

# Was Ghazālī an Ash‘arite?\*

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## I. Introduction

It has been generally taken for granted that Ghazālī (1058–1111) was an Ash‘arite theologian. This has become, however, increasingly questionable, at least to the present writer. The aim of this article is to explain why and whence it is so.

As is well-known, there is a minor treatise entitled *al-Maḍnūn al-Ṣaghīr*<sup>1)</sup> attributed to Ghazālī. Some scholars regard it as spurious, and others treat it as one of his writings.<sup>2)</sup> Among the latter group, D. B. Macdonald in particular highly evaluates its notion of spirit as an incorporeal substance occupying no space (*lā mutahayyiz*), and regards it as a turning point in the development of the traditional conception of spirit in Sunnī theology.<sup>3)</sup>

Meanwhile, in his article “The Authenticity of the Works Attributed to al-Ghazālī” (*JRAS*, 1952, pp. 24–45), W. M. Watt proposes three criteria of authenticity for the works attributed to Ghazālī, one of which is Ghazālī’s concern to be orthodox (Ash‘arite), and tries to classify them and to clarify their later interpolations accordingly. Thus Watt draws the conclusion that *al-Maḍnūn al-Ṣaghīr* is unauthentic for five reasons.

Summarizing the argumentation in the *Maḍnūn*, Watt says, “The author has been saying that the Prophet forbade the revealing of the nature of the spirit . . . , because the minds of the common people cannot appreciate such things; the Karrāmīyah and Ḥanbalīyah consider God a body; those a little superior denied corporeality but affirmed direction (?=position)” (p. 36), and he quotes from the *Maḍnūn*:

The Ash‘arīyah and the Mu‘tazilah advanced still further beyond these ordinary men and affirmed an existent which had no direction. Question: Why may not this mystery (sc. of the spirit) be revealed to such people? Answer: Because they hold that these attributes can belong only to God; if you mention this (spirit) to some of them they regard you as an infidel and say you are characterizing yourself by an attribute which is peculiar to God, and that you are claiming Divinity for yourself. (*ibid.*)<sup>4)</sup>

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\*This is a revised and enlarged version of my Japanese article entitled “Gazālī to Ashuarī-ha shingaku” (Ghazālī and Ash‘arite Theology) in *Isuramu Sekai (The World of Islam)*, Vol. 41 (1993).

And he says, "There is no evidence from admittedly genuine works that al-Ghazālī ever to this extent dissociated himself from the Ash'arīyah" (*ibid.*).<sup>5)</sup>

This is Watt's argumentation. I have some queries and questions in respect of the other criteria as well. But I will take up only one of them in this article, namely, the question of Ghazālī's Ash'arism. Did Ghazālī remain an orthodox Ash'arite, or did he step out of traditional Ash'arism so that it is not possible any more to take it as a criterion?<sup>6)</sup>

## II. Ghazālī's Own Testimonies

It is proper to start with examining how Ghazālī considers himself. Generally speaking, first of all, according to the impressions we have from his writings and sayings, he was born with an extraordinary intellectual ability, and was confident and proud of it (see, for example, his *Munqidh*). Hence his words toward some one inferior intellectually or heretical become sharp and poignant, and his attitude becomes despising and scornful as if looking down on him (see, for example, *Fadā'ih al-Bāṭiniyyah*).

This is evident from the following remark by one of Ghazālī's contemporaries, 'Abd al-Ghāfir al-Fārisī:

I visited him many times, and it was no bare conjecture of mine that he, in spite of what I saw in him in time past of maliciousness and roughness towards people, and he looked upon them contemptuously through his being led astray by what God had granted him of ease in word and thought and expression, and through the seeking of rank and position, had come to be the very opposite and was purified from these stains.<sup>7)</sup>

This testimony emphasizes Ghazālī's radical change after his conversion to Sūfism. As far as we can gather from his "Autobiography" (*Munqidh*) written late in his life, however, his trait of self-confidence is still evident in his style. Would such a self-confident man as Ghazālī ever remain satisfied with being a mere epigone of al-Ash'arī?

Indeed Ghazālī writes in one of the works composed toward the end of his life, *Faysal al-Tafriqah*, as follows:

Verily I see you, O bewildered brother and faithful friend, inflated with anger and divided in thoughts, on hearing a group of people blame me out of envy at what I wrote about the secrets of the religious practices. *They allege that there are in those writings some points which contradict the teachings of the early authorities and the master theologians; that it is unbelief (kufr) to deviate even a little from the teaching of al-Ash'arī; and that it is an error and perdition to differ even in a small matter from him.* Relax, O faithful and bewildered brother! Do not press your bosom with it. Calm down. Forbear what they say and leave them alone

smartly. Despise those who are envious and speak ill of others. Disregard those who know nothing about unbelief and heresy. (p. 127; emphasis added here and below)

Ghazālī also says in the same work:

If someone says that unbelief means the denial of the teachings of al-Ash‘arī, or the Mu‘tazilites, or the Ḥanbalites, or any other, he is, you should know, unexperienced and stupid, bound by *taqlīd* (blind following). It would be a waste of time to try to remedy him. . . . If al-Bāqillānī (d. 1013) contradicted al-Ash‘arī (d. 935), why would it be al-Bāqillānī rather than al-Ash‘arī who is an unbeliever? Why is one of them right, and the other wrong? Is it due to antecedence in time? If so, then the Mu‘tazilites are anterior to him (al-Ash‘arī) and therefore they must be right. Or is it due to the difference in virtue and knowledge? If so, then by what sort of scale and measure can one know the amount of virtue so that it may become evident to him that no one is more virtuous than the followed (*matbū*) and imitated (*muqallad*)? (pp. 131–32)

In the *Arba‘īn* we find the following passage:

Probably you say that I fabricated the assertion contradictory to what is well-known (*mashhūr*) and disavowed by the majority, since I claim that the various kinds of punishment in the Hereafter are known by the light of spiritual insight (*baṣīrah*) and illumination (*mushāhadah*), which are far beyond the level of the blind imitation of the Divine Law. If it is so, you ask whether I can narrow down the kinds and details of the punishment. Know that it cannot be denied that I differ from the majority. How can it be denied that the traveller [after truth] differs from the majority? (p. 289)

Ghazālī also says in the *Mizān*, after explaining the meaning of “school” (*madhhab*):

. . . . therefore, stop relying on the schools, and seek the truth by way of demonstration (*naẓar*) so as to be a master of a school (*ṣāhib madhhab*). Do not follow a guide like a blind man so that he may lead you along the way while there are a thousand similar guides around you, calling out to you that he has ruined and misguided you from the right path. (p. 409)

Ghazālī explained his attitude in the presence of the calumniators in Ṭūs:

With regard to theoretical matters (*ma‘qūlāt*), there are [for me] the way (*madhhab*) of demonstration and what logical argument requires. As for legal matters (*shar‘iyyāt*), there is the way of the Qur‘ān. I never follow (*taqlīd namī*

*konam*) any one of the Imāms. Neither Shāfi'ī has any claim upon me, nor Abū Ḥanīfah has any right upon me.<sup>8)</sup>

All these statements by Ghazālī lead us to the conclusion that he was quite an independent theologian, not a faithful follower of traditional Ash'arism. It is, therefore, far from being surprising that he could have deviated from it whenever he deemed necessary.<sup>9)</sup>

### III. Ghazālī's Own View of Ash'arites

Let us next consider what Ghazālī himself thought about the Ash'arites or the Ash'arite school. The following are a few comments found in his major works:

