through syllogism. Thus, definition and syllogism are the two instruments with which knowledge is acquired.

Unlike Aristotle, ibn Sīna had divided all syllogisms into the copulative *(iqtirāni)* and the exceptive *(istiṯnā'i)*. Ṭūsi has followed this division and elaborated it in his own way. His logical works are Aristotelian in general outline, but he mentions four[51] instead of three syllogistic figures; and the source of this fourth figure is found neither in the *Organon* of Aristotle nor in any of the logical works of ibn Sīna.[52]

N

REVIEW

Ṭūsi, as we have already seen, owes his ethics to ibn Miskawaih and politics to Fārābi; but neither of them reaches the depth and the extent of ibn Sīnā's influence over him. Ṭūsi's logic, metaphysics, psychology, domestics, and dogmatics—all are substantially borrowed from him. Besides, his long though casual connection with the Nizāri Ismā'ilites also influenced his ethical, psychological, and metaphysical speculations. Historically speaking, his position is mainly that of a revivalist. But from the standpoint of the history of culture, even the revival of the philosophical and scientific tradition, specially in an era of political and intellectual decline, though marked by tiresome erudition and repetition, is no less important than origination, inasmuch as it prepares the ground for the intellectual rebirth of a nation.

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[51] *Ibid.*, p. 379.

[52] Afnān, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

Part 4. The Middle-Roaders

Chapter XXX

AL-GHAZĀLI

METAPHYSICS

A

INTRODUCTION

Al-Ghazāli occupies a position unique in the history of Muslim religious and philosophical thought by whatever standard we may judge him: breadth of learning, originality, or influence. He has been acclaimed as the Proof of Islam *(ḥujjat al-Islām)*, the Ornament of Faith *(zain al-dīn)* and the Renewer of Religion *(mujaddid)*.[1] Al-Subki (d. 771/1370) went so far in his estimation of him as to claim that if there had been a prophet after Muḥammad, al-Ghazāli would have been the man.[2] To be sure he gathered in his own person all the significant intellectual and religious movements of his time and lived over again in the inwardness of his soul the various spiritual phases developed by Islam. He was in turn a canon-lawyer and a scholastic, a philosopher and a sceptic, a mystic and a theologian, a traditionist and a moralist. His position as a theologian of Islam is undoubtedly the most eminent. Through a living synthesis of his creative and energetic personality, he revitalized Muslim theology and reorientated its values and attitudes. His combination of spiritualization and fundamentalism in Islam had such a marked stamp of his powerful personality that it has continued to be accepted by the community since his time. His outlook on philosophy is characterized by a remarkable originality which, however, is more critical than constructive. In his works on philosophy one is struck by a keen philosophical acumen and penetration with which he gives a clear and readable exposition of the views of the philosophers, the subtlety and analyticity with which he criticizes them, and the candour and open-mindedness with which he accepts them whenever he finds them to be true. Nothing frightened him nor fascinated him, and through an extraordinary independence of mind, he became a veritable challenge to the

[1] For al-Ghazāli's role as a renewer of religion, cf. abu al-Ḥasan 'Ali, *Tārīḵh-i Da'wat-u 'Aẓīmat*, Azamgarh, 1375/1955, Part I, pp. 111–81 (Urdu); Shibli Nu'māni, *al-Ghazāli*, Lahore, 1956, pp. 279–352 (Urdu). Cf. also A. W. Ẓuhūri (Tr. and Comp.), *Makātīb-i Imām Ghazāli* (Letters of Imām Ghazāli), Karachi, 1949 (Urdu). See *al-Munqiḏh*, English translation by W. Montgomery Watt in his *Faith and Practice of al-Ghazāli*, London, 1953, p. 75. All references to *al-Munqiḏh* are to this translation unless mentioned otherwise.

[2] Al-Subki (Tāj al-Dīn), *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah al-Kubra*, Cairo, 1324/1906, Vol. IV, p. 101. See also note No. 10, below.

philosophies of Aristotle and Plotinus and to their Muslim representatives before him, al-Fārābi and ibn Sīna. The main trends of the religious and philosophical thought of al-Ghazāli, however, come close to the temper of the modern mind. The champions of the modern movement of religious empiricism, on the one hand, and that of logical positivism, on the other, paradoxical though it may seem, would equally find comfort in his works. The teachings of this remarkable figure of Islam pertaining either to religion or philosophy, either constructive or critical, cannot, however, be fully understood without knowing the story of his life with some measure of detail, for, in his case, life and thought were one: rooted in his own personality. Whatever he thought and wrote came with the living reality of his own experience.

