visions of good people.[561] In addition, he received an official request from vizier Fakhr Al-Mulk in which he asked him to teach at the Nizamiyyah of Nishapur.[562]

During these years, he wrote four books[563]: his autobiographic work *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal* (Deliverance from Error), a ruling [*fatwa*] on divorce *Ghayat Al-Ghawr Fi Dirayat Ad-Dawr*, *Al-Mustasfa Min `Ilm Al-Usul* (The Chosen from the Science of the Fundamentals of Jurisprudence), and a defence of the *Ihya'* which he called *Al-Imla' Fi Ishkalat Al-Ihya'* (The Dictation on the Problems of the Revival).[564] It is the aim of this chapter to continue tracing Al-Ghazzaliyy's theory of knowledge in these books with the exception of *Ghayat Al-Ghawr Fi Dirayat Ad-Dawr* which is not related to the subject matter of this chapter.

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561 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 159.

562 Al-Qarah Daghi, vol. 1, p. 123.

563 Bouyges listed two other books, the first is *`Aja'ib Al-Khawas* (The Wonders of the Qualities [of Chemicals and Magic]); the authenticity of this book was disputed by many scholars. The second book is *Sir Al-`Alamyn Wakashf Ma fi Ad-Darayn* (The Secret of the Two Worlds); the authenticity of this book was disputed by many scholars including Bouyges himself. See Badawi, *Mu'allafat*, p. 205 and p. 271.

564 Badawi, *Mu`allafat*, p. xvii.

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1. *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal*:

The first book to be written during this period is *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal* (The Deliverance from Error). This book was written in response to a brother in religion who wanted Al-Ghazzaliyy to communicate to him "the aim and secrets of the sciences and the dangerous and intricate depths of the different doctrines and views."[565] It is not now possible to determine whether this request actually took place; it is likely that this question-answer is nothing but the writing style of Al-Ghazzaliyy. It is possible that he picked up this style from Platonic dialogues.[566]

Al-Ghazzaliyy gave an account of his "travail in disengaging the truth from amid the welter of the sects, despite the polarity of their means and methods." In addition, he discussed why and how he moved from conformism to independent investigation.[567] He next deliberately took the reader on an intellectual tour that has Sufism as the last station. This station was not intended as a layover, where the reader would take a rest before returning to his first station; *Al-Munqidh* was designed to take the reader on a one-way journey that has Sufism as the *last* station. As a matter of fact, he wanted the reader to avoid the other stations because he tried them and found

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565 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, p. 61.

566 In addition to *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal*, examples of this style can be found in *Al-Maqsad Al-Asna Sharh Asma' Allah Al-Husna*, *Al-Qistas Al-Mustaqim*, *Ar-Risalah Al-Ladunniyyah*, *Faisal At-Tafriqah*, and *Ayyuha Al-Walad*.

567 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, p. 61.

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them not suitable for the aim of this tour which is the attainment of true knowledge.

In the introduction of *Al-Munqidh*, Al-Ghazzaliyy described his quest for knowledge, his attempt to examine creed and every sect or group, as an on going process that began when he was less than twenty years old. According to him, this process continued on; he said that it was still the case with him at the time he was more than fifty years old.[568] This statement supports the idea that he maintained his inquisitive nature throughout his life. Moreover, he declared that his "thirst to perceive the reality of things" was an instinct [*gharizah*] that was placed in his nature by Allah and, therefore, his he had no choice but to seek true knowledge.[569]

Al-Ghazzaliyy described the history of his search for true knowledge. The first change in his epistemology was to break away from conformism [*taqlid*] which he defined as uncritical acceptance of knowledge, presented by parents or teachers, as true. As a result, he rejected all inherited creed [*al-`aqa'd al-mawruthah*]. According to him, the inherited creed is nothing but dictated knowledge [*talqiniyyat*] which is received by way of imitation. He held that this source of knowledge [i.e. *taqlid*] is responsible for the differences between people.[570] He emphasized the necessity to reject conformism as an essential step in any search for true knowledge.

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568 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 79.
569 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 81.
570 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 81-82.

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Al-Ghazzaliyy realized the necessity of defining the nature of knowledge as part of his search for the reality of things. He reached the conclusion that peremptory knowledge [*al-`ilm al-yaqiniyy*] is that knowledge which is indubitable and devoid of mistake or illusion regardless of the circumstances. It is here that he compared the certitude that he was seeking with that which is generated in mathematics [e.g., as the certitude that result from knowing that ten is greater than three].[571]

Al-Ghazzaliyy used his concept of peremptory knowledge as a criterion to verify the sciences that he acquired previously. He found that the sensibles [*al-hissiyyat*] and logical necessities [*ad-daruriyyat*], which he believed to be trustworthy for a while, proved to be subject to doubt and, therefore, he categorized them in terms of certitude along with the knowledge acquired through conformism.[572]

Al-Ghazzaliyy's language in *Al-Munqidh* is different from that of previous works, where he used to present his discussions regarding the sources of knowledge in independent sentences or clauses. There was a transition between defining peremptory knowledge and its application to the sensibles and logical necessities: he used the term "next" [*thumma*] at the beginning of a new chapter [i.e. The Avenues to Sophistry and Agnosticism][573] in addition to

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571 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 82.

572 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 83.

573 R. J. McCarthy translated the title of this chapter *Madakhil As-Safsata Wa Jahd Al-`Ulum*, as "The Avenues of Sophistry and Skepticism." I think that Al-

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other places.[574] The use of this conjunction in Arabic [i.e. *thumma*] creates a sense of continuity that portrays the whole process as a systematic approach to epistemology.

Al-Ghazzaliyy's doubt of the senses was based upon his examination of sight [*basar*] which he considered the strongest sense; if he could doubt sight then he could doubt the rest of the senses as well. He provided several accounts where sight is deceived. In one of these examples he said:

> "The strongest of the senses is the sense of sight. Now this looks at a shadow and sees it standing still and motionless and judges that motion must be denied. Then, due to experience and observation, an hour later it knows that the shadow is moving, and that it did not move in a sudden spurt, but so gradually and imperceptibly that it was never completely at rest."[575]

Al-Ghazzaliyy realized that while the judge of the senses finds the sensibles acceptable, the reason judge refutes the latter judgement. At this stage he trusted the knowledge that comes through reason and which belongs to "the category of primary truths [*al-awwaliyyat*], such as asserting that 'Ten is greater than three,' and

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Ghazzaliyy did not intend "*Jahd Al-'Ulum* " as skepticism here, a translation which cannot be justified linguistically. The literal translation is "denial of the sciences" which the context renders it closer to the concept of agnosticism rather than skepticism or doubt. Al-Ghazali, *Freedom*, p. 64.

574 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 82-83.

575 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, p. 64.

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'One and the same cannot be simultaneously affirmed and denied', and 'One and the same cannot be incipient and eternal, existent and nonexistent, necessary and impossible.' "[576]

Soon Al-Ghazzaliyy found that his trust in reason was also challenged. He was presented with another problem; it was the personified senses that asked him the following question: "What assurance have you that your rational knowledge is not like your reliance on sense judge?"[577] The basic argument is that the existence of a higher faculty makes the lower one doubtful and if it was not for the reason judge, he would have trusted the sense. How then can he be sure that there is not a higher judge than that of reason which once reveals itself, it gives the lie to the judgement of reason? Moreover, the fact that there is no appearance of this higher faculty does not indicate the impossibility of its existence.[578]

Furthermore, this problem was reinforced by Al-Ghazzaliyy's soul, which hesitated about the answer, by appealing to dreaming[579], saying:

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576 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, p. 65.

577 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, p. 65.

578 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 84-85.

579 R. J. McCarthy mistakenly thought that it is the sense judge which reinforced its position by appealing to dreaming. In Arabic, the term "judge" [*hakim*] is masculine while both the "soul" [*an-nafs*] and "reinforced" [*ayyadat*]: the verb reinforced has to be in the masculine form *ayyada* in order for McCarthy's translation to be correct. In addition, the suffixed pronoun *ha* in *ishkalaha* [its problem] is feminine and, therefore, refers to the soul and not the judge. Al-Ghazali, *Freedom*, p. 65 and Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 85.