- (a) Perhaps you may say, "Your (Ghazālī's) words in this book are divided into those which conform to the school of the Sūfis and those which conform to that of the Ash'arites and some theologians (*mutakallimīn*). The words are understood only according to a particular school. Which one of these schools is right? (*Mīzān*, p. 405)
- (b) Bring any simple theoretical question to the Mu'tazilite masses. They will immediately accept it. But if you say that it is [from] the Ash'arite school, then they set back and refuse to accept it, and *vice versa*. (*Iqtisād*, pp. 168–69).
- (c) *But there are a group of people who take the middle path. They open a gate to the ta'wīl (allegorical interpretation) in all that is related to the attributes of God, but accept the literal meanings as they are, denying the ta'wīl, with regard to the Hereafter. They are the Ash'arites. The Mu'tazilites go further than they . . . . (Iḥyā', I, p. 103)*
- (d) . . . . because each group of people declare their opponent to be an unbeliever (*kāfir*) and connect with them the denial of the Messenger [of God]. Thus the Ḥanbalites declare that the Ash'arites are unbelievers, alleging that the latter deny the Messenger in affirming "above" (*fauqa*) for God and His sitting on the Throne. The Ash'arites declare the Ḥanbalites to be unbelievers, alleging that the latter are anthropomorphists. (*Faysal*, p. 175)
- (e) The Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites, because of too much investigation, went so far as to admit the *ta'wīl* of many literal senses. *Those who are closest to the Ḥanbalites in matters of the Hereafter are the Ash'arites (May God help them!)*, for they affirm most of the literal senses except a few. The Mu'tazilites have gone much further in the *ta'wīl* than the Ash'arites. Together with this, they (I mean the Ash'arites) are compelled to use *ta'wīl* in matters. . . . (*ibid.*, p. 185)
- (f) The Ash'arites say: The accidents (*a'rād*) perish by themselves, and their duration (*baqā'*) is inconceivable; for if it were conceivable, their

annihilation (*fanā’*) would be inconceivable in that sense. As regards the substances (*jawāhir*) they do not last by themselves, but because of a duration which is additional to their being. So when God does not create duration for them, the substances will perish because of the absence of that which would make them last, . . . Another section of the Ash‘arites say: The accidents perish by themselves, but the substances perish when God does not create in them motion or rest or combination or separation. When it has nothing of the sort, it cannot last and perishes. (*Tahāfut*, p. 130)<sup>10</sup>

- (h) Question: Should the names and attributes applied to God be taken as they are or can they be interpreted by way of reason?

Qāḍī Abū Bakr (al-Bāqillānī) deems it possible to interpret them as long as the Divine Law does not prohibit it or says that the [literal] meaning is not applicable to God. As for those which have no restriction, it is possible. It is al-Ash‘arī’s view that they should be taken as they are, and it is impossible to apply to God the [allegorical] meaning of the description, except when it is permitted [by God]. Our standpoint is to divide [the matter] and say that what is reducible to the Name (*ism*) should be accepted with permission, and what is reducible to the Description (*wasf*) does not require permission for interpretation. (*Maqṣad*, p. 192)

It is certainly difficult to know from all these comments exactly what Ghazālī’s attitude toward the Ash‘arites is, but we can say at least that Ghazālī supports, and identifies himself with, the middle path of the Ash‘arites, as is shown in passages (c)<sup>11</sup> and (e). On the other hand, attitude toward them is very cool, detached and even independent. He even differs from al-Ash‘arī, as is seen in passage (h). This means that Ghazālī accepts any aspects of Ash‘arism as long as he thinks they are true.

#### IV. Ibn Khaldūn’s Testimony

How do other people, then, look upon Ghazālī in the history of Islamic theology? We will take up Ibn Khaldūn as their representative. Logic, one of the ancient sciences, says Ibn Khaldūn, was rejected in the beginning by Muslim theologians, but it became generally accepted later among the Muslims on account of the efforts of Ghazālī and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1209).

It should be known that the early Muslims and the early speculative theologians greatly disapproved of the study of this discipline. They vehemently attacked it and warned against it. They forbade the study and teaching of it. Later on, ever since Ghazālī and the Imām Ibn al-Khaṭīb (al-Rāzī), scholars have been somewhat more lenient in this respect. Since that

time, they have gone on studying [logic], except for a few who have recourse to the opinion of the ancients concerning it and shun it and vehemently disapproved of it.<sup>12)</sup>

Ibn Khaldūn thus highly evaluates the great role played by Ghazālī in the acceptance of logic in the Muslim world.

Then he explains the reason why the Muslim theologians denounced logic, and describes the transformation of Islamic theology since the time of Ghazālī.<sup>13)</sup> According to Ibn Khaldūn, the theologians invented the science of speculative theology (*ilm al-kalām*) in order to support the articles of faith (*al-aqā'id al-īmānīyah*) with rational evidence. Their approach was to use some particular demonstration (*adillah khāṣṣah*). For example, they proved the createdness of the world (*ḥadath al-ālam*) by affirming that accidents exist and are created, that bodies cannot possibly be free from accidents, and that something that cannot be free from created things must itself be created (*ḥādīth*). They also affirmed the existence of primeval attributes (*al-ṣifāt al-qadīmah*) by drawing conclusions from the visible (*shāhid*) as to the supernatural (*ghā'ib*). Then, they strengthened that evidence by inventing basic principles (*qawā'id wa-uṣūl*) constituting a sort of premise for the evidence. They thus affirmed the existence of the atom (*al-jawhar al-fard*) and atomic time (*al-zamān al-fard*) and vacuum (*khalā'*), and denied the concepts of nature (*ṭabī'ah*) and the intellectual construction (*al-tarkīb al-'aqlī*) of essences (*māhīyāt*). Then came al-Ash'arī, al-Bāqillānī and Abū Ishāq al-Iṣfarā'inī (d. 1027), who were of the opinion that the evidence for the articles of faith is reversible in the sense that the arguments for the articles of faith hold the same position as the articles of faith themselves.

Now, logic (*mantiq*) revolves around intellectual combination and the affirmation of the objective existence of a natural universal (*al-kullī al-ṭabī'ī*) to which must correspond the mental universal (*al-kullī al-dhīhnī*) that is divided into the five universals, namely, genus, species, difference, property, and general accidents. The speculative theologians deny this. The universal (*kullī*) and essential (*dhātī*) is to them merely a mental concept having no correspondence to the outside reality. Thus, the five universals, the definition based on them, and the ten categories are wrong, and the essential attribute is wrong. This means that all the pillars of logic contradict many premises of speculative theology, and so the early theologians vehemently disapproved of the study of logic. Recent theologians (*muta'ahkhirūn*) after Ghazālī, however, have disapproved of the idea of reversibility of arguments and have not assumed that the fact that the arguments are wrong requires as its necessary consequence that the thing proven by them be wrong. They accepted the opinion of logicians concerning intellectual combination and the outside existence of natural quiddities and their universals. They decided, therefore, that logic does not contradict the articles of faith, even though it does contradict some of the demonstrative arguments for them. In fact, they concluded that many of the premises of the speculative theologians were

wrong.<sup>14)</sup>

According to this view of Ibn Khaldūn’s, Islamic theology underwent a great change after Ghazālī. We see here an indication that Ghazālī took a step across the boundary of traditional Ash‘arism. Now we will turn to examine concretely in which aspects he was innovative among the Ash‘arites.

## V. The Uniqueness of Ghazālī

### 1. The Theory of the Optimum (*al-aṣlah*)

The Ash‘arites generally deny optimism in opposition to the Mu‘tazilites. Ghazālī also denies it in his “official” theological works. The *Iqtisād* is said to have been composed during, or a little before, his inner crisis that lasted for half a year in the fourth and last year (1095) after he came to Baghdad as professor of the Nizāmiyah Madrasah, and it was written after the *Tahāfut*, a refutation of philosophy (*falsafah*).<sup>15)</sup> Ghazālī says in this *Iqtisād*:

It is not obligatory for God to consider the best (*ri‘āyah al-aṣlah*) for human beings. Rather God can do whatever he wills, and passes a judgement as He wishes, in contradistinction to the assertion of the Mu‘tazilites, who circumscribe the acts of God and believe it God’s obligation to consider the optimum. Their view is disproved by the demonstration which denies God’s obligation and its disparity with actual reality. So we will show them that there are things in God’s acts that we cannot but confess to be not good to men. (p. 184)

He then tells the famous story of the three brothers.<sup>16)</sup> There are three brothers. One of them dies young. The second grows up and dies a Muslim. The third grows up, but dies an infidel and remains in Hell for ever. The former two brothers go to Paradise, but the second who grows up and does many good deeds occupies the highest rank in Paradise. Then the first brother who dies young asks God, “Why did you not let me live longer like my second brother so that I might occupy the same highest rank?” Thereupon God replies, “I let you die young so that you might not live longer to be an infidel and live in Hell for ever.” Then the third brother protests to God, saying, “Then, why did you not let me die before I grew up to be an infidel?” How would God respond to this protest? So, says Ghazālī, optimism does not fit in well with actual reality. (pp. 184–85)

Let us next consider Ghazālī’s theological attitude on this question in *Risālah al-Qudsīyah*, which he wrote while in Jerusalem for the inhabitants soon after he had left Baghdad following his conversion, and which was later incorporated into the *Ihyā’* (Rub’ I, Kitāb 2, Faṣl iii).