B

LIFE[3]

Abu Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṭā'ūs Aḥmad al-Ṭūsi al-Shāfi'i, generally known simply by his *nisbah* al-Ghazāli,[4] was born in 450/1058 at Tabaran, one of the two townships of Ṭūs, now in ruins in the neighbourhood of modern Meshed in Khurāsān.

Al-Ghazāli was not the first scholar of distinction in his family: there had been another abu Ḥāmid al-Ghazāli (d. 435/1043), his grand-uncle, who was a theologian and jurisconsult of great repute,[5] possibly a model which he might have set before him in his ambitious youth. But he was early exposed to Sufistic influences. His own father was a pious dervish who according to al-Subki would not eat anything but what he could earn with his own hands

[3] The principal sources for the life of al-Ghazāli are his autobiographical *al-Munqidh*, S. Murtaḍa, *Ittiḥāf al-Sādah*, Cairo, 1311/1893, Vol. I (Introduction) pp. 2–53, and al-Subki, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 101–82. For the account of al-Ghazāli's life in English, cf. D. B. Macdoland, "Life of al-Ghazzāli with Special Reference to His Religious Experience," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. XX, 1899, pp. 71–132 (Important); M. Smith, *al-Ghazāli: The Mystic*, London, 1944, Part I, pp. 9–104; W. H. T. Gairdner, *An Account of Ghazzāli's Life and Works*, Madras, 1919; S. M. Zwemer, *A Moslem Seeker after God*, London, 1920. An account in Urdu can be found in Shibli Nu'māni, *op. cit.*, pp. 19–73; M. Ḥanīf Nadawi, *Afkār-i Ghazāli*, Lahore, 1956, Introduction, pp. 3–113; 'Abd al-Salām Nadawi, *Ḥukamā'-i Islām*, Azamgarh, 1953, pp. 386–408.

[4] Known as Algazel, sometimes as Abuhamet to Medieval Europe. Some of the Western scholars even now use Algazel (e.g. Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, London, 1946, p. 477) or its other varients al-Gazal, Algazali, Gazali, etc. Whether al-Ghazāli should be spelt with double or single "Z" has been a matter of long and strong dispute. More general practice both with the contemporary Muslim writers and the Orientalists now is to use single "Z". Cf. Ḥanīf Nadawi, *op. cit.*, pp. 3–6; D. B. Macdonald, "The Name Al-Ghazzāli," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1902, pp. 18–22; S. M. Zwemer, *op. cit.*, pp. 63–65, 140–43.

[5] Known thereafter as al-Ghazāli al-Kabīr. He is reported to have taught canon-law *(Fiqh)* to al-Fārmadhi, the Sufi guide of our own al-Ghazāli; cf. Macdonald, "Life of al-Ghazāli . . ." *JAOS*, p. 126; also al-Subki, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 36.

and spend as much time as he could in the company of the divines. Early left as an orphan, al-Ghazāli was brought up and educated by a pious Sufi friend of his father along with his brother who later made a mark as a great mystic. While still a boy al-Ghazāli began the study of theology and canon-law, with the express desire for wealth and reputation as he himself has acknowledged[6] first in his native town under Shaikh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Rādhkhāni al-Ṭūsi and then at Jurjān under the Imām abu Naṣr al-Ismā'īli.