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> "Don't you see that when you are asleep you believe certain things and imagine circumstances and believe they are fixed and lasting and entertain no doubts about that being their status? Then you wake up and know that all your imaginings and beliefs were groundless and unsubstantial. So while everything you believe through sensation or intellection in your waking state may be true in relation to that state, what assurance have you that you may not suddenly experience a state which would have the same relation to your waking state as the latter has to your dreaming, and your waking state would be dreaming in relation to that new and further state? If you found your self in such a state, you would be sure that all your rational beliefs were unsubstantial fancies."[580]

Al-Ghazzaliyy thought this state beyond reason might be either that which the Sufis claim is theirs, or death. In the first case, the Sufis allege in their states that when they concentrate inwardly and suspend their sensation, they see phenomena which are not in accord with reason. The other possibility is death, where he derived this notion from what he falsely believed to be a Hadith in which the

580 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, p. 65.

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prophet said: "People are asleep: then after they die they awake."[581] In addition, he held that this notion corresponds to a verse in the Qur'an which says: "But we have removed from you your veil and today your sight is keen."[582]

Al-Ghazzaliyy explained that he could not find a way out of these thoughts, because to arrange any proof he needed to combine primary truths, which was inadmissible at the time. Hence, he was left in the condition of rejecting as false all kinds of knowledge, which lasted for two months. He regarded this condition as practically equivalent to sophistry [*safsata*],[583] but his condition did not extend to utterance or doctrine.[584]

Al-Ghazzaliyy considered this condition as a sickness which was "healed" by a light [*nur*] that Allah has caste into his chest. He came to regard this light as the key to most knowledge. From it, he regained his trust in necessary rational knowledge [*ad-daruriyyat al-`aqliyyah*]. He asserted that one should not restrict the possibility of unveiling truth [*al-kashf*] to precisely formulated proofs.[585]

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581 This narration is not a Hadith: Muhammad Al-Hut related in *Asna Al-Matalib Fi Ahadith Mukhtalifat Al-Maratib* that this is a saying of Ali Ibn Abi-Talib, the fourth Caliph. See Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 85-86.

582 Qur'an, 50: 22.

583 *Safsatah* is an Arabicized form of Greek *sophos*.

584 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, p. 66.

585 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 86.

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Al-Ghazzaliyy reflected on this experience in terms of the concept of "dilation" [*ash-sharh*].[586] In the Qur'an there is a verse which reads: "So he whom Allah wishes to guide aright, He dilates[587] his breast for submission to Himself [i.e. to embrace Islam]".[588] In a Hadith, the prophet interpreted this verse as follows: "It is a light which Allah casts into the heart." Then someone said: "And what is the sign of it?" He replied: "Withdrawal from the mansion of delusion and turning to the mansion of immortality."[589] Al-Ghazzaliyy also adverted to other Hadiths on the same subject, concluding that one should seek to unveil truth through that light which gushes forth from the divine generosity, and one must be on the watch for it. He added that these narrations are intended so one should seek truth in areas other than primary truths which are given.[590]

After his trust in primary truths was reinstated at the end of this period of doubt, Al-Ghazzaliyy returned to searching for true knowledge in the teachings of every sect and school of thought. Eventually he narrowed the list of the "classes of seekers" to the Batinites, the dialectical theologians [*Al-Mutakallimun*], the

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586 *Sharh* is a metaphorical expansion of the breast in order to indicate an acceptance of or to accommodate truth.
587 `Ali translated the meaning of *yashrah* as "openeth". See Yusuf `Ali, *Tarjamat Ma`ani Al-Qur'an Al-Karim*, p. 326.
588 Qur'an, 6: 125.
589 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, p. 66.
590 Al-Ghazzaliyy, Al-*Munqidh*, pp. 87-88.

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philosophers and the Sufis. His aim was to show that only the Sufis possessed the methodology [i.e. "tasting" or *dhawq*] that lead to true knowledge.[591]

1.i. The Influence of *Al-Munqidh* on Descartes:

`Uthman Ka``ak related that he found a translated copy of *Al-Munqidh* in Descartes' library in Paris with his comments in the margin.[592] Although there is no account of the nature of these comments, I think a comparison of Descartes' epistemology with that of Al-Ghazzaliyy is in order, because of the remarkable similarities.

Like Al-Ghazzaliyy, Descartes expressed his dissatisfaction with authoritative instruction which he considered deceptive. Therefore, as soon as his age permitted him to pass from under the control of his instructors, he abandoned formal studying: he began travelling and holding intercourse with men of different dispositions by way of studying what he described as the great book of the world.[593] This position is similar to that of Al-Ghazzaliyy regarding conformism. Descartes described his delight in the certitude of mathematics.[594] Likewise, Al-Ghazzaliyy made the certitude of mathematics as the criteria he aspired to reach in all knowledge.[595] Again, Descartes

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591 This stage was discussed at length in chapter three. See p. 104.
592 Al-Qardawiyy, *Al-Ghazzaliyy*, p. 115.
593 Descartes, Discourse on Method and the Meditations, John Veitch, trans. (Bufalo: Prometheus Books, 1989) p. 15.
594 Descartes, p. 14.
595 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 82.

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considered the revealed truths to be beyond the scope of reason's comprehension, and that there was a need of "some special help from heaven" in order to understand them.[596] This is comparable to Al-Ghazzaliyy's assertion that *sharh* is some special help from heaven. In addition, like Descartes he held that reason is impotent to verify revealed truths.

The most important comparison between the two is in the steps each one took toward verification of knowledge. Descartes doubted the senses and reason, and then followed with a comparison of knowledge in dreaming to that of being awake. He said:

> "When I considered that the very same thoughts (presentations) which we experience when awake may also be experienced when we are asleep, while there is at that time not one of them true, I supposed that all the objects (presentations) that had ever entered into my mind when awake, had in them no more truth than the illusions of my dreams."[597]

He went on to ask: "How do we know the thoughts which occur in dreaming are false rather than those other which we experience when awake, since the former are often not less vivid and distinct than the latter?"[598]

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596 Descartes, p. 14.
597 Descartes, p. 30.
598 Descartes, pp. 33-34.

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All these steps made Descartes consider every idea that he had as false, except that he who thinks must exist, and therefore established the first principle of his philosophy.[599] Al-Ghazzaliyy followed the same steps: he doubted the senses, reason and presented similar account regarding the relationship between knowledge in dreaming and that of being awake, saying:

> "Don't you see that when you are asleep you believe certain things and imagine certain circumstances and believe they are fixed and lasting and entertain no doubts about that being their status? Then you wake up and know that all your imaginings and beliefs were groundless and unsubstantial. So while everything you believe through sensation or intellection in your waking state may be true in relation to that state, what assurance have you that you may not suddenly experience a state which would have the same relation to your waking state as the latter has to your dreaming, and your waking state would be dreaming in relation to that new and further state?"[600]

It is apparent that there are numerous similarities between *Al-Munqidh* and *Discourse on Method*, which seem to support Ka``ak's observations. Thus it seems that an investigation of Al-Ghazzaliyy's

599 Descartes, p. 30.
600 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, p. 65.

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influence upon Descartes might be a profitable line of research. Such an investigation is, however, beyond the scope of this dissertation.

1.ii. The Stages of Epistemological Development in Human Beings:

Al-Ghazzaliyy outlined the epistemological development in human beings in his chapter, "The True Nature of Prophecy and the Need All Men Have for It" in *Al-Munqidh*. He began with the essence of man in his original condition at the time of his creation and held that man is born devoid of any knowledge of the existing things. Each category of the existing things is known through a perception [*idrak*] that is created.[601]

In the first stage of development, the senses are created in the human being. The first thing to be created in this stage is the sense of touch [*hassat al-lams*]. The category perceived with it includes the knowledge of heat and cold, wetness and dryness, and softness and harshness in addition to others. Next, sight is created for him with which he perceives colors and shapes. Al-Ghazzaliyy considered this category the largest of the "world" of the sensibles. Next, hearing is created in him with which he hears sounds and tones. Next, tasting is created for him, and so on until he passes the "world" of the sensibles.[602]

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601 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 144.
602 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 144-145.