He (God) Most High does what He wills with His servants, and it is not

incumbent upon Him to do the best (*aṣṣlah*) for them, because of the reason we have already explained, namely, that nothing is incumbent upon Him; nay, obligation in relation to Him is inconceivable.<sup>17)</sup>

And he cites the above-mentioned story of the three brothers and criticizes the Mu'tazilite optimism. Then he says:

If it is argued that it would be evil (*qabīh*) and unworthy of His wisdom, while possessing the power to do the best for His servants, for Him to subject them to what earns them punishment, we would reply: The meaning of evil is that which does not suit the purpose [of man]. When a thing suits a man's purpose (*gharad*) and does not suit another's, then it is good (*hasan*) for him and evil for the other. Thus the murder of a person is an evil act to his friends, but good for his enemies. If evil means that which does not suit the Lord's purpose, then it is impossible, since He has no purpose at all. Likewise it is inconceivable that anything evil or injustice (*zulm*) should proceed from Him, since it is inconceivable that He should dispose of anybody's possessions other than His own. If it means, on the other hand, that which does not suit the purpose of another [beside the Lord], then why do you (the Mu'tazilites) maintain that it is impossible for Him? . . . . The Wise (*ḥakīm*) [in reference to Him] means the All-knowing (*ʿālim*) of the realities of all things, and the All-powerful (*qādir*) means to complete their functions according to His Will (*irādah*). This being so, in what way could it be made incumbent upon Him to do the best to His servants? On the other hand, the wise among us (men) is he who seeks the best for himself so that he will earn praise in this world and reward in the next or to ward off evil from himself—all of which is impossible for God Most High.<sup>18)</sup>

This is the argument of Ghazālī who takes the traditional Ash'arite (orthodox) position which denies optimism and emphasizes the Almightyness of God.

There is, however, another assertion in Ghazālī which seemingly affirms the theory of optimism. Here I quote this rather long, but important, passage from the *Ihyā'*:

. . . . if God had created all creatures with the intelligence of the most intelligent among them and the knowledge of the most learned among them; and if He had created for them all the knowledge their souls could sustain and had poured out upon them wisdom of indescribable extent; then, had He given each one of them the knowledge, wisdom, and intelligence of them all, and *revealed to them the consequences of things and taught them the mysteries of the invisible world and acquainted them with the subtleties of divine favor and the mysteries of final punishments*, until they were made well aware of good and evil, benefit and harm; then, if He had ordered them to arrange this world and the



invisible world in terms of the knowledge and wisdom they had received, (even then) that act of arrangement on the part of all of them, helping each other and working in concert, would not make it necessary to add to the way in which God has arranged creation in this world and the next by (so much as) a gnat's wing, nor to subtract from it (by so much as) a gnat's wing; nor would it raise a speck of dust or lower a speck of dust; (their arrangement) would not ward off sickness or fault or defect or poverty or injury from one so afflicted, and it would not remove health or perfection or wealth or advantage from one so favored.

But if people directed their gaze and considered steadfastly everything that God has created in heaven and earth, they would see neither discrepancy nor rift.

Everything which God apportions to man, such as sustenance, life-span, pleasure and pain, capacity and incapacity, belief and disbelief, obedience and sin, is all of it sheer justice, with no injustice in it; and pure right, with no wrong in it.

Indeed, it is according to the necessarily right order, in accord with what must be and as it must be and in the measure in which it must be; and *there is not in possibility anything whatever more excellent, more perfect, and more complete than it*. For if there were and He had withheld it, having power to create it but not deigning to do so, this would be miserliness contrary to the divine generosity and injustice contrary to the divine justice. But if He were not able, it would be incapability contrary to divinity.

Indeed, all poverty and loss in this world is a diminution in this world but an increase in the next. Every lack in the next world in relation to one individual is a boon in relation to someone else. For were it not for night, the value of day would be unknown. Were it not for illness, the healthy would not enjoy health. Were it not for Hell, the blessed in Paradise would not know the extent of their blessedness. In the same way, the lives of animals serve as ransom for human souls; and the power to kill them which is given to humans is no injustice.

Indeed, giving precedence to the perfect over the imperfect is justice itself. So too is heaping favors on the inhabitants of Paradise by increasing the punishment of the inhabitants of Hell. The ransom of the faithful by means of the unfaithful is justice itself.

As long as the imperfect is not created, the perfect will remain unknown. If beasts had not been created, the dignity of man would not be manifest. The perfect and imperfect are correlated. Divine generosity and wisdom require the simultaneous creation of the perfect and the imperfect. Just as the amputation of a gangrenous hand in order to preserve life is justice, since it involves ransoming the perfect through the imperfect, so too the matter of the discrepancy which exists among people in their portion in this world and the next. That is all justice, without any wrong; and right in which there is no

caprice.

Now this is a vast and deep sea with wide shores and tossed by billows. In extent it is comparable to the sea of God's unity. Whole groups of the inept drown in it without realizing that it is an arcane matter which only the knowing comprehend. Behind this sea is the mystery of predestination where the many wander in perplexity and which these who have been illuminated are forbidden to divulge.

The gist is that good and evil are foreordained. What is foreordained comes necessarily to be after a prior act of divine volition. No one can rebel against God's judgement; no one can revise His decree and command. Rather, everything small and large is written and comes to be in a known and expected measure. "What strikes you was not there to miss you; what misses you was not there to strike you." (IV, pp. 252–53)<sup>19</sup>

Ghazālī also makes a similar assertion in the *Arba'in* which was a near summary of the *Ihyā'*:

*Indeed, there is beside Him (God) no existent which is not created by His act and emanating from His justice in the best, the most perfect, the most complete and the most just way. Indeed, He is wise in His acts and just in His determination. (p. 19. Cf. Imlā', pp. 71–72; Mīzān, p. 339)*

How should we harmoniously understand the foregoing two groups of "contradictory" texts? According to al-Zabīdī,<sup>20</sup> commentator of Ghazālī's *magnum opus*, the *Ihyā'*, this problem began to be discussed among theologians even while Ghazālī himself was still alive, and the disputations lasted up until the end of the 19th century. Al-Zabīdī mentions the names of 32 participants in the arguments and four titles by anonymous authors. E. L. Ormsby has traced these disputations and analysed them in his book, *Theodicy in Islamic Thought: The Dispute over al-Ghazālī's "Best of All Possible Worlds"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). Relying on this study, I will discuss this issue below.

According to Ormsby, the disputants are from the Mālikites, the Ḥanbalites and the Shāfi'ites (among whom are included both Ash'arites and non-Ash'arite conservative theologians). There are even Sūfis included among them. The issue was first raised by those who suspected that Ghazālī's statements of the latter group which seem to affirm optimism would contradict traditional Ash'arite (orthodox) theology. That is to say, (1) If the present world is the best of all possible worlds, does it lead to narrowing down the almighty power of God (*ḥaṣr al-qudrah*)? (2) If the present world is the best of all possible worlds and is the result of divine necessary justice, then is it not the heretical view of the philosophers (*falāsifah*)? (3) Is not the thesis of "optimism" the heretical view of the Mu'tazilites?

As for question (1), Ormsby classifies "impossibility" (*istiḥālah*) into two types:

one is impossibility *per se* (*li-dhāti-hi*) (ex. affirmation of two contradictory things or propositions simultaneously), and the other is impossibility *propter aliud* (*li-ghayri-hi*), that is, “because of something else” (ex. affirmation of a lie or an injustice on behalf of God) (p. 157). The former impossibility is the real one, and it is impossible even for God. But no one can say that God is impotent for this reason. That God does not make better the present best world is the latter “impossibility,” and this is also not due to any lack of capability on the part of God, but is due to His wisdom and will.

As for question (2), Ghazālī says that the best possible world is the result of necessary order, but this order is not what the philosophers call natural necessity (*ʿijāb dhātī*), but is due to divine predestination (*qadāʾ*). In philosophy, divine knowledge is the cause of all the emanations; beings emanate by degrees from God in accordance with perfect knowledge and necessary order in the perfect way. This is what the philosophers call providence (*ʿināyah*). Thus the world shows a rational and necessary order, and as a result it is the most beautiful and wonderful world. Its existence results necessarily from the essence of God.