After his return from Jurjān he stayed for a while in Ṭūs and possibly during this period studied Sufism under Yūsuf al-Nassāj and perhaps even undertook some of the Sufistic exercises. At the age of about twenty he proceeded to the Niẓāmiyyah Academy of Nīshāpūr to study under abu al-Ma'āli al-Juwaini known as Imām al-Ḥaramain, the most distinguished Ash'arite theologian of the day, only fourth from al-Ash'ari himself in an apostolic succession of the Ash'arite teachers. The curriculum of the Academy included a wide range of subjects such as theology, canon-law, philosophy, logic, dialectics, natural sciences, Sufism, etc. Imām al-Ḥaramain allowed full freedom of thought and expression to his pupils; they were encouraged to engage in debates and discussions of all kinds. Al-Ghazāli gave early proof of great learning and also of a tendency towards philosophizing. Imam al-Ḥaramain described him as "a plenteous ocean to be drowned" and comparing him with two other pupils of his observed: "al-Khawāfī's strong point is verification, al-Ghazāli's is speculation, and al-Kiyā's is explanation."[7] In his debates with other students he showed great suppleness of mind and a gift for polemics. Not long afterwards he began to lecture to his fellow-students and to write books. But al-Ghazāli was one of those rare minds whose originality is not crushed by their learning. He was a born critic and possessed great independence of thought. It was verily during his studentship at the Niẓāmiyyah Academy of Nīshāpūr that he became impatient of dogmatic teaching and freed himself from the bondage of authority *(taqlīd)* and even showed the signs of scepticism.

During his stay at Nīshāpūr, he also became a disciple to the Sufi abu 'Ali al-Faḍl ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Ali al-Fārmadhi al-Ṭūsi, a pupil of al-Ghazāli's own uncle and of the reputed al-Qushairi (d. 465/1074). From al-Fārmadhi al-Ghazāli learnt more about the theory and practice of Sufism. He even practised rigorous ascetic and Sufistic exercises under his guidance but not to the desired effect. As he himself narrates, he could not attain to that stage where the mystics begin to receive pure inspiration from "high above."[8] So he did not feel quite settled down in his mind. On the one hand, he felt philosophically dissatisfied with the speculative systems of the scholastic theologians and could not accept anything on authority, on the other, the Sufistic practices

[6] Cf. al-Subki, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 102.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 103, 106.

[8] Cf. ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān* (English trans. by de Slane), Paris, 1842–1871, Vol. II, p. 122.

also failed to make any definite impression on him for he had not received any sure results. There is no doubt, however, that the increasing attraction of the Sufistic teaching, with its insistence upon a direct personal experience of God, added to al-Ghazālī's critical dissatisfaction with dogmatic theology.

Al-Fārmadhi died in 477/1084, and Imām al-Ḥaramain in 478/1085. Al-Ghazāli was then in his twenty-eighth year, ambitious and energetic; the fame of his learning had already spread in the Islamic world. He betook himself to the Court of Niẓām al-Mulk, the great vizier of the Saljūq sovereign Malikshāh (r. 465/1072–485/1092) and joined his retinue of canonists and theologians. Niẓām al-Mulk by his munificent patronage of scholarship, science, and arts had gathered round him a brilliant galaxy of savants and learned men. He used to hold frequent assemblies for debate and discussion and al-Ghazāli soon made his mark at these and was conspicuous for his skill in debate.

Al-Ghazālī's profound knowledge of Muslim law, theology, and philosophy so much impressed Niẓam al-Mulk that he appointed him to the Chair of Theology in the Niẓāmīyyah Academy (established 458–60/1065–67) at Baghdād in 484/1091. He was then only thirty-four. This was most coveted of all the honours in the then Muslim world and one which had not previously been conferred on anyone at so early an age.

As a professor in the Academy, al-Ghazāli was a complete success; the excellence of his lectures, the extent of his learning, and the lucidity of his explanations attracted larger and larger classes including the chief savants of the time. Soon all Islam acclaimed his eloquence, erudition, and dialectical skill and he came to be looked upon as the greatest theologian in the Ash'arite tradition. His advice began to be sought in matters religious and political, and he came to wield influence comparable to that of the highest officials of the State. Apparently, he attained to all the glory that a scholar could by way of worldly success, but inwardly he began to undergo an intellectual and spiritual crisis.[9]

[9] It may be recalled that not only theology but medicine and philosophy were also taught at Baghdād and the school of Baghdād from the first was characterized by its scientific spirit and freedom of thought. The city of Baghdād had more than thirty-five libraries for the use of scholars and the place attracted all sorts of people belonging to different sects and schools. A few generations back there flourished the association of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafa; its meetings were attended by abu al-'Alā' al-Ma'arri, said to be the arch-heretic in Islam who died (at the age of 84) only a year before al-Ghazāli was born. Al-Qushairi the teacher of Fārmadhi, yet himself a pupil of al-'Ash'ari in theology, died in 465/1074 when al-Ghazāli was a boy of seventeen, but then probably this is also the date of the death of Nāṣir-i Khusrau, the Ismā'īli propagandist and philosopher. 'Umar Khayyām (d. c. 517/1123), the great mathematician, astronomer, and the agnostic philosopher (the Lucretius and the Voltaire of Islam in one), enjoyed with al-Ghazāli the patronage of Niẓām al-Mulk. Only a year after al-Ghazālī's appointment in the Niẓāmīyyah Academy, Niẓām al-Mulk died (485/1092) as the first victim of the Ismā'īli assassins headed by al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ (483/1090–518/1124)—the second victim was no less than the king himself (Malikshāh) only after an interval of thirty-five days.