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The second stage comes after all the senses are completed. The only thing to be created in the human being at this stage is discernment [*tamyiz*] and it is created at the age of seven.[603] With discernment, the human being perceives things other than the sensibles.[604] Al-Ghazzaliyy did not provide examples of the things perceived on this level.

Following discernment, the human being ascends to the third level where reason is created. With reason he perceives the necessary, the possible and the impossible in addition to matters that are not perceived in the stages before.[605]

The fourth stage is that which comes after reason, something which Al-Ghazzaliyy does not give a specific name. It is always described in terms of its order relative to reason. He held that another "eye" is opened at this stage, and that it is used to "see" metaphysical things. The knowledge that is acquired through this faculty is the one usually attained by the prophets; only part of it can be achieved through "tasting" [*dhawq*] by following the Sufi way.[606]

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603 It might be that Al-Ghazzaliyy chose age seven for the beginning of a new stage from a Hadith, part of which indicates that children need to be taught prayer, at age seven though it does not become obligatory [*Muru Awladakum Bis-Salati Idha Balaghu Sab`an...*]. This Hadith was verified by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Abu Dawud and Al-Hakim who held that it is sound [*sahih*] according to the criteria of Muslim.

604 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 145.

605 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 145.

606 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 145-148.

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Al-Ghazzaliyy's argument in support of the existence of this faculty is based upon the relationship between the different stages, he said:

> "Just as the intellect is one of man's stages in which he receives an "eye" by which he "sees" various species of intelligibles from which the senses are far removed, the prophetic pore is an expression signifying a stage in which man receives an "eye" possessed of a light, and in its light the unknown and other phenomena not normally perceived by the intellect become visible."[607]

The importance of Al-Ghazzaliyy's account of what might be described as the post-intellect faculty, can be seen as a response to the Islamic philosophers who placed reason as the highest faculty of knowledge and, therefore, denied prophecy. Or as a response to those who equated the Shari`ah with wisdom [*hikmah*] and, thus, prophecy would appear subservient to the intellect.[608]

2. *Al-Mustasfa Min `Ilm Al-Usul:*

Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote *Al-Mustasfa Min `Ilm Al-Usul* [The Filtered in the Fundamentals of Jurisprudence] at the request of some students of jurisprudence at the Nizamiyyah of Nishapur. They wanted a book which would be median in its size relative to *Tahdhib*

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607 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, p. 98.
608 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 161.

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Al-Usul which they have considered very long and *Al-Mankhul* which does not have enough details.[609]

In this section on *Al-Mustasfa*, I will inquire into whether Al-Ghazzaliyy remained faithful to the epistemology contained in Sufism and whether it had any impact on the fundamentals of jurisprudence. His basic epistemological position is included in both the preface and the introduction.

Unlike the introduction of *Al-Mankhul* which addressed the relationship of jurisprudence to the fundamentals of jurisprudence,[610] the preface to *Al-Mustasfa* began with a criticism of this world for being deceptive and for not being a place of happiness. Al-Ghazzaliyy was calling people to consider this world as a passage to the next one. According to him, both reason and the Shari`ah agree to this latter position.[611] Certainly, the tone of the latter is that of a Sufi rather than that of a jurist.

In this preface, he also provided two classifications of the sciences. In the first classification, he divided the sciences into three categories according to their relations with reason and the Shari`ah. In the second, he divided the sciences into two categories only: rational [*`aqliyyah*] and religious [*diniyyah*]. The first category comprises purely rational [*`aqliyy mahd*] sciences such as

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609 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mustasfa Min `Ilm Al-Usul* (Cairo: Al-Matba`ah Al-Amiriyyah, 1904) vol. 1, p. 6.
610 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, p. 3.
611 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mustasfa*, vol. 1, p. 3.

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mathematics, geometry and astronomy. These subjects are based on either false opinions, or true knowledge that is not useful. Al-Ghazzaliyy admits that these sciences do yield benefit, but they are worldly and, therefore, do not help in attaining real happiness in the hereafter. This language indicates the continuity of his Sufi vision of the world. In addition, he held that the Shari`ah is neutral regarding the study of these sciences; it neither encourages nor discourages it.[612]

The second category is what he considered purely textual [*naqliyy mahd*]. It comprises sciences of the Shari`ah such as Hadith and exegesis [i.e. of the Qur'an]. He argued that these sciences depend on memory and that reason plays no role in them.

The third category comprises the sciences, such as the fundamentals of jurisprudence, that draw on both the Shari`ah and reason. According to Al-Ghazzaliyy, this category is the most honorable. It is better than the sciences that are based on pure reason and do not enjoy the acceptance of the Shari`ah, and it is also better than the sciences of the Shari`ah that are based on pure conformism [*mahd at-taqlid*] that is not supported by reason.[613]

Turning to his second classification, Al-Ghazzaliyy intended this classification to show the relationship between the fundamentals of jurisprudence and the rest of the sciences. The rational include

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612 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mustasfa*, vol. 1. p. 3.
613 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mustasfa*, vol. 1, p. 3.

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sciences such as medicine, arithmetic and geometry; these sciences are of no concern to the fundamentals of jurisprudence. The religious sciences comprise dialectical theology, jurisprudence, the fundamentals of jurisprudence, Hadith, exegesis and the science of esoteric [*`ilm al-batin*] or the science of the heart [i.e. the one that cleans it].[614]

The rational and the religious categories include some sciences that are concerned with universals and others that are concerned with particulars; the science which is concerned with universals is superior to one concerned with particulars. Among the religious sciences, *kalam* addresses universals, while all other religious sciences are concerned with particulars. The latter include jurisprudence, fundamentals of jurisprudence, Hadith and exegesis.[615]

Al-Ghazzaliyy elevated *kalam* to the highest of the religious sciences because all others are dependent on it. He maintained that not everyone has to study it; only those who wish to be considered an absolute scholar [*`alim mutlaq*] and knowledgeable in all the religious sciences, should acquire *kalam*.[616] This position regarding *kalam* is totally different from that presented in the *Ihya'* in which Al-Ghazzaliyy, newly under the influence of Sufism, undermined

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614 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mustasfa*, vol. 1, p. 5.
615 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mustasfa*, vol. 1, p. 5.
616 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mustasfa*, vol. 1, pp. 5-7.

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kalam and regarded it as a veil that prevents the attainment of peremptory knowledge.[617]

The role of *kalam* is restricted to studying existence by using reason. It establishes the necessity of a Creator and that it is possible for Him to send messengers, and that the possible became reality. The last thing to verify is the truthfulness of the prophet and after that, reason receives from the prophet knowledge that it cannot reach by itself, nor render impossible.[618] The other religious sciences address parts of the message of the prophet: exegesis is concerned with the meaning of the Qur'an, the science of Hadith verifies the soundness of the Hadith, jurisprudence covers the rulings that are concerned with the actions of the *mukallaf*,[619] and the fundamentals of jurisprudence pertains to the sources of the latter rulings.[620]

Of these particular religious sciences, the fundamentals of jurisprudence is especially important. Al-Ghazzaliyy listed the Qur'an, Sunnah, and consensus [*al-ijma`*][621] as the only sources of this science.[622] He used reason to derive knowledge [e.g., by analogy,

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617 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, vol. 1, pp. 22-23.
618 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mustasfa*, vol. 1, p. 6.
619 *Mukallaf* is the adult [i.e. who reached puberty] and sane Muslim.
620 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mustasfa*, vol. 1, p. 5.
621 Al-Ghazzaliyy defined consensus [*Ijma*] as the common agreement of all acknowledged Muslim scholars [*ahl alhal wal-`aqd*] on any one issue in religion. See Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mustasfa*, vol. 1, pp. 173-174.
622 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mustasfa*, p.6.

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qiyas] from these three sources.[623] Al-Ghazzaliyy emphasized his restriction of the sources of the Shari`ah to these three whenever he mentioned them together by adding "only" [*faqat*].[624] This position is consistent with *Al-Mankhul*, his first book on the fundamentals of jurisprudence written as a student, in which he also held the Qur'an, Sunnah and consensus as the only three sources of the Shari`ah.[625] The question is whether this restriction of the sources of the Shari`ah marks a new stage in the development of Al-Ghazzaliyy's epistemology, in which he returned to traditional positions? This question can be answered by reference to the theory that I presented in chapter two,[626] where I argued that Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained two independent lines of thought. In the first, he pursued peremptory knowledge [*`ilm yaqin*]; this line of thought, I believe, constitutes his search for universal truths. In the second, he sought particular truths in sciences such as the fundamentals of jurisprudence.