It is true that Ghazālī's view appears similar to this philosophical teaching, but there is also a difference between them; while the philosophers deny creation by free divine will, Ghazālī affirms it from the Ash'arite standpoint. Divine will in the case of Ghazālī, however, is necessitated by divine wisdom. Therefore, it is necessary “after the preceding wisdom.”

As for question (3), Ormsby explains the difference between the optimism of the Mu'tazilites and that of Ghazālī. One of the two extremes in theodicy is the Mu'tazilite rationalistic position which affirms the best possible world and makes it obligatory for God to do so. The other extreme is the Ash'arite voluntaristic position which regards the world as a result of the unfathomable will of God and His acts transcending the rational judgement of man. According to this latter viewpoint, God does not care about whatever the result of His acts may be, and this is divine justice.

Ghazālī comes close to the Mu'tazilites in that he regards the reality as the best, but there is a great difference between them. First of all, according to the Mu'tazilites, each being has its own *raison d'être*. It is good and there is no injustice for each in the end, even though there seems to be apparently so. We simply cannot know it. For Ghazālī, on the other hand, things are not so: good is good, evil is evil, imperfect is imperfect, and pain is pain. But all being taken *in toto* at the cosmic level, they are the best as they are. Each individual is not the best, as the Mu'tazilites assert.

Furthermore, Ghazālī's notion of providence (*qadar*) remains opaque and inseparable from mystery in the eye of reason (but it is not so in the spiritual eye and Sūfī intuition), in contrast to that of the Mu'tazilites. According to Ghazālī, it is also not incumbent upon God to do the best to man. He is absolutely free. But He does the best simply out of His generosity and favor. Thus God always does the best to man in accordance with His wisdom, without limiting His attributes of

almightiness and freedom.

In conclusion, says Ormsby, Ghazālī's theodicy is "compatible with traditional Ash'arite theology" (p. 261) elaborated in his theological works; it is rather "a natural outgrowth" (*ibid.*) of this traditional theology under the influence of Sūfism, Mu'tazilism and philosophy.

We may make at this juncture some comments as to Ormsby's arguments. For instance, Ormsby, by proposing two types of "impossibility," gives a logical and harmonious explanation of Ghazālī's "optimism" and divine omnipotence (anti-optimism). This explanation certainly fits in well with the case of Ghazālī, since he himself makes the same classification of "impossibility."<sup>21)</sup> But the problem is that, as Ormsby indicates, it does not apply to his antagonists who emphasize too much the almightiness of God to approve the differentiation of impossibility.

As for question (3), Ormsby, admitting the similarity between Ghazālī's "optimism" and the Mu'tazilite view, indicates differences between them too. One is that the former is cosmic and the latter individual. In my view, however, the best possible world is not known by ordinary people or by reason, but only by those who have "the mysteries of the invisible world" disclosed (see *supra*, pp. 8–9). That is to say, the world is the best and the most perfect only in the eyes of the Sūfī experts.

Considering these points, we may say that Ghazālī's "optimism" is quite different from traditional Ash'arism, though it may yet be understandable in terms of a natural development from the latter, as Ormsby says.<sup>22)</sup>

## 2. Atomism

For both the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites the Kalām is based on atomism. Body (substance) consists of atoms (*jawhar fard*). The atom is defined as "an indivisible part" (*juz' lā yatajazza'u*). It "fills space" (*mutahayyiz*), but does not have magnitude.<sup>23)</sup> All its qualities including combination, separation, movement and rest are called accidents (*'arad*).<sup>24)</sup> The atom is the substratum or locus (*mahall*) where accidents reside, and is inseparable from them. An accident does not last even a moment. The Ash'arites admit this without exception, since if an accident were to last, it would require another accident of "duration" (*baqā'*), which would logically be impossible according to the Ash'arites, since an accident cannot be the substratum of other accidents. On the other hand, the Mu'tazilites admit exceptionally the duration of some accidents such as "duration" and others in order to approve the human responsibility for his acts and the justice of God with *continuing* power.<sup>25)</sup>

In his work on official dogma, the *Iqtisād*, Ghazālī explains the atomism of traditional Ash'arism as follows (p. 24). He classifies, first of all, all beings into that which "fills space" (*mutahayyiz*) and that which does not. He subdivides the former into atoms and their composite, or a body (*jism*). Next, he subdivides the latter,

namely, that which does not fill space, into the self-subsistent (*qā'im bi-nafsi-hi*), i.e., God, and that which is not self-subsistent, i.e., accidents. A being's occupying space means that it is impossible for another to occupy the same locus (p. 41). In short, beings are either God or atoms (body) and accidents. This means that the human spirit or soul, angels and satans are all "subtle bodies."

But in Ghazālī's other writings, particularly the *Tahāfut*, we see some skeptical remarks about atomism, for example, in his criticism of the rational demonstration by the philosophers of the existence of the soul as an incorporeal, self-subsistent substance which "does not fill space, and is free from direction, neither inside nor outside the body, neither connected nor disconnected with it" (p. 252). According to the philosophers, he says, there are indivisible units (*āḥād*) in rational cognitions; if the substratum (*maḥall*) of these cognitions is a body, then it is divisible, and the rational cognitions must also be divisible. This is absurd. Therefore, say the philosophers, the soul as the substratum of the rational cognitions is incorporeal.

Against this demonstration, Ghazālī argues as follows:

How will you (philosophers) disprove one who says that the substratum of knowledge is an individual atom which, although filling space, is indivisible? This idea is found in the theories of the theologians. It being adopted, the only remaining difficulty is that it may be regarded as improbable. . . . *However, we do not like to make much of this point. For the question of the indivisible part has been discussed at very great length, and the philosophers have a number of geometrical arguments against<sup>26</sup> it which, if considered by us, would make the present discussion too lengthy.* One of these arguments may be related here. Say the philosophers: If the individual atom is between two other atoms, does one of its two sides come into contact with the same thing as the other does, or are the two things different? It is impossible that the two should be identical, for then the two sides of the atom would coincide. For if A touches B, and B touches C, then A will be in touch with C. If, on the other hand, things in contact with the two sides of the atom are different, that only proves multiplicity and division. *Such a difficulty cannot be solved without a lengthy discussion.* (p. 257)<sup>27</sup>

Concerning the same question, Ghazālī also says in another place:

Should one say here: Why did you not counter these arguments by saying that knowledge subsists in an indivisible, although space-filling, substance—viz., the individual atom? We would answer: *The theory of the individual atom belongs to Geometry, and the explanation of the individual atom requires a lengthy discourse. Moreover, even that theory does not remove all the difficulties.* For it would follow that power and will should also be in the individual atom. Man's action is inconceivable without power and will. And will is inconceivable without

knowledge. The power of writing is in the hand and the fingers. But the knowledge of it is not in the hand; for in case the hand should be cut off, knowledge would not disappear. Nor is the will in the hand; for one can be willing to write, even when the hand is paralysed. If in such a case one fails to write, the failure is to be attributed to the absence of power, not to the absence of will. (p. 261).

All these remarks are made not by the philosophers in their refutation of atomism, but by Ghazālī himself. Certainly we cannot take them as clear evidence that Ghazālī was critical of atomism itself and forsook that dogma, but he might have felt that the theory of traditional atomism was going bankrupt. This appears most clearly in his view of the soul.

### 3. The Theory of the Soul

According to Ash'arite atomism, the human soul (*nafs, rūḥ; dil, jān*) is a combination of atoms and accidents, and is the same as other bodies in this respect. It is, however, a subtle body which is not perceived by the senses. Angels are similar in this regard.

A materialistic notion of the soul like this is common to most Mu'tazilites and orthodox Muslims at large, as well as Ash'arites. According to H. Stieglecker,<sup>28)</sup> it is the widely accepted teaching among the Muslim theologians that the soul extends in three dimensions and occupies space and position. In this sense, the angels, the jinns and the satans are corporeal. Thus there is no immaterial, spiritual substance which occupies no space as the philosophers say.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, one of Ibn Taymīyah's disciples, says in his *Kitāb al-Rūḥ*:

Further the soul (*rūḥ*) can be defined as a body (*jism*) different in quiddity (*māhīyah*) from the sensible body, of the nature of light (*nūrānī*), lofty (*'ulwī*), light (*khafīf*), living, which penetrates the substance of the [physical] limbs (*jawhar al-a'dā*) and runs in them as water runs in a rose and oil in an olive and fire in charcoal. As long as these limbs are sound, so as to receive the imprints proceeding from this subtle (*latīf*) body, it remains intertwined (*mushābih*) with them and gives them these imprints of sense and intentional (*irādīyah*) movement. But whenever these limbs are corrupted (*fasada*), through coarse admixtures (*al-akhlāt al-ghalīzah*) overpowering them, and become unable to receive these imprints, the soul separates itself from the body (*badan*) and is transferred to (*infaṣala ilā*) the world of souls (*'ālam al-arwāḥ*). (pp. 178–79)<sup>29)</sup>

And he says that this is the only right teaching on the soul on the authority of the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, the Ijmā' of the Companions of the Prophet, reason and human nature (*fiṭrah*).