His old doubts and scepticism began to assail him once again and he became highly critical of the very subjects that he taught. He keenly felt the hollowness of the meticulous spinning of casuistry of the canon-lawyers.[10] The systems of the scholastic theologians *(Mutakallimīn)* had no intellectual certainty, for they depended entirely on the acceptance of their initial dogmatic assumptions on authority. He denounced their over-emphasis on the doctrinal, for it led to a faulty representation of religion by reducing it to a mere mould of orthodoxy and catechism of dogmas. The disputes of the scholastics amongst themselves he considered as mere dialectical logomachies which had no real relation with religious life.[11] Al-Ghazāli turned once again to the study of philosophy, this time as diligently and as comprehensively as he could,[12] but found, like Kant, that it was impossible to build theology on reason alone. Reason was good so far as it went, but it could not go very far. The Ultimate, the Supreme Truth, could not be reached through it. Becoming keenly aware of the theological limitations of reason, he fell into a state of scepticism and lost his peace of mind. The hypocrisy of his orthodox teaching became unbearable and he found himself to be in a false position.

But all was not lost: he had some assurances that he could be delivered from this state of despair through the Sufi way. It was not that he now discovered that in Sufism lay the possibility for a direct encounter with reality; this fact he had been realizing over a period of years. He had made a theoretical study of Sufism and had even ventured into Sufistic exercises; only he had not advanced far enough into them. If he could consecrate himself to the Sufistic way of life through spiritual renunciation, sustained asceticism, and prolonged and deep meditation, he might have received the light he sought. But this meant in his case giving up his brilliant academic career and worldly position. He was by nature ambitious and had great desire for fame and self-glorification. On the other hand, he was the most earnest seeker after truth. Besides, he had the anxiety to reach a secure faith which was accentuated by his thought of life after death. He remained in the throes of a severe moral conflict and in a spiritual travail for about six months beginning from Rajab 488/July 1095. He collapsed physically and mentally; appetite and digestion failed and he lost his power of speech. This made it easy for him

[10] He was himself a master of the canon-law and compiled works of the very highest order on it, e.g., *al-Wajīz*, *al-Basīṭ*, *al-Wasīṭ*, *al-Mustaṣfa*, etc., According to Sayyid Murtaḍa (d. 1206/1791), *al-Wajīz* was commented on by later scholars for about seventy times and that had al-Ghazāli been a prophet he could have claimed this work as his miracle. Al-Ghazāli on his part considered canon-law only to be *'ilm al-mu'āmalah* (knowledge dealing with practical affairs of life) and not *'ilm al-mukāshafah* (gnosis of Ultimate Reality); cf. M. Ḥanif Nadawi, *op. cit.*, pp. 92–111.

[11] For al-Ghazāli's criticism of *Kalām*, cf. his *Iljām al-'Awāmm 'an 'Ilm al-Kalām* and *Risālah fi al-Wa'ẓ wa al-I'tiqād*. He, however, approved of *Kalām* to explain and defend faith; cf. his *al-Iqtiṣād fi al-I'tiqād*.

[12] See note No. 29 below.

to renounce his post as a professor. He left Baghdād in Dhu al-Qa'dah 488/November 1095, ostensibly on a pilgrimage to Mecca; actually he went into seclusion to practise the ascetic and religious discipline of the Sufis in order to secure certainty for his mind and peace for his soul. He gave away all his fortune except some "trust funds" to maintain his family and proceeded to Syria.