The last book that Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote during this period, *Al-Imla' Fi Mushkil Al-Ihya'*,[627] includes harsh criticism of those who were critical of the *Ihya'*, and very strong arguments in defense of Sufism and the possibility of attaining metaphysical knowledge by

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623 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mustasfa*, vol. 1, p. 7.
624 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mustasfa*, vol. 1, pp. 6-7.
625 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mankhul*, pp. 4-6.
626 See p. 88.
627 This book, *Al-Imla' Fi Mushkilat Al-Ihya'*, is published as an appendix to *Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din*. See Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ihya'*, Appendix [*Al-Mulhaq*]. pp. 13-41. Subsequently, I will refer to it as *Al-Imla'*.

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the post-reason faculty. This defense asserts beyond any doubt that he maintained his Sufi beliefs, at least till the end of the second period of public teaching.

The introduction to *Al-Mustasfa* is for all practical purposes an introduction to logic, which he considered a concise form of what he presented in *Mihak An-Nazar Fi Al-Mantiq* [The Touch-Stone of Reasoning in Logic] and *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm Fi Al-Mantiq* [The Criterion of Knowledge in Logic]. Although Al-Ghazzaliyy included this introduction to logic at the beginning of *Al-Mustasfa*, he did not consider it a part of the fundamentals of jurisprudence. Nevertheless, he held that logic is the prerequisite of all the sciences, and that whoever does not acquire logic cannot expect to have his knowledge trusted.[628]

3. *Al-Imla' Fi Ishkalat Al-Ihya'*:

This book, *Al-Imla' Fi Ishkalat Al-Ihya'* [The Dictation on the Problems of *Al-Ihya'*], was written in response to the criticism that the *Ihya'* had endured at the hands of traditionalists whom Al-Ghazzaliyy did not mention by name. According to Al-Ghazzaliyy, they held that his book contradicts the Shari`ah in advocating "unveiling" [*mukashafah*] as a source of knowledge and, therefore, they tried to censure it.[629]

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628 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Mustasfa*, vol. 1, p. 10.
629 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Imla'*, p. 13.

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The importance of this book is based on two elements: its subject matter and timing. In *Al-Imla'*, Al-Ghazzaliyy defends Sufism and the knowledge that can be derived from it. Chronologically, this was written at the end of the second period of public teaching at the Nizamiyyah of Nishapur, his last book of this period. It is clear, therefore that, contrary to the many voices which argue that he began to change his Sufi method towards the end of his life, and that he adopted the method of the traditionalists who stated that "unveiling" [*mukashafah*] as a source of knowledge cannot be justified from the point of view of the Shari`ah, that Al-Ghazzaliyy made no such changes in his thought during this period. Rather, in his reply to those who were critical of Sufism, Al-Ghazzaliyy defended the existence of Divine knowledge [*al-`ilm al-ilahiyy*].[630] It is certain that this work supports the notion that he remained faithful to his Sufi method until the end of this period; whether he maintained the same epistemology during the final period of his life is something that we shall be considering next.

630 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Imla'*, p. 16.

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Chapter Six

Al-Ghazzaliyy's Quest for Knowledge: the Second Withdrawal from Public Teaching

(503 A.H./1110 C.E.-505 A.H./1111 C.E.)

This chapter deals with the last stage in Al-Ghazzaliyy's life which extended from his withdrawal[631] from public teaching at the Nizamiyyah of Nishapur until his death in 505 A.H./1111 C.E. During this period, he wrote three books: *Ad-Durrah Al-Fakhirah Fi Kashf `Ulum Al-Akhirah* [The Precious Pearl in Unveiling the Sciences of the Hereafter], *Iljam Al-`Awam `An `Ilm Al-Kalam* [Preventing the Common People from Engaging in the Science of Kalam] and *Minhaj Al-`Abidin* [The Course of the Worshippers].[632]

The aim of this chapter is to trace the last developments in his epistemology and to question the claim that he abandoned Sufism and adopted the method of the traditionalists who consider the Qur'an and the Sunnah as the two major sources of knowledge.

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631 According to Badawi, there are no primary sources that contain the exact date of his withdrawal from the Nizamiyyah. He suggests that Al-Ghazzaliyy might have withdrawn some time after the assassination of vizier Fakhr Al-Mulk in 500 A.H./1106 C.E. Badawi's opinion is based on the idea that Fakhr Al-Mulk pressured Al-Ghazzaliyy to teach at the Nizamiyyah of Nishapur, and that when Fakhr Al-Mulk was assassinated, he did not feel obligated to continue teaching. See Badawi, *Mu'allafat*, p. xxv.

632 Badawi, *Mu'allafat*, p. xvii.

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According to Al-Hafiz Abu Al-Qasim Ibn `Asaker, Al-Ghazzaliyy studied Al-Bukhariyy's *Sahih* at the hands of Abu Sahl Muhammad Ibn `Ubayd Allah Al-Hafsiyy.[633] Nevertheless, it seems that `Abd Al-Ghafir Al-Farisiyy, Al-Ghazzaliyy's student and the *Khatib*[634] of Nishapur, was the first one to relate his strong interest in studying Hadith. He said:

> "He [Al-Ghazzaliyy] concluded [the last years of his life] by studying the Hadith of prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace be upon him, and by interacting with the scholars of Hadith. He began reading the two books of sound Hadith: Al-Bukhariyy's *Sahih* and Muslim's *Sahih*.[635] Had he lived longer, he would have, in short time, excelled in this art more than everybody else....In addition, he studied Abu Dawud As-Sijistaniyy's *Sunan*[636] at the hands of Abu Al-Fath Al-Hakimi At-Tusiyy."[637]

One cannot deny that Al-Farisiyy's statement indicates a serious attempt by Al-Ghazzaliyy to study Hadith. This does not prove, however, as Dimashqiyyah attempts to show that Al-Ghazzaliyy

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633 As-Subkiyy, vol. 4, p. 200.

634 *Khatib* is the Imam who leads the Friday prayer which includes a *Khutbah* [speech]. This *Khutbah* is considered part of the prayer.

635 According to Al-Hafiz Abu Sa`d Ibn As-Sam`aniyy, Al-Ghazzaliyy studied the two books of *Sahih* at the hands of Abu Al-Fityan `Umar Ibn Abu Al-Hasan Ar-Rawasiyy Al-Hafiz At-Tusiyy. See As-Subkiyy, vol. 4. p. 215.

636 This is another collection of Hadith which is considered below the level of the *Sahih*.

637 As-Subkiyy, vol. 4, pp. 210-212.

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returned to the method of the traditionalist [*As-Salaf*].[638] The statement is quoted by Dimashqiyyah from a page in As-Subkiyy's *Tabaqat Ash-Shafi`iyyah Al-Kubra* in which Al-Farisiyy held that Al-Ghazzaliyy, upon his return to Tus, established his own school and built a lodge for the Sufis [*khanaqah lis-Sufiyyah*]. Moreover, he devoted part of his time for the Sufis who were described as the people of the hearts [*ahl al-qulub*].[639] It is obvious that this historical account of building a lodge for the Sufis and attending to them is an indication of a continued interest in Sufism. It remains that a study of his last three books is essential in determining Al-Ghazzaliyy's precise stand regarding Sufism.

1. *Ad-Durrah Al-Fakhirah Fi Kashf `Ulum Al-Akhirah*;

This book *Ad-Durrah Al-Fakhirah Fi Kashf `Ulum Al-Akhirah* [The Precious Pearl in Unveiling the Sciences of the Hereafter] is less theoretical than the other two books. It is concerned primarily with Islamic eschatology; it describes in great details themes such as death, the Heavens and Hell. Nevertheless, there are scattered statements which indicate his high esteem for the Sufis whom he described as the Gnostics [*al-`arifun*]. He said that some of those who die proceed through the seven Heavens until they reach the Throne

638 Dimashqiyyah, *Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali Wat-Tasawwuf*, p. 366.
639 As-Subkiyy, vol. 4, p. 210.