Now, according to Ibn Qayyim, the reason why most orthodox theologians regard the soul as a kind of body is “to affirm such attributes, acts and judgements of the soul as its movement, transference, ascendance, descendance, direct taste of benevolence and punishment, and of pleasure and pain, and its confinement, release and seizure, and its entrance and exit” (p. 201). On the other hand, they oppose the philosopher’s notion of the soul as a simple being (*wujūd mujarrad*), “free from materiality and occupancy of space” (p. 195) and “a simple substance neither inside nor outside the world, neither connected nor disconnected with it” (p. 196), simply because it makes it impossible for such a soul to be lifted up to heaven, to be extracted [from the body] by the angel after death or during sleep, as depicted vividly in the Qur’ān and the Ḥadīth (cf. Q. 6:60, 93; 31:10; 32:10–11; 39:42; 56: 83–87, etc.).

According to Ibn Qayyim, most of the Ash‘arites do not admit the subsistence of an accident for two moments (*zamānayn*). And thus he says:

A man’s soul (*rūh*) of this moment is different from that of the previous moment. It is inevitably created anew for him, and next it changes and another soul is created. Then it changes and so on *ad infinitum*. Thus in an instance, or in a shorter time, a thousand or more souls alternate one after another. (p. 111)

This is obviously a description of the Ash‘arite view of the soul, and it is the same as the previous one in regarding the soul as material.

On the other hand, Ghazālī has some other comments in the *Tahāfut* which seem to supersede the traditional Ash‘arite view of the soul.

... (The theme of this chapter is) their (philosophers’) inability to give a rational demonstration of their theory that the human soul is a spiritual substance which exists by itself; it is not space-filling (*lā mutahayyiz*); it is not body, and not impressed upon body; it is neither connected nor disconnected with body, as God is neither inside nor outside the world, or as the angels are. (p. 252/Kamali, p. 197)

Then, with regard to such a theory of the soul, Ghazālī describes his own view as follows:

However, we intend to question their (philosophers’) claim that by rational arguments they can know the soul’s being a self-subsistent substance. *Ours is not the attitude of one who would not admit God’s power over such a thing, or would maintain that religion actually contradicts this view. On the contrary, we will show in the discussion on Resurrection that religion lends its support to this view.* But we dispute their claim that the intellect alone is the guide in this matter, and that therefore one need not depend on religion in regard to it. (p. 256 / Kamali, p. 200)

Here Ghazālī definitely says that he affirms the philosophers' view on the soul in the *Tahāfut*. His only query is that the philosophers cannot prove it by rational demonstration.

Later on in the *Iqtīṣād*, however, he seems to recant such a view:

We have dealt with this question in detail in *The Inconsistency of the Philosophers* (*Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*) and have gone so far in invalidating their viewpoint as to admit the survival of the soul which does not fill space in their view and to suppose that the soul will return to control the body, whether it is the same old body or not. *But that is an unavoidable thing which does not coincide with what we believe. Indeed, that work was composed so as to disprove their position, not to establish the right one.* (p. 215)

This confession by Ghazālī, however, does not seem to the present writer to reflect his real intention. The teachings expressed in the *Iqtīṣād* seem to be his official viewpoint as an orthodox theologian on behalf of the common people and the theologians.<sup>30)</sup> As we saw in the discussion of optimism, Ghazālī expressed later on a seemingly contradictory view, and Ormsby explained this fact in terms of the change and development of his thought. However, considering the fact that the *Ihyā'* and the *Mizān* where the theory of optimism is expressed were (begun to be) written respectively a little after the *Iqtīṣād* and around the same time toward the end of his stay in Baghdad,<sup>31)</sup> and that his official theological viewpoint in a work from his final years, the *Iljām*, is no different from his early one, we may conclude that Ghazālī had two standpoints since a fairly early period: one was the official view of Ash'arism and the other was the teachings for the elite (for example, physical and sensuous pleasures and pains in the Hereafter belong to the former, and intellectual and spiritual joys and griefs to the latter; he admits both as real, but he personally commits himself to the latter, in contrast to the philosophers who deny bodily resurrection).<sup>32)</sup> That is to say, Ghazālī officially supports the traditional Ash'arite view of the soul, while he is inclined privately or unofficially to the philosophical view of the soul (though not in philosophical terms).<sup>33)</sup> We have to prove this thesis in his other writings.

Stating that the "soul" (*nafs*) is the "heart" (*qalb*), he argues in the following way (*Ihyā'*, III, pp. 2–4). The Arabic word *qalb* which means "heart" has two meanings: one is the "heart" (*al-laḥm al-ṣanawbarī*) in the physical and physiological sense and the other is the "heart" in the abstract sense of the mind. Ghazālī is obviously concerned with the latter meaning.

The heart is "something subtle (*latīfah*), divine (*rabbānī*) and spiritual (*rūḥānī*)" (III, p. 3), and it cannot be grasped by the senses. This heart is also called "the spirit" (*rūḥ*), "the serene soul" (*al-nafs al-muṭma'innah*) (Q. 89:27), "the precious substance" (*jawhar nafsī*), or "the noble pearl" (*durr 'azīz*) (I, p. 54). It is something other than the physical, sensible part of man, but is related to the physical heart in a way none but a few can know (III, p. 3). The heart is "that part of man which



perceives (*mudrik*), knows (*‘ālim*) and intuitively (*‘arif*)” (*ibid.*), while the body and the five senses are its vessel and instruments. In sum, it is the continuous entity in man and the subject which thinks, perceives and moves the body.

This “essence of man” (*ḥaqīqah al-īnsān*), however, has a divine dimension: it is “one of the secrets of God” (*sirr min asrār Allāh*), “one of subtleties of God” (*latīfah min latā‘if Allāh*)” (I, p. 54), or it is “of the *amr* of my Lord” (*min amr rabbī*), “a divine thing” (*amr ilāhī*) (*ibid.*). It is the “trust” (*amānah*) which God put in man, but the heavens and the mountains all hesitated and refused to accept it, when God tried to entrust it to them (Q. 33:72). In other words, it is something which distinguishes man from the animals, and the original purity which Adam had before he was expelled from Paradise. It is the real essence of man in the sense that it is something extraneous in the body. It is something other than human (*bashariyah*) in man. “The heart it is which, if a man knows, he indeed knows himself, he indeed knows his Lord” (III, p. 2). It is something which knows God (*al-‘ālim bi-Allāh*), which draws near to God (*al-mutaqarrrib ilā-Allāh*), which strives for God (*al-‘āmil li-Allāh*), which speeds toward God (*al-sā‘ī ilā-Allāh*), and to which is disclosed what is in and with God (*al-mukāshaf bi-mā ‘inda-Allāh*). (*ibid.*).

In the *Kīmīyā*, a Persian abridgement of the *Ihyā’*, composed toward the end of his life, Ghazālī says:

... that (*dāl*) is a precious gem (*gōhar-i ‘azīz*) and is of angelic substance (*gōhar-i firishtigān*). Its original mine is the Divine Presence (*ḥadrat-i ilāhīyāt*), from which it is come, and to which it aspires to return. It has come here (to this world) as a stranger to do business and to cultivate. (p. 11)

In sum, the heart is something which makes possible the relationship between man and God so that man can know and love God.

The soul is thus the divine being which is totally different from the body. Then, is it identical to the soul of the philosophers, an immaterial self-subsistent substance? Frustratingly enough, we cannot draw any definitive conclusion from the foregoing evidence, for we cannot exclude the possibility that, even though the soul as Ghazālī views is certainly not a visible, coarse body, it may be a subtle, but special body. He carefully refrains from elaborating directly the issue in detail, saying that to do so is to step into the domain of revelation and has nothing to do with religious practice.

Then, what about these comments in the *Arba‘īn*?