For two years from 488/1095 to 490/1097 he remained in strict retirement in one of the minarets of the mosque of the Umayyads in Damascus, undergoing most rigorous ascetic discipline and performing religious exercises. He moved to Jerusalem for another period of meditation in the mosque of 'Umar and the Dome of the Rock. After having paid his visit to the tomb of Abraham at Hebron, he went on pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina; then followed a long period of retreat at different places in holy shrines and mosques and wandering in deserts.[13] After eleven years the life of a wandering dervish and scholar came to an end and he finally returned to his native town, Ṭūs, in 499/1105.[14]

Of his inner spiritual experiences in their experimental actuality, after he left Baghdād, al Ghazāli tells us almost nothing except that there were revealed to him in his periods of solitude things innumerable and unfathomable. Apparently, these experiences culminated in his acknowledgment of the authority of the Prophet and the complete submission to the truth revealed in the Qur'ān. The first public sign of his recovery to orthodoxy is perhaps *al-Risālah al-Qudsīyyah*, written during his retreat in Jerusalem, where in all probability he was before 492/1099, for in Sha'bān of that year Jerusalem was captured by the Crusaders. This has been inserted as *Qawā'id al-'Aqā'id* in the third chapter of the second book of his massive *magnum opus Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (The Revivification of the Sciences of Religion) in which he began to set down what he had learnt through his long periods of self-discipline and meditation.[15] During his wanderings he not only kept on writing other

[13] He is also reported to have gone to Egypt visiting Cairo and Alexandria. There is a good deal of uncertainty about the various places that he visited and the time and order of his journeyings (except the first two years of his stay in Syria). These extensive travels must have added considerably to his experience of life in general, to his first-hand contact with the cultures of many lands, and to his involvement with other religions—hence his humanism. For his understanding of Christian religion and involvement with it, cf. J. W. Sweetman, *Islam and Christian Theology*, London, 1955, Part II, Vol. I, pp. 22–23, 262–309; also L. Massignon in *Revue des Études islamiques*, 1933.

[14] The period of al-Ghazālī's rather unduly long retreat coincides with the time when Barkiyāruq ruled as the great Saljuq. In the civil war between Barkiyāruq and his uncle Tutush, al-Ghazāli is reported to have sided with the cause of the latter. To this may be added the fact that in Syria where al-Ghazāli spent some years Tutush (r. 487/1094–488/1095) and his sons were the kings (488/1095–511/1117). All this is strongly suggestive of some possible political complications. Cf. Macdonald, *JAOS*, pp. 71–132.

[15] An analytical account of the contents of *Iḥyā'* can be found in D. M. Donaldson's *Studies in Muslim Ethics*, London, 1953, pp. 159–65. Cf. also *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, London, 1953, Vol. V, pp. 508a, 509b. A large part of *Iḥyā'*

books besides *Iḥyā'* but also resumed teaching from time to time. He keenly felt it incumbent upon him to crush heresy and unbelief around him and to call people back to the truth and moral power of Islam, both through writing and teaching: he virtually assumed the role of a moral and religious reformer. He began to devote himself more and more to the study of the traditions of the Prophet and make an extensive use of them for the purposes of edification and spiritual guidance.

On his return to Ṭūs he once again gave himself to the life of retirement and contemplation, but very soon Fakhr al-Mulk, the son of his old patron, Niẓām al-Mulk, who was the vizier to Sulṭān Sanjar, urged him to accept the chair of theology at the Maimūnah Niẓāmīyyah College at Nīshāpūr which he did after some hesitation in Dhu al-Qa'dah 499/August 1106. But he did not stay there long and retired once more to his home in Ṭūs and established a *madrasah* at which he began to teach both theology and *taṣawwuf*. At the instance of the learned and the common people of Baghdād he was once again summoned by the Grand Vizier al-Sa'īd to take up teaching in the old Niẓāmīyyah Academy of Baghdād but al-Ghazāli chose to remain at Ṭūs. There he lived in peace with some personal disciples having charge of his *madrasah*. Every moment was filled with study and devotion till his death on the 14th of Jumāda II 505/the 19th of December 1111. It was a beautifully complete and round life in which the end came to the beginning.