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(i.e., of Allah). Some of them are denied access to Allah; only the Gnostics who know Him [*`arifuh*] will reach Him.[640]

In another place in the *Durrah*, he relates the story of prophet Muhammad's intercession [*shafa`ah*] on behalf of his own people on the day of judgement. This intercession begins with praising Allah in a fashion that was not used before. As to the nature of this praise, Al-Ghazzaliyy quoted some Gnostics [*ba`d al-`arifin*] who argued that it was originally "Allah's glorification of Himself at the time He completed His creation [i.e., of the world]."[641]

The term "Gnostic" is also used in a third context. Al-Ghazzaliyy listed the categories of those who are saved on the day of judgement. They are: the believers [*al-mu'minun*], the Muslims [*al-muslimun*], the doers of good works [*al-muhsinun*], the Gnostics [*al-`arifun*], the believers in revelation [*as-siddiqun*], the martyrs [*ash-shuhada'*], the righteous [*as-salihun*] and the messengers [*al-mursalun*].[642] It should be noted that all of these categories are mentioned in the Qur'an, with the exception of the "Gnostics".

All of these three instances involving the Gnostics, namely, reaching the presence of Allah, acceptance of their argument

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640 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ad-Durrah Al-Fakhirah Fi Kashf `Ulum Al-Akhirah*, Muhammad Mustafa Abu Al-`Ula, ed. (Cairo: Maktabat Al-Gindi, 1968) p. 126. This book was printed as an appendix to *Sir Al-`Alamin*, a book that was ascribed to Al-Ghazzaliyy.

641 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Ad-Durrah*, p. 151.

642 Al-Ghazali, *The Precious Pearl*, Jane Idleman Smith, trans. and ed. (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979) p.70.

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regarding the exaltation of Allah, and creating a special category for them along with the messengers on the day of resurrection are clear indications of Al-Ghazzaliyy continued acceptance of Sufis.

2. *Iljam Al-`Awam `An `Ilm Al-Kalam:*

Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote *Iljam Al-`Awam `An `Ilm Al-Kalam* [Preventing the Common People from Engaging in the Science of Kalam] in order to explain the creed of the first generation of Muslims [i.e., *As-Salaf*] regarding divine attributes, and to prove that their position is right and that any other position is an innovation [*bid`ah*]. He held that this is necessary to avoid questions of anthropomorphism.[643]

This book was understood as a criticism of kalam and metaphorical interpretation [*ta'wil*] of divine attributes which forms the essential stand of the later generation of Asha`irites including Al-Ghazzaliyy. This position was misunderstood by many scholars including Dimashqiyyah, who said:

> "He experimented with Sufism: its illusion, self-mortification, "tasting", emotion, circle of *dhikr* [*hadrah*] and seclusion, believing the claim of its masters that what is right is not received from the written revelation, but rather from the hidden esoteric [source], and that Allah

643 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Iljam Al-`Awam `An `Ilm Al-Kalam*, Muhammad Al-Mu`tasim Billah Al-Baghdadiyy, ed. (Beirut: Dar Al-Kitab Al-`Arabi, 1985) pp. 51-52.

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> the Exalted did not provide guidance for the people in whatever verses He sent down for them, but rather in what He hid for the possessors of the stations [*maqamat*] and supernatural powers [who know through] expositions, unveilings and emanations. He remained like this until it became clear to him -when the train of life passed by and the sun of his lifetime dwindled- that he had wasted his life in [seeking] a false illusion and the erroneous impossible, while the infallible peremptory source [of knowledge] was within the reach of his hands, rather close to his lips and he died, may Allah be merciful to him, with the *Sahih* on his chest,[644] as if he were resisting death so that he might drink from it [the *Sahih*] whatever sips to cleans his inside which was stuffed with [knowledge of] the Batinites, philosophy, kalam and Sufism."[645]

Dimashqiyyah held that "unveiling", the Sufi source of knowledge, is a rival of the science of Hadith; he interpreted Al-Ghazzaliyy's position as deserting the Sufi path in favor of the *Salafiyyah* methodology which is based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah.[646] Dimashqiyyah misinterpreted the meaning of "common

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644 This anecdote about Al-Ghazzaliyy's death was mentioned originally by Ibn Taymiyyah. See Dimashqiyyah, p. 367.
645 Dimashqiyyah, p. 369.
646 Dimashqiyyah, p. 368.

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people" [*`awam*] in *Iljam Al-`Awam*. Regarding the definition of common people, Al-Ghazzaliyy said:

> "The category of common people [*Al-`Awam*] includes the man of letters [*al-adib*], the grammarian [*an-nahawi*], the scholar of Hadith [*al-muhaddith*], the interpreter [i.e., of the Qur'an], the jurist and the Mutakallim."[647]

In fact, the Sufis were the only people who were not considered among the *`Awam* and, therefore, they were the only ones qualified to achieve divine knowledge. He held that only one in ten Sufis will reach what he described as the kept secret [*as-sir al-makhzun*]. Al-Ghazzaliyy wanted to prevent all those included in the definition of "common people" from engaging in Kalam and to accept the position of the *Salaf* regarding the interpretation of divine attributes.[648] Thus, the passage Dimashqiyyah refers to provides no basis for the claim that Al-Ghazzaliyy abandoned Sufism.

Instead, Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained the highest rank for the Sufis, as can be seen in the following analogy in which he compared divine presence to that of the Sultan, he said:

> "The Sultan has in his kingdom a private palace which is surrounded by a courtyard that has a gate where all the subjects gather without being permitted to enter through

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647 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Iljam*, p. 67.
648 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Iljam*, pp. 67-68.

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> the gate; they are not permitted to the edge of the courtyard. Then the elites of the kingdom are permitted to enter through the gate and into the courtyard where they can sit according to their positions [i.e., the higher the rank, the closer one gets to the palace]. It could be that only the vizier is permitted to the private palace where the king reveals to the vizier whatever he wishes of the secrets of his kingdom, and he [the king] keeps to himself matters that he would not reveal to him. It is the same regarding how close one can get to the divine presence. The gate is where all the *`Awam* [common people] stop and if any one of them trespasses, he should be reprimanded. As for the Gnostics [*al-`arifun*], they enter through the gate into the courtyard where they spread according to their ranks without being able to get close, or even look at the sacred place [*hazirat al-qudus*] in the center of the court."[649]

This analogy is a clear indication of Al-Ghazzaliyy's classification of the Sufis higher than "common people" which include scholars of Hadith, the very science that he was supposed to accept as the source of knowledge instead of "unveiling" according to the many claims in this respect. To avoid any misunderstandings I should say that he accepted Hadith as a source of knowledge throughout his life, yet this

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649 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Iljam*, pp. 85-86.

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acceptance on its own should not lead to any conclusion regarding his position towards other sources of knowledge [e.g., "unveiling", *kashf*].

Another indication that he did not change his position concerning Sufism is his assertion regarding the existence of a faculty higher than reason. He reiterated his argument in respect to the inability of reason to perceive things such as the harm that results from sinning or the benefit that results from obedience [i.e., to the Shari`ah] in relationship to after death. He added that all those who are rational agree that reason cannot lead to specific knowledge similar to that in the Shari`ah, and that only a post-reason faculty can perceive metaphysical knowledge.[650] It is obvious that Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained his idea on the limitations of reason which he used to support his argument on the existence of a faculty higher than reason, which is accessible to the Sufis.

3. *Minhaj Al-`Abidin*:

This book, *Minhaj Al-`Abidin* [The Course for the Worshippers], is the last work known to be written by Al-Ghazzaliyy at the end of his life; `Abd Al-Malik Ibn `Abdullah, one of his students, said:

> "My honorable Sheikh, the successful and happy mystical Imam, Proof of Islam and Ornament of religion, the honor of the nation, Abu Hamid Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Al-Ghazzaliyy At-Tusiyy, may Allah

650 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Iljam*, p. 87.

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> sanctify his soul and may Allah raise his rank in Heavens, dictated this concise[651] book which was the last book to be written by him, and only copied by his very close companions [*khawas ashabih*]."[652]

Ibn `Abdullah's preface to his own copy of *Minhaj Al-`Abidin* is important not only because it indicates that this is the last book to be written by Al-Ghazzaliyy, but also because it comes from one of the close companions, or what might be described as a member of the inner circle, a fact that adds to the certitude of his statement.