The essence of the spirit (*ḥaqīqah al-rūh*) is yourself (*nafs-ka*) and your essence (*ḥaqīqah-ka*). It is that which is most hidden from you. It is such that you do not want to know your Lord so long as you do not know yourself, that is, your spirit, which is the characteristic of the *amr* related to God Most High in His words “Say: the spirit is of the *amr* of my Lord” (17:85). *It is not the subtle, material spirit* (*al-rūh al-jusmānī al-latīf*). (p. 279)

It is now clearly stated that the soul is something related to God and is even not the subtle, material spirit. What, then, is “the subtle, material spirit”? It is, after all, subtle, spiritual vapor (*bukhār laṭīf*) running through the human body (III, p. 3). What is the soul (spirit), then, if it is neither a visible nor a subtle body?

(Though your body perishes by death, you yourself remain.) That is to say, your essence by which you are yourself remains. For you are at present the same person who was in your childhood. Perhaps nothing of those bodily parts remains [up till now]. They have all resolved and been substituted by others through nourishment, and your body has totally changed, while you remain yourself. (*Arbaʿīn*, p. 282)

The soul (i.e., the essence of man) is said to be a permanent continuous entity, completely different from the human body. Is it a simple spiritual entity, then?<sup>34)</sup> This interpretation, however, might be countered by saying that the meaning is simply that the atoms continue to be created instant by instant so that all the physical parts of the body are replaced and transformed by metabolism, while the soul remains a single atom, which keeps on being created and replaced one after another, but without transformation (cf. *supra*, p. 15).

Admitting that the relationship between the soul and the body (the physical heart) is the problem which baffles the human mind, Ghazālī writes as follows:

The relationship resembles that of accidents to bodies and of qualities to the qualified, or that of the user of a tool to the tool, or that of something in a place to the place. (*Ihyāʾ*, III, p. 3)<sup>35)</sup>

He seems to say that there is a relationship between the soul and the body, but it is not essential to the soul. They are totally different beings.

Ghazālī explains in the *Ihyāʾ* the intellect (*ʿaql*) which he identifies with the soul:

The intellect does not change by death. What changes is the body and its members. The dead man thinks, perceives and knows pains and joys, since nothing of the intellect changes. The perceiving intellect is not of these members. It is something hidden (*bāṭin*), and has neither length nor width. It is that which cannot be divided (*lā yanqasimu*) in itself, and that which is the perceiver of things. If the bodily members of man are all scattered and do not remain except the cognitive part that cannot be divided (*al-juzʾ al-mudrik al-ladhī la yatajazzaʾu wa-lā yanqasimu*), then the thinking man remains completely. So does it after death, since that part does not dissolve by death and does not go out of existence. (IV, p. 487. Cf. *Arbaʿīn*, p. 280)

It could be supposed here that “that indivisible part” means nothing but the atom. But it does not. For an atom cannot exist alone according to the traditional

(Ash‘arite) atomism; it only exists in combination with other atoms by way of the accident of “combination” (*i’tilāf*). By “indivisible” is not meant indivisibility on the material level of atomism, but on a level different from the material world. It means pure being with no relationship to space. This is clear from the fact that the soul belongs to the world of *amr* (*‘ālam al-amr*).

Ghazālī divides the worlds into the world of phenomena (*‘ālam al-mulk*) and the invisible world (*‘ālam al-malakūt*).<sup>36</sup> These are also called respectively the world of *khalq* (*‘ālam al-khalq*) and the world of *amr* (*‘ālam al-amr*). The former is the world of volume and size, that of the objects of measure (*taqdīr*), and the latter is the world of what is beyond volume and size (*Ihyā’*, III, pp. 370–71). In other words, the latter is “the world which God created once and for all and ever since remains in the same state without any increase nor decrease” (*Imlā’*, p. 187), and the world of angels and spiritual beings (*Jawāhīr*, p. 11).<sup>37</sup>

In passing, Ghazālī says in the *Mīzān*, one of the works he wrote when he was under the strong influence of philosophy:

You already know that the happiness of the soul and its perfection are to *have the realities of the divine things inscribed in it and to become so unified with them that it looks like them.* (p. 221)

Suppose that the soul is the locus where divine knowledge is inscribed. There are two ways of doing so. . . . The second way is to become prepared for receiving the inscription from outside. By “outside” (*khārij*) is meant the Heavenly Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-mahfūz*) and the souls of the angels, for real knowledge is actually inscribed constantly. (p. 226)

“The souls of the angels” and “the Heavenly Tablet” in the above quotations clearly remind us of what the philosophers call “the active intellect” (*al-‘aql al-fa‘āl*), and “the unification (of the soul) with the realities of the divine things” also suggests the human intellect’s becoming the acquired intellect (*al-‘aql al-mustafād*) and being unified with the active intellect.<sup>38</sup>

Could we then not say that the soul here is indeed not “a subtle body” but an incorporeal, self-subsistent substance occupying no space (which is not an atom!)? And could we not suppose that Ghazālī’s view of the soul did not essentially change thereafter, but that only his expressions became more careful?<sup>39</sup>

We say: The meaning of the soul is what everyone indicates by saying “I” (*anā*). The scholars differ as to whether the meaning of the word is this visible body or not. As for the former, most people and many theologians think that man is this body. Everyone indicates himself only with the word “I.” This is a wrong view as we shall show. Those who say that it is other than this visible body still differ: some of them assert that it is other than a body and not corporeal, but it is a spiritual substance which emanates upon this body, animates it and takes it as an instrument for acquiring knowledge so that its

substance may become perfect and cognizant of its Lord, knowledgeable of the realities of His intelligibles, and may become prepared therewith for returning to His Presence and become one of His angels in unending happiness.

This is a passage quoted from one of Ibn Sīnā's treatises on the soul.<sup>40)</sup> Is there any difference between the foregoing descriptions of Ghazālī's conception of the soul and the notion of the soul expressed in the above quotation?<sup>41)</sup>

## VI. Conclusion

We have examined Ghazālī's views of optimism, atomism and the soul, and have come to the conclusion that they are very much different from, even contradictory in some points to, traditional Ash'arite theology.<sup>42)</sup> Certainly Ghazālī himself never denies being an Ash'arite, but he is not satisfied with *traditional* Ash'arism and even becomes critical of it once in a while as an independent thinker. This makes his theological standpoint subtle and complex, and even difficult to pinpoint.

In my view, this has something to do with what Ghazālī often mentions as the two groups of people in the Muslim Community and his concern for both of them. They are the elite (*khawāṣṣ*), or the elite of the elite (*khawāṣṣ al-khawāṣṣ*), and the common people (*'awāmm*) including the theologians (*mutakallimūn*). Ghazālī himself, of course, belongs to the former group. And in his tremendous efforts to seek after truth as a member of the elite, he possibly stepped over the boundary of traditional Ash'arism in some respects. But as a leading theologian of the Community, he was also concerned for the salvation of the common people at large, and he dealt with this problem as an Ash'arite.

Therefore, it is not possible to take *a priori* traditional Ash'arism as a criterion for the authenticity of Ghazālī's works as Watt proposed. Our next problem is to investigate concretely in which respects and how far Ghazālī dissociates himself from traditional Ash'arism.

### Ghazālī's Works (*Textes Reçus*) and Their Abbreviated Titles

*Arba'in*=*Kitāb al-arba'in fī uṣūl al-dīn*. Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Tijārīyah al-Kubrā, 1925.

*Faḍā'ih*=*Faḍā'ih al-bāṭinīyah*. Ed. by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī. Cairo: al-Dār al-Qawmīyah, 1964.

*Faḍā'il*=*Makātib-i fārsī-yi Ghazālī bi-nām-i faḍā'il al-anām min rasā'il Ḥujjah al-Islām*. Ed. by 'Abbās Iqbāl. Tehran: Kitābfurūshī-yi Ibn-i Sīnā, 1333 Sh.H.

*Faysal*=*Faysal al-tafriqah bayna al-Islām wa'l-zandaqah*. Ed. by S. Dunyā. Cairo: 'Īsa 'l-Bābi 'l-Ḥalabī, 1961.

*Ihyā'*=*Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*. 4 vols. Cairo: 'Īsa 'l-Bābi 'l-Ḥalabī, n.d.