C

METHOD

The most important thing about al-Ghazāli's system of thought is its method which may be described as that of the courage to know and the courage to doubt. The best expression of it is given in his famous autobiographical work, *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl* (The Deliverer from Error), which he wrote some five years before his death.[16] In *al-Munqidh* al-Ghazāli makes

has also been analysed by Miguel Asin Palacios in his *Algazel, dogmatica, moral, asética*, Zaragoza, 1901. *Iḥyā'* is divided into four parts each comprising ten books. Part III, Book ii; Part II, Book vii; Part IV, Book vi, have been translated into English by D. B. Macdonald, in his *Religious Attitude and Life in Islam*, Chicago, 1909, Lectures vii–x; *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, 1901–1902, and *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. II, pp. 677–80, respectively. Translation of some of the extracts from Parts III and IV can also be found in Syed Nawab Ali's *Some Moral and Religious Teachings of al-Ghazzali*, Lahore, 1946, pp. 28–133. Hans Bauer has made a German translation of some of the "Books" of *Iḥyā'*; cf. his *Islamische Ethik* (Three Parts), Halle, 1916, 1917, 1922. For a complete Urdu translation of *Iḥyā'*, cf. M. Aḥsan, *Madhāq al-'Ārifīn*, 4 Vols., Lucknow, 1955 (seventh edition).

[16] *Al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl* as an autobiographical work is unique in the whole of Arabic literature for "the keenness and the fullness of its self-revelation." It is the most often referred to book and has been translated and edited a number of times; C. Brockelmann in his *Arabische Litteratur*, Weimar, 1899, Vol. I, pp. 419–

a critical examination of the methods of the various schools of thought current in his time in a manner closely similar to that of Descartes' (d. 1060/1650) in his *Discours de la méthode* (1047/1637).

All kinds of knowledge, al-Ghazāli held, should be investigated and nothing should be considered dangerous or hostile. For himself he said that he had embarked on the open sea of knowledge right from his adolescence setting aside all craven caution: "I poked into every dark recess and made an assault on every problem, I plunged into every abyss. I scrutinized the creed of every sect and I fathomed the mysteries of each doctrine. All this I did that I might distinguish between the true and the false. There was not a philosopher whose system I did not acquaint myself with, nor a theologian whose doctrines I did not examine. If ever I met a Sufi, I coveted to probe into his secrets; if an ascetic, I investigated into the basis of his austerities; if one of the atheistic *zindīqs*, I groped into the causes of his bold atheism."[17] Such was the courage of al-Ghazāli to know. He was free from the parochialism of the dogmatic theologians of his day who would rather consign the books of the atheists and philosophers to flames than read them. But prepared though he was to listen to every creed and doctrine, he would accept none and doubt all. For one thing, he came to the conclusion that the greatest hindrance in the search for truth was the acceptance of beliefs on the authority of others and blind adherence to the heritage of the past. He remembered the traditional saying of the Prophet: "Every child is born with a sound disposition *(fiṭrah)*; it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian"[18] and he was anxious to know what that sound disposition was before it suffered the impress of the unreasoned convictions imposed by others. Indeed, he wanted to reconstruct all his knowledge from its very foundation and was led to make the following reflections: "The search after truth being the aim which I propose to myself, I ought in the first place to ascertain what are the bases of certitude. In the second place I ought to recognize that certitude is the clear and complete knowledge of things, such knowledge as leaves no room for doubt, nor any possibility of error."[19] As one might foresee, this proposed test for certitude only led him to a series of doubts. No part of the knowledge he had acquired

26, has given 69 items. For some of the important translations of *Munqidh*, cf. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden, 1913–34, Vol. II, p. 149. For Urdu translations see Ḥāfiẓ M. Anwar 'Ali, *Lecture Imām Ghazāli*, Lahore, 1311/1893, 111 pp. (with Arabic text) and M. Ḥanīf Nadawi, *Sargudhasht-i Ghazāli*, Lahore, 1959, 188 pp. (with an Introduction, pp. 3–108).

[17] Cf. *al-Munqidh*, pp. 20, 21.

[18] Bukhāri (23: 80, 93); also the Qur'ān, xxx, 30; xxxv, 1. The term *fiṭrah* came to be used by the philosophers in the sense of *lumen naturale*.