According to Al-Ghazzaliyy, this book was written in the same spirit of the *Ihya'*, except that he was hoping that *Minhaj Al-`Abidin* would not draw criticism similar to the *Ihya'* which he blamed on the inability of the "common people" to understand it. He found consolation in the fact that the Qur'an which is the perfect word of Allah, was described of being "stories of past nations" [i.e., not revealed].[653]

Moreover, he kept referring the reader throughout *Minhaj Al-`Abidin*, because it is a concise book, to read the corresponding chapters in the *Ihya'*. Al-Ghazzaliyy gives no indication that he has retracted the basic positions expressed in the *Ihya'*, which of course

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651 *Minhaj Al-`Abidin* which has more than 240 pages is considered a concise book here relative to books like the *Ihya'*.
652 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Minhaj Al-`Abidin*, Muhammad Mustafa Abu Al-`Ula, ed. (Cairo: Maktabat Al-Gindi, 1972) p. 13.
653 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Minhaj*, p. 14.

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includes his views on the superiority of Sufism as a source of knowledge over all other forms. Yet it is clear that he did not mention every thing he knew regarding Sufism for fear of misunderstanding. He cited four lines of a poem by Zayn Al-`Abidin[654] in which he held that he kept as a secret the jewels of his knowledge fearing an ignorant person who accuse him of being an idolator or worse, he might get killed if he reveals his knowledge.[655] This poem represents the outlook of Al-Ghazzaliyy when he wrote this book; it shows that he was not at ease in expressing all that he wanted to say. Nevertheless, we shall see direct statements that he made in favor of Sufism.

Like the *Ihya'*, *Minhaj Al-`Abidin* was written to explain the path to the hereafter.[656] Al-Ghazzaliyy described seven obstacles[657] that face the person who treads this path. According to him, the arrangement of the contents of this book was an inspiration [*ilham*] from Allah.[658] I will analyze the language that he used in discussing some of these obstacles where he explicitly uses Sufi terms and

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654 Zayn Al-`Abidin, `Ali Ibn Al-Husayn Ibn `Ali Ibn Abu Talib, the grandson of the fourth Caliph.

655 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Minhaj*, p. 15.

656 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Minhaj*, p. 255.

657 These are: *`aqabat al-`ilm wal-ma`rifah* [the obstacle of knowledge], *`aqabat at-tawbah* [the obstacle of repentance], *`aqabat al-`awa'iq* [the obstacle of obstructions], *`aqabat al-`awarid* [the obstacle of crises], *`aqabat al-bawa`ith* [the obstacle of motivations], *`aqabat al-qawadih* [the obstacle of impunities] and *`aqabat al-hamd wash-shukr* [the obstacle of gratitude and thankfulness].

658 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Minhaj*, p. 20.

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themes in order to determine whether there were any changes in his epistemology.

The first of these is the obstacle of science and knowledge [*`aqabat al-`ilm wal-ma`rifah*]. In order to worship, one needs to know what it is that he is worshipping and to be certain about it. To overcome this obstacle, he held that one should seek help "from the scholars of the hereafter [*`ulama' al-akhirah*] who are the guides of this path, the saddle of this nation and the leaders of the Imams. One should benefit from them and should ask them for their good supplication [*du`a'*] so he can cross this path with the help of Allah, praise be to him, in order to attain peremptory knowledge [*`ilm al-yaqin*]."[659] Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained, since he accepted the Sufi path as the only way to achieve peremptory knowledge. Thus, I understand the solution that Al-Ghazzaliyy provided to this obstacle as an invitation for people to seek a Sufi Sheikh among those whom he described as "the scholars of the hereafter" who would guide the novice [*al-murid*] on this path.

Furthermore, he stated that while studying at the hands of a teacher facilitates knowledge and makes it easier to achieve, Allah bestows his bounty on whomever He chooses from among His servants and becomes their direct Teacher.[660] The latter statement

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659 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Minhaj*, p. 16.
660 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Minhaj*, p. 27.

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conforms to the Sufi notion of achieving knowledge directly from Allah which is known as *al-`ilm ladunniyy*.

In his discussion of another obstacle, that concerning worldly things, he considered the question of whether asceticism [*zuhd*] is an obligation [*fard*]. Al-Ghazzaliyy held that asceticism is an obligation in regard to forbidden [*haram*] things; it is voluntary [*nafl*] concerning what is lawful [*halal*]. That is to say, refraining from things which are forbidden is obligatory on all; but one may refrain, though one is not obliged to do so, in cases of things which are permitted by Islamic law. He maintained that there is a higher level than this where the lawful is considered forbidden and, therefore, asceticism becomes obligatory. This higher level is pertaining to the Sufis who become *Abdal*.[661]

To explain this term "*abdal*", one needs to know the hierarchy of a Sufi order. The Sufi order has one Sheikh in the highest rank; he is described as *Qutub* [head].[662] The *Qutub* has three deputies [*Nuqaba'*, sing. *Naqib*] who represent the second level. The third level comprises seven chiefs [*Awtad*, sing. *Watad*].[663] The fourth rank includes forty substitutes [*Abdal*, sing. *Badal*].[664] It is the members of this latter rank that Al-Ghazzaliyy had in his mind when he made his comments that their asceticism is obligatory in both the

661 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Minhaj*, p. 42.
662 Literally "*qutub*" means pole.
663 Literally '*watad*" means peg or stake.
664 Trimingham, J., *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971) p. 262.

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lawful and the forbidden. The meaning of this is that once a Sufi reaches the fourth rank or higher, he regards lawful things as if they are a dead animal.[665] According to Islamic jurisprudence, one can eat of a dead animal only in case where if he did not, he would die. For Al-Ghazzaliyy, the dead animal becomes a metaphor of this world, where the Sufi would use enough of it to subsist in order to be able to continue worshipping.

Moreover, he explained that asceticism should take place in regard to everything except for subsistence. He added that one might subsist with or without food and drink; if Allah wills the body to subsist without a cause [i.e., food and drink] it will do so, as do the angels. On the other hand, if He wills the body to subsist with something, it might be that you seek that thing, or that He would cause that thing to come to you without seeking it. To support his argument, Al-Ghazzaliyy cited a verse in the Qur'an which indicates that for one who fears Allah, He will find him a way out of his problems and that He will provide him with sustenance in ways that he did not expect.[666]

Another obstacle that Al-Ghazzaliyy discussed is people. He held that people will keep one from worshipping, and if he does worship in their presence, he might change the way he worships [e.g., improve it], an act which renders him hypocrite. According to Al-

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665 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Minhaj*, p. 42.
666 Qur'an, 65: 3. See Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Minhaj*, p. 43.

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Ghazzaliyy, the solution to this problem is seclusion [*al-`uzlah*]. He related numerous Hadiths, poems and anecdotes of Sufis in support of this notion. In addition, he defended the existence of Sufi schools and lodges [*ribatat as-sufiyyah*] which fulfill the notion of seclusion, even though other people are present. He maintained that if problems arise in these special gatherings, then it is legitimate for the scholar to seek absolute isolation even if it leads to the "burial of knowledge." He emphasized that finding comfort in the presence of people without a need [e.g., for studying] is an indication of emptiness.[667]

Al-Ghazzaliyy discussed many other Sufi themes such as poverty and celibacy. He held that poverty is better than wealth and that celibacy is better than being preoccupied with the the affairs of the wife and children. His position is based on the idea that the Sufi should be disentangled and independent from worldly affairs.[668]

Towards the end of this book, he described the nature of this path that the Sufi needs to follow, saying:

> "This path in its length is unlike the existing distances that are people cover by feet according to their strength and weakness, it is rather a spiritual path that is tread by hearts which cover it with thought according to the faith and insight [of the seeker]. Its origin is a Heavenly light

667 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Minhaj*, pp. 44-58.
668 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Minhaj*, p. 141.