- Iljām*=*Iljām al-'awāmm 'an 'ilm al-kalām*, in *Qusūr al-'awālī* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Jundī, n.d.), pp. 239–301.
- Imlā'*=*Kitāb al-implā' fī ishkālāt al-Ihyā'*, in *Ihyā'* (*op. cit.*), I, pp. 55–203 (margin).
- Iqtisād*=*al-Iqtisād fī 'l-i'tiqād*. Ed. by İ. A. Çubukçu & H. Atay. Ankara: Nur Matbassı, 1962.
- Jawāhir*=*Jawāhir al-Qur'ān*. Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīdah, 1973.
- Kīmiyā*=*Kīmiyā-yi sa'ādat*. Ed. by Aḥmad Ārām. Tehran: Kitābkhānah wa-Chapkhānah-yi Markazī, 1334<sup>3</sup>.
- Maqāsid*=*Maqāsid al-falāsifah*. Ed. by S. Dunyā. Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1966.
- Maqṣad*=*al-Maqṣad al-asnā' fī sharḥ ma'ānī asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*. Ed. by F. A. Shehadi. Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1971.
- Mizān*=*Mizān al-'amal*. Ed. by S. Dunyā. Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1964.
- Munqidh*=*al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*. Ed. by J. Salībā & K. 'Iyād. Damascus: Maktab al-'Arabī, 1939<sup>3</sup>.
- Tahāfut*=*Tahāfut al-falāsifah*. Ed. by S. Dunyā. Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1966.

### Notes

- 1) This work is also called *Risālah al-nafkh wa'l-taswīyah* or *al-Ajwibah fī 'l-masā'il al-ukhrawīyah*, and several manuscripts are extant. The present writer is now in the process of editing it.
- 2) According to M. Bouyges, such scholars as W. H. T. Gairdner, D. B. Macdonald, M. Asín Palacios and Carra de Vaux took it as authentic, while L. Massignon and W. M. Watt denied its authenticity (*Essai de chronologie des œuvres de al-Ghazālī* [Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1959], pp. 53–56). H. Lazarus-Yafeh also regards it as spurious (*Studies in al-Ghazzālī* [Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1975], pp. 251, 256, etc.).
- 3) D. B. Macdonald, "The Development of the Idea of Spirit in Islam," *Acta Orientalia*, IX (1931), pp. 333–37.
- 4) *Al-Madnūn al-ṣaghīr* (in *Qusūr al-'awālī* [Cairo: Maktabah al-Jundī, n.d.], pp. 347–62), pp. 352–53.
- 5) See also his arguments against the genuineness of the third section of Ghazālī's *Mishkāt al-anwār* ("A Forgery in al-Ghazālī's *Mishkāt*?" [*JRAS*, 1949], pp. 6–9).
- 6) In his recent articles, "The Non-Ash'arite Shāfi'ism of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī" (*REI*, 54 [1986], pp. 239–57) and "Al-Ghazzālī, disciple de Shāfi' en droit et en théologie" (*Ghazzālī, la Raison et le Miracle, Table Ronde UNESCO, 9–10 Décembre 1985* [Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1987], pp. 45–55), G. Makdisi tries to prove that Ghazālī was never an Ash'arite from the very outset. He is not convincing, however, since he relies in his arguments mainly on transmitted narrations about Ghazālī. For example, in order to support his proposition, he quotes I. Goldziher's words to the effect that Ghazālī was attacked by an Ash'arite in Maghrib and that, therefore, he was not a hundred-percent Ash'arite ("Al-Ghazzālī, disciple de Shāfi'", p. 47). Judging from the context, however, what Goldziher means is not that Ghazālī was never an Ash'arite, but that he was "no more a pure Ash'arite, being influenced by Sufism." This view rather supports my standpoint (I. Goldziher, *Le livre de Muhammad Ibn Tūmart, Mahdi des Almohades* [Alger: P. Fontana, 1903], pp. 37–38).

By analysing the third section of the *Mishkāt* in detail, H. Landolt tries to prove the Isma'īlī influence in it in his article "Ghazālī and 'Religionswissenschaft'" (*Asiatische Studien*, XLVI/1 [1991], pp. 19–72). This also supports my thesis that Ghazālī is quite a "unique" Ash'arite, to say the least.

- 7) Quoted from D. B. Macdonald, "The Life of al-Ghazzālī, with Especial Reference to His Religious Experiences and Opinions," *JAOS*, XX (1899), p. 105.

- 8) *Faḍā'il*, p. 12 (D. Krawulsky [tr.], *Briefe und Reden des Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī* [Freiburg: Klaus Schwarz, 1971], p. 79).
- 9) Hence Ghazālī's severe and negative attitude to "taqlīd" (cf. H. Lazarus-Yafeh, "Some Notes on the Term 'Taqlid' in the Writings of al-Ghazzālī," *Israel Oriental Studies*, I [1971], pp. 249–56).
- 10) The translation is based on S. A. Kamali (tr.), *al-Ghazali's Tahafut al-Falasifah* (Lahore: Pakistan Philosophical Congress, 1963), p. 59.
- 11) G. Makdisi, in an attempt to prove Ghazālī's "Sunnī traditionalism" sympathetic to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal by quoting this passage and the one just preceding it, says that "it is therefrom concluded that the limit considered just and correct by the Ḥanbalites is that which was practiced by the pious ancestors and Ghazālī approves of it" (G. Makdisi, "Al-Ghazzālī, disciple de Shāfi'ī," pp. 48–49). H. Landolt criticizes Makdisi by quoting the subsequent passages which are to change totally "any impression of 'Sunnī traditionalism'":
- The right middle between total decomposition (of sacred texts, *inḥilāl kullī*) and Ḥanbalite inflexibility (*jumūd al-ḥanābilah*) is a subtle and difficult point, which can be grasped only by those made successful by God. They perceive things through a divine light (*nūr ilāhī*), not through listening (to mere words). Once the hidden side of things (*asrār al-umūr*) is unveiled to them as it really is, they examine the traditional texts. They then confirm whatever is in agreement with their contemplation through the light of certitude, and apply *ta'wīl* to whatever is different (*wa-mā khālaḥa awwalū-hu*). (*Ihyā'*, I, p. 104. Landolt, *op. cit.*, p. 37)
- Commenting on this passage, Landolt says that Ghazālī's view "is not even in line with the 'orthodox' kind of Sufism" (*ibid.*). I agree with this interpretation. But when he says in regard to my cited passage (c) that "his (Ghazālī's) sympathies appear to lie not even with the Ash'arite, but with the most 'traditionalist' Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal" and affirms Makdisi's interpretation, I cannot agree with him, since the meaning of the passage is, I believe, the opposite.
- 12) Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddimah* (ed. by Quatremère. 3 vols. Paris: Benjamin Duprat, 1858), III, p. 113. The translation is based on F. Rosenthal (tr.), *The Muqaddimah* (3 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2nd ed., 1958), III, pp. 143–44.
- 13) Ibn Khaldūn, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 114–16.
- 14) *Ibid.*, pp. 144–46.
- 15) G. F. Hourani, "The Revised Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings," *JAOS*, 104/2 (1984), p. 294.
- 16) For this story, see R. W. Gwynne, "Al-Jubbā'ī, al-Ash'arī and the Three Brothers: The Use of Fiction," *The Muslim World*, 75 (1985), pp. 132–61.
- 17) A. L. Tibawi, "Al-Ghazālī's Tract on Dogmatic Theology, Edited, Translated, Annotated, and Introduced," *The Islamic Quarterly*, IX (1965), Arabic Text, p. 90, Tr., pp. 114–15.
- 18) *Ibid.*
- 19) The translation is based on Ormsby, *Theodicy* (see below), pp. 38–41.
- 20) Al-Zabīdī, *Ithāf al-sādah al-muttaqīn bi-sharḥ asrār Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (10 vols. Cairo: al-Maṭba'ah al-Maymuniyah, 1311 AH), I, pp. 31–34.
- 21) *Tahāfut*, pp. 243–49. As to Ghazālī's argument on causality, see in particular L. E. Goodman, "Did al-Ghazālī Deny Causality?" *Studia Islamica*, 47 (1978), pp. 83–120.
- 22) N. Calder, in his review of the book, does not agree with Ormsby and flatly states: "The root of the muddle lies in the fact that Gh. was not fully orthodox" (*BSOAS*, 49/1 [1986], p. 211).
- 23) Among the early Mu'tazilites, especially the Baṣrī branch, there were some who admitted size in an atom. But it was regarded as a geometrical point at least by the later Ash'arites. There were, of course, some like Abu 'l-Hudhayl who took the soul as an accident, and some who confined it to the accident of "life." In this case, a man becomes a complete *nil* after death (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah, *Kitāb al-rūḥ* [Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1979], pp. 93, 110). On this work, see F. T. Cooke, "Ibn Qayyim's Kitāb al-Rūḥ," *The Muslim World*, 25 (1935), pp. 129–44.
- 24) These four accidents are particularly important and are called "*akwān*" in distinction from the others (see, for example, al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb uṣūl al-dīn* [Istanbul: Maṭba'ah al-Dawlah, 1928], p. 40).
- 25) S. Pines, *Beiträge zur islamischen Atomenlehre* (Berlin: A. Heine, 1936), pp. 27–29.