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[*nur samawiyy*] and a Divine look [*nazar ilahiyy*] which descends on the heart of the servant who uses it to see the reality of both worlds."[669]

As to the length of time one spends in seeking this path, Al-Ghazzaliyy argued that someone might seek it for a hundred years without finding it due to mistakes in the way he seeks it or because he does not exert enough effort. On the other hand, someone else might find it in a moment with the care of the Lord, the Exalted, who is responsible for guidance.[670]

4. Conclusion:

It is apparent, then, that *Ad-Durrah Al-Fakhirah, Iljam Al-`Awam `An `Ilm Al-Kalam* and *Minhaj Al-`Abidin*, written during the last stage of Al-Ghazzaliyy's life, contain clear manifestations of his continued acceptance of Sufism as the path for true knowledge.

In *Ad-Durrah Al-Fakhirah*, he held that the Sufis, whom he described as *`Arifin* [Gnostics], are the only people who upon their death could proceed through the seven Heavens to reach Allah. In *Iljam Al-`Awam*, he employed the concept of "common people" to divide every other kind of scholar from the Sufis. He ranked the Sufis higher and he described them as the scholars of the hereafter. Finally, in *Minhaj Al-`Abidin*, he defended Sufi schools and lodges.

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669 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Minhaj*, p. 245.
670 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Minhaj*, p. 245.

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In addition, he described the knowledge of the Sufi in terms of a Divine light which is typical of "unveiling" [*kashf*].

All of these Sufi themes, which were also written using Sufi terminology, leave no room for any doubt or hesitation that Al-Ghazzaliyy's epistemology was Sufi in its essence. It should be noted that this is not a defence of Sufism against the *Salafiyyah* movement which tried to present Al-Ghazzaliyy in his final days as someone who abandoned Sufism. What I am trying to say is that they need a better argument for their position.

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Conclusion

In this dissertation I have offered a comprehensive study of Al-Ghazzaliyy's epistemology in all his confirmed and available works. I have argued that his epistemology evolved through the various stages of his life. He began as a conformist (i.e., accepting knowledge on the authority of parents and teachers), but soon he broke away from conformism while still a child. He stressed the importance of this step for anyone seeking true knowledge. After releasing himself from the authority of conformism, he began a long intellectual journey in quest for truth which led him to question everything and eventually to experience one of the most original and dramatic cases of skepticism in the history of thought. The way out of his skepticism was divine illumination. After he regained his trust in logical necessities, he studied all the existing schools of thought including philosophy, dialectical theology and the Batinites; his search culminated in his acceptance of Sufism as the only path that leads to what he described as peremptory knowledge [*`ilm yaqin*].

In Chapter One I presented a sketch of Al-Ghazzaliyy's life as an aid to understanding the complexities and the controversies that surround this great Muslim thinker. Not only his writings (e.g., Al-Ghazzaliyy's books on knowledge), but also his life is a direct manifestation of his spiritual and intellectual development. This is especially true when the person is a Sufi, a Muslim mystic, whose

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everyday life is a manifestation of the epistemological path he is using.

In the subsequent chapters (2-6) I analyzed Al-Ghazzaliyy's books in chronological order in order to portray the development in his epistemology.

As a student, Al-Ghazzaliyy wrote *Al-Mankhul* on the fundamentals of Jurisprudence [*usul al-fiqh*]. His basic epistemological interest in this book was mainly as a jurist. He concentrated on technical issues that were part of or related to *usul al-fiqh* [e.g., the conditions of the narrators of Hadith]. As a student, Al-Ghazzaliyy imitated his teacher Al-Juwainiyy, which he acknowledged at the end of this book. Although he differed in very few cases from his teacher in *Al-Mankhul*, his originality in *usul al-fiqh* was manifested in his later work *Al-Mustasfa* where logic played a major role in his *usul*.

Although *Al-Mankhul* shows Al-Ghazzaliyy as an imitating student, his bibliographic work *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal*, which was written towards the end of his life, projects a personality that is preoccupied with truth in itself. It was differences in belief that prompted him to search for truth. His awareness, during the early stages of his life, of the different creeds of people started him on his first stage of a long journey of systematic skepticism which lasted until the climax of his quest for knowledge during his last days as a teacher at the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad.

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Al-Ghazzaliyy's critical thinking and regard for general questions of truth and knowledge, while apparent in *Al-Munqidh*, are absent from *Al-Mankhul*. The fact that these two books reflected different areas of interest in Al-Ghazzaliyy's early life might appear contradictory. One question that might surface as a result of these two areas is: how could someone like Al-Ghazzaliyy, who was investigating the general notions of knowledge and their sources as stated in *Al-Munqidh*, proceeded to verify the particular as the case in *Al-Mankhul*?

There could be one answer, I argue, that explains these positions. Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained two lines of thought since the days of youth until the last years of his life. The first line of thought, which represents Al-Ghazzaliyy's quest for knowledge, is best illustrated in the following lines from the introduction of *Al-Munqidh*:

> "In the bloom of my life, from the time I reached puberty before I was twenty until now, when I am over fifty, I have constantly been diving daringly into the depths of this profound sea and wading into its deep water like a bold man, not like a cautious coward. I would penetrate far into every murky mystery, pounce upon every problem, and dash into every mazy difficulty. I would scrutinize the creed of every sect and seek to lay bare the secrets of each faction's teaching with the aim of

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> discriminating between the proponent of truth and the advocate of error, and between the faithful follower of tradition and the heterodox innovator."[671]

Al-Ghazzaliyy reaffirmed the early beginning of this search for truth and the source of this quest for knowledge in the same introduction. He said:

> "The thirst for grasping the real meaning of things was indeed my habit and wont from my early years and in the prime of my life. It was an instinctive, natural disposition placed in my makeup by God [Allah] Most High, not something due to my own choosing and contriving. As a result, the fetters of servile conformism [*taqlid*] fell away from me, and inherited beliefs lost their hold on me, when I was still quite young."[672]

Although the above quotations showed the time frame of the first line of thought, which covered Al-Ghazzaliyy's life as a student, it remains that there were no books written by the student Al-Ghazzaliyy that reflected this independent approach to knowledge and truth. There were many works (e.g., *Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal*) by the later Al-Ghazzaliyy that embodied this investigative course

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671 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom and Fulfillment* [*Al-Munqidh Min Ad-Dalal*], Richard Joseph McCarthy, tr. (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980) p. 62.
672 Al-Ghazali, *Freedom*, p. 63.

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that he undertook in pursuit of knowledge and truth in what could be called the area of universals.

The second line of thought is represented in Al-Ghazzaliyy's works in fields like jurisprudence. Although the first line of thought must have influenced the way Al-Ghazzaliyy approached areas like *fiqh* by having that independent spirit which led him not to be a conformist to previous writings in such fields, one cannot claim that these works were reflecting the first line of thought because they were concerned with particulars. Unlike a reductionist, he addressed these areas of particulars as if there was no relationship between the general notions of knowledge, which he put under investigation, and these particular fields.

The fact that Al-Ghazzaliyy kept working in the particular fields of the Shari`ah indicate that he was never in doubt about the true validity of the premises which were derived from the Qur'an and the Sunna. In fact, he continued lecturing on these subjects even at the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad, when he was going through what I like to call the climax of his mental discourse regarding the first line of thought.[673]

Al-Ghazzaliyy's continuous inquiry into both universals and particulars is interesting because on the surface they seem incompatible. One could see that Al-Ghazzaliyy had an obvious,

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673 Al-Ghazzaliyy, *Al-Munqidh*, p. 136.

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spontaneous interest in the first. It prompted a good deal reflection throughout his life. The difficulty is in the question: why did he pursue the second? Part of the answer could be found in Al-Ghazzaliyy's formal education which started with training in the particulars (i.e. *fiqh*). Another partial answer comes from the fact that there was common interest in these particular sciences, especially in jurisprudence. In addition, Al-Ghazzaliyy pursued his interest in the particulars as a teacher who was expected, and thus there is a sense of duty, to lecture on such topics. All of these aspects and probably more provided the motivation for such pursuit of knowledge in the particulars. Moreover, one could think that once Al-Ghazzaliyy achieved universal knowledge, he found that his interest in the particulars was on line with his interest in the universals. In addition, there is a sociological element in this equation, where a scholar in the Islamic world is unlikely to be accepted without being deep rooted and having strong interests in the particulars.

The next stage in Al-Ghazzaliyy's epistemological development took place when he became the teacher of the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad. His writings during this period, which lasted for a decade, reflect one of the most important stages in his intellectual development. He broke with conformism which dominated his work as a student, and began a systematic inquiry of the schools of thought that were available at the time in search for true knowledge.

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Al-Ghazzaliyy encountered many schools of thought in his quest for true knowledge. Eventually, he restricted the possibility of finding such knowledge to four "classes of seekers": the dialectical theologians [*al-Mutakallimun*], the Batinites, the philosophers and the Sufis whose methodology he finally accepted. A careful study of the language that Al-Ghazzaliyy used to describe these four groups reveals that he narrowed them to two only; the Batinites and the philosophers in one group, and the *Mutakallimun* and the Sufis in the other. The choice of words reflects a subtle approval of the latter group.

When Al-Ghazzaliyy became a teacher at the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad, he started studying philosophy in his search for true knowledge as part of a systematic approach in which he was attempting to study all sects, religions and schools of thought in search of true knowledge. According to him, he could not find such knowledge in all the traditional subjects of philosophy; the only two exceptions were logic and mathematics. Although he was critical of philosophy, he adopted many positions from the works of the philosophers [e.g., Al-Farabi].

One of the most important contributions of Al-Ghazzaliyy during this period is his position on logic. He wrote several books in which he intended to set forth a criterion for science. He held in *Mi`yar Al-`Ilm* that every person has three judges: a judge of sensibles, a judge of illusions [*hakim wahmiyy*] and a judge of reason.

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It is the addition of a "judge of illusion" here that contributes to the development of his genetic epistemology even though he would drop it later on in *Al-Munqidh*.

Al-Ghazzaliyy's search for indubitable knowledge led him to reject all knowledge that was based on authority [e.g., parents, teachers] which he blamed for the differences among people. He defined this knowledge in terms of mathematical certitude [e.g., on the same level of certitude that is found in 'ten is greater than three']. He scrutinized all his cognition in search for knowledge that would meet the previous description; he thought for a while that the sensibles and the self evident truths conform to the level of certitude that he was looking for. Nevertheless, meditating upon such knowledge he found that he could doubt them, and thus he found himself devoid of any indubitable knowledge. As a result, he found himself doubting all sources of knowledge, including reason, which was based upon the possibility of the existence of a higher faculty and which he defined in terms of its relation to reason [i.e., the faculty above reason (*malakah fawqa al-`aql*)]. In fact, he underwent a most genuine and dramatic experience of skepticism. This state of doubt continued for the duration of two months and eventually ended by divine illumination.

The first thing that Al-Ghazzaliyy regained after he emerged from his state of doubt was his trust in logical necessities. According to him, this would not have been possible without divine illumination

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which he considered a source of knowledge that he called *kashf* and which he described as acquiring knowledge directly (i.e. from Allah). This latter source of knowledge forms the backbone of Sufi epistemology; he would expand on this concept during his first period of withdrawal from public life which he believed to be a condition that he should fulfill in order to attain peremptory knowledge.

During the years of seclusion Al-Ghazzaliyy emphasized in his writings the limited capability of reason and that "unveiling" [*kashf*] is the only source of knowledge that is absolutely capable of attaining indubitable transcendental knowledge. In the *Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din* [The Revival of Islamic Sciences], he stressed the superiority of Sufi knowledge over that which is attained by conventional sources of knowledge. This Sufi knowledge which he referred to as *`ilm al-mukashafah* is the aim of intellectual activity, yet he stated that such knowledge should not be revealed to the public. Therefore, the subject of the *Ihya'* is that knowledge which leads to "unveiling" [*kashf*], namely the science of action [*`ilm al-mu`amalah*]. By action, he means self-mortification and discipline which form a prerequisite for attaining peremptory transcendental knowledge. In addition, he held that "unveiling" [*kashf*] is possible through the faculty higher than reason which forms one of the most important developments in his epistemology. The aim of this position is to show the limitations of reason which cannot achieve peremptory knowledge. This position is reinforced by listing prophecy as the highest level in

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relation to the attainment of knowledge which is followed by the scholars in what might be considered Al-Ghazzaliyy's response to the Muslim philosophers who ranked reason as the highest faculty. Finally, he added in the *Ihya'* another form for the attainment of peremptory knowledge, namely, vision.

Similar to his position in the *Ihya'*, Al-Ghazzaliyy continued in *Al-Maqsad Al-Asna Sharh Asma' Allah Al-Husna* [The Sublime Aim in the Interpretation of Allah's Beautiful Names] to stress the limitations of reason and its incapability to attain peremptory transcendental knowledge. The only way to achieve such knowledge is through "unveiling" [*kashf*]. It is obvious that these two notions are consistent with Al-Ghazzaliyy's epistemology in the *Ihya'*.

As to *Bidayat Al-Hidayah* [The Beginning of Guidance], there are whole sections which are identical with *Qawa`id Al-`Aqa'id* which is considered a part of the *Ihya'* and therefore it adds to the consistency of Al-Ghazzaliyy's epistemology during this period. In these sections he asserted the notion of discipline and self-mortification as prerequisites to the attainment of peremptory knowledge.

In *Jawahir Al-Qur'an* [The Jewels of the Qur'an] which corresponds to his position in the *Ihya'* and *Bidayat Al-Hidayah*, Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained the notion of discipline and self-mortification as conditions for the attainment of transcendental knowledge. He

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held that transcendental knowledge can be revealed through true vision in metaphorical language.

In *Ar-Risalah Al-Ladunniah*, Al-Ghazzaliyy discussed the notion of "metaphysical transcendental knowledge [*al-`ilm al-ghaybiyy al-ladunniyy*] which is accessible to elite Sufis only. This kind of knowledge can be attained through inspiration [*ilham*].

The last book dealing with the epistemology of Al-Ghazzaliyy during the first period of seclusion is *Mishkat Al-Anwar* [The Niche for Lights]. He reiterated his position regarding the existence of a faculty higher than reason. According to him, elite Sufis are capable of attaining knowledge directly from the same source, similar to prophets.

Although Al-Ghazzaliyy introduces different sources (e.g., inspiration, insight) for the attainment of knowledge, the last six books emphasize Sufism as the common theme and, therefore, this period of seclusion reflects a unified epistemology.

After ending his seclusion and returning to teach at the Nizamiyyah of Nishapur, Al-Ghazzaliyy maintained his epistemology as a Sufi. His last book to be written during this period, *Al-Imla' Fi Ishkalat Al-Ihya'* [The Dictation on the Problems of *Al-Ihya'*], was written in response to the criticism that the *Ihya'* had endured at the hands of traditionalists whom Al-Ghazzaliyy did not mention by name. According to Al-Ghazzaliyy, they held that his book

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contradicts the Shari`ah in advocating "unveiling" [*mukashafah*] as a source of knowledge. His defence of the *Ihya'* is a sign of his commitment to Sufism as the only path for true knowledge.

After spending about four years at the Nizamiyyah of Nishapur, Al-Ghazzaliyy withdrew again from public life and settled in his hometown Tus. The most important task regarding the last period of his life in relation to epistemology is to question the claim that he abandoned Sufism and adopted the method of the traditionalists. It is apparent though, that *Ad-Durrah Al-Fakhirah, Iljam Al-`Awam `An `Ilm Al-Kalam* and *Minhaj Al-`Abidin*, which were written during the last stage of his life, contain direct references to his continued acceptance of Sufism as the path for true knowledge.

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All of these Sufi themes, which were also written using Sufi terminology, leave no room for any doubt or hesitation that Al-Ghazzaliyy's final epistemology was Sufi in its essence. It should be

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noted that this is not a defence of Sufism against the *Salafiyyah* movement which tried to present Al-Ghazzaliyy in his final days as someone who abandoned Sufism. What I am trying to say is that they need a better argument for their position.

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Bibliography

This bibliography is divided into four sections. The first is a chronological listing of Al-Ghazzaliyy's works in Arabic that were either cited or consulted for this dissertation. The second section is a list of very few translated works of Al-Ghazzaliyy. The third is a list of medieval primary sources in Arabic and the fourth is a general list of books in Arabic and non-Arabic languages.

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