- 26) The Arabic text is as follows: *wa-la-hum fī-hi adillah handasiyah yaṭūlu al-kalām* ‘alay-hi. Kamali translates “the philosophers have a number of mathematical arguments for it” (p. 202). But I render it “. . . against it” as S. van den Bergh does in *Averroes’ Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* (2 vols. London: Luzac, 1969), I, p. 337.
- 27) The translation is based on Kamali, *op. cit.*, pp. 201–202.
- 28) H. Stieglecker, *Die Glaubenslehren des Islam* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöning, 1962), p. 661.
- 29) The translation is based on D. B. Macdonald, “The Development of the Idea of Spirit,” p. 323. In passing, Ghazālī’s teacher, Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī, writes, “The most evident for us is that the soul (*rūh*) is subtle bodies intertwined with visible bodies. God maintains their relationship by the orderly custom (*‘ādah*) of sustaining the life of the bodies. When He separates them, death immediately follows life according to the custom” (*Kitāb al-irshād* [Cairo: Maktabah al-Khānjī, 1950], p. 377).
- 30) The aforementioned *al-Risālah al-qudsiyah* belongs to this category. M. E. Marmura takes this passage as it is, and does not regard the description in the *Tahāfut* as expressing Ghazālī’s genuine view (“Al-Ghazālī’s Second Causal Theory in the 17th Discussion of His *Tahāfut*,” P. Morewedge [ed.], *Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism* [N.Y.: Delmar, 1981], p. 101). On the other hand, B. Abrahamov asserts that Ghazālī changed his view expressed in the *Iqtisād* in his later *Ihyā’*, and that the contradictions in the *Ihyā’* are a camouflage of this change (“Al-Ghazālī’s Theory of Causality,” *Studia Islamica*, 67 [1988], p. 91).
- 31) Hourani, “The Revised Chronology,” p. 294.
- 32) See, for instance, *Ihyā’*, IV, p. 483, etc. Cf. H. A. Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, & Averroes, on Intellect* (N.Y. & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 112–16.
- 33) It goes without saying that Ghazālī *did not deny* all the philosophical sciences. He accepted what he thought to be true such as logic and natural sciences (Cf. *Munqidh*, pp. 84–107). I am not saying here, however, that he was a disguised philosopher, but I mean that he came very close to philosophy in some respects. That is to say, it is necessary to look once again at Ghazālī’s apparently orthodox thought expressed in non-philosophic terms against the background of philosophy (particularly Ibn Sīnā’s) as Davidson did for the *Mishkāt al-anwār* (*op. cit.*, pp. 132–44). Naturally we must be careful, in this attempt, not to put too much emphasis exclusively on this aspect. See also S. Pinès, “Quelques notes sur les rapports de *l’Ihyā’ ‘Ulām al-Dīn* d’al-Ghazālī avec la pensée d’Ibn Sīnā,” *Ghazālī, la Raison et le Miracle*, pp. 11–16; B. Abrahamov, “Ibn Sīnā’s Influence on al-Ghazālī’s Non-Philosophical Works,” *Abr-Nahrain*, 29 (1991), pp. 1–17.
- 34) Cf. *Tahāfut*, pp. 269–70. On this question about the continuity of the soul and the replacement of the whole body, see M. E. Marmura, “Ghazālī and the Avicennan Proof from Personal Identity for an Immaterial Self,” R. Link-Salinger *et al.* (eds.), *A Straight Path, Studies in Medieval Philosophy and Culture: Essays in Honor of Arthur Hyman* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988), pp. 195–205.
- 35) On these metaphors, see Ibn Rushd, *Tahāfut al-tahāfut* (ed. by S. Dunyā. 2 vols. Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1964–65), I, p. 206 (S. van den Bergh, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 67–68); O. Leaman, *An Introduction to Medieval Islamic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 102.
- 36) To be more precise, Ghazālī posits another intermediate world between the two, called “*‘ālam al-jabarūt*.” On Ghazālī’s cosmology, see my forthcoming article, “Imām Ghazālī’s Cosmology Reconsidered” in *Studia Islamica*, and A. J. Wensinck, “On the Relation between Ghazālī’s Cosmology and His Mysticism,” *Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde, Ser. A, LXXV* (1933), pp. 183–209, which should, however, be read carefully today.
- 37) Ghazālī defends the indivisibility of the soul as follows in the *Kīmīyā*:
- The human soul (*dīl*) has no magnitude nor volume. Therefore it cannot be divided. If it were divisible, there would be ignorance of a thing in part of it and knowledge of it in another part. And thus the person would be both a knower and a non-knower at the same time. This is impossible! (p. 12)
- Compare this argument with the philosophers’ fourth proof for the indivisibility of the soul in the *Tahāfut* (p. 262).

- 38) With regard to this unification, Ghazālī summarizes the philosophers' view as follows:  
 Happiness is to be liberated from the necessity to care for the body and the requirements of the senses, when the soul has prepared itself to receive the emanation of the active intellect (*al-'aql al-fā'āl*) and has become habituated to permanent union with it. But the body keeps on attracting and occupying the soul and prevents it from complete union. When the soul is freed from the occupation of the body by death, the veil and disturbance are removed and the union becomes permanent. (*Maqāṣid*, p. 373)  
 For the philosopher's view of the intellect, see Davidson, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 49–58, 103–105; F. Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 35; *id.*, *Prophecy in Islam* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1958), p. 12.
- 39) As the grounds for man's love of things, Ghazālī mentions direct or indirect conduciveness to his existence, beauty or goodness itself, and mutual inner relationship or similarity. Since God combines all these grounds, says Ghazālī, man's love of God is necessary and inevitable. Thus Ghazālī emphasizes the inner relationship (*munāṣabah*) and similarity (*mushākahlah*) between man and God (*Ihyā'*, IV, pp. 285–99). Furthermore, concerning the famous Ḥadīth derived from the Old Testament, "God created Adam in his image (*'alā-ṣūrat-hi*)," most orthodox theologians including Ash'arites emphasized divine transcendence so much that they interpreted "his image" as referring not to "God's image," but to "Adam's," while Ghazālī took it literally in the sense of "God's image" (cf. *Mishkāt al-anwār* [ed. by Abu 'l-'Alā 'Affīfī. Cairo: al-Dār al-Qawmiyah, 1964], Part I, p. 44; W. M. Watt, "Created in His Image: A Study in Islamic Theology," *Glasgow University Oriental Society Transactions*, 18 [1959–69], pp. 38–49).
- 40) Ibn Sinā, *Risālah fī ma'rifah al-naḥs al-nāṭiqah wa-ahwāl-hā* (in *Ahwāl al-naḥs* [Cairo: 'Īsa 'l-Bābi 'l-Ḥalabī, 1952]), p. 183.
- 41) R. C. Zaehner says, "... it seems fairly clear that the secret doctrine Ghazali speaks of is that the soul, in its total denudation of all qualities, is identical with God, and there are passages in the *Kīmīyā* and the *Mishkāt* which show that this conclusion is correct" (*Hindu and Muslim Mysticism* [N.Y.: Schocken Books, 1969], p. 163). But the matter does not seem quite so simple, as we have seen in the above.
- 42) According to recent studies, too, Ghazālī's conception of causality is more akin to philosophy than to the traditional Ash'arism. See W. J. Courtenay, "The Critique of Natural Causality in the Mutakallimūn and Nominalism," *The Harvard Theological Review*, 66 (1973), pp. 77–94; L. E. Goodman, *op. cit.*; *id.*, *Avicenna* (N.Y. & London: Routledge, 1992), p. 38; I. Alon, "Al-Ghazālī on Causality," *JAOS*, 100 (1980), pp. 397–405; B. Abrahamov, "Al-Ghazālī's Theory of Causality," *Studia Islamica*, 67 (1988), pp. 75–98; R. M. Frank, *Creation and the Cosmic System: Al-Ghazālī & Avicenna*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1992.