[19] Cf. *al-Munqidh* (English translation by Claud Field, *The Confessions of al-Ghazzāli*, London 1909, p. 13). This is exactly the first of the four rules mentioned by Descartes in his *Discours de la méthode* and the second rule of his *Regulae ad Directionem Ingenii* composed as early as 1038/1628; cf. E. S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross (Trs.), *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, Cambridge, 1911, Vol. I, pp. 3, 92, 101.

hitherto could stand this rigorous test. He further observed, "We cannot hope to find truth except in matters which carry their evidence in themselves, i.e., in sense-perception and necessary principles of thought; we must, therefore, first of all establish these two on a firm basis." But he doubted the evidence of sense-perception; he could see plainly as Descartes did later that they so often deceive us. No eye can perceive the movement of a shadow, still the shadow moves; a small coin would cover any star yet the geometrical computations show that a star is a world vastly larger than the earth.[19a]

Al-Ghazāli's confidence in sense-perception having been shaken, he turned to the scrutiny of what he called the necessary principles, but he doubted even these. Is ten more than three? Can a thing both be and not be at the same time or be both necessary and impossible? How could he tell? His doubt with regard to sense-perception made him very hesitant to accept the infallibility of reason. He believed in the testimony of senses till it was contradicted by the verdict of reason. Well, perhaps there is above reason another judge who if he appeared would convict reason of falsity and if such a third arbiter is not yet apparent it does not follow that he does not exist.

Al-Ghazāli then considers the possibility that life in this world is a dream by comparison with the world to come; and when a man dies, things may come to appear differently to him from what he now beholds.[20] There may be an order of reality different from this spatio-temporal order which may be revealed to a level of consciousness other than the so-called normal consciousness such as that of the mystics or the prophets. Such was the movement of al-Ghazālī's thought, which though formulated a little artificially in the *Munqidh* was dramatic enough to make out a case for the possibility of a form of apprehension higher than rational apprehension, that is, apprehension as the mystic's inspiration or the prophet's revelation.[21]

[19a] Haldane and Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 101, where Descartes makes similar observations.

[20] Cf. *Iḥyā'*, Cairo, 1340/1921, Vol. IV, p. 19, where al-Ghazāli refers to a tradition: People are asleep; when they die, they awake. Cf. also *Kīmiya-i Sa'ādat* (Urdu tr. by M. 'Ināyat Allah), Lahore, n.d., pp. 738, 740.

[21] It is, however, a serious though widespread error of interpretation to consider al-Ghazāli to be an anti-intellectualist. Macdonald's statement in his article "al-Ghazzāli" in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* that "he taught that intellect should only be used to destroy trust in itself," is very unfortunate. So also is Iqbāl's allegation that al-Ghazāli denied dynamic character to thought and its self-transcending reference to the infinite (cf. S. M. Iqbāl, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Oxford, 1934, pp. 4–6). Al-Ghazāli very definitively and explicitly brings out both these aspects of thought in his analysis of intelligence in the *Mishkāt al-Anwār* (cf. English translation by W. H. T. Gairdner, Lahore, 1952, pp. 83–91). This section in the *Mishkāt* is quite noteworthy in view of the general opinion that the *Mishkāt* was written by al-Ghazāli at a time very close to the writing of *al-Munqidh* (probably after it): a period in the spiritual history of al-Ghazāli during which he came to advocate the supremacy of intuition over reason as against an earlier phase, say that of *Iḥyā'*, when he ranked them as equal and made reason go parallel with intuition (e.g., Part I, Book I, Chapter 7). True, in *al-Munqidh* al-Ghazāli makes a delimitation of the province of the human intellect by denying it a finality in the

Al-Ghazālī's method of doubt or sceptical attitude did certainly have its historical antecedents. The Ash'arites' system of atomism, by reducing all categories except substance *(jauhar)* and quality *('arḍ)* to mere subjectivities, virtually amounted to a form of scepticism.[22] Even earlier the Mu'tazilites like al-Naẓẓām (d. 231/845) and abu al-Hudhail (d. 266/840) had formulated the principle of doubt as the beginning of all knowledge.[23] But with al-Ghazāli this was as much a matter of an inherent trait of his intellectual disposition as a principle. One may be tempted to say that his keenly alert and sensitive mind, though exposed from early youth to all the various intellectual and spiritual movements of the times such as scholasticism, rationalism, mysticism, etc., was not fully captured by any one single movement. Ambitious and self-confident, he had been in a way playing with the various influences rather than affected exclusively by anyone of them. His restless soul had always been trying to reach for what it had not attained. In his sincere and open search for absolute truth, he possibly remained oscillating for a long time between the moments of belief and disbelief—moments when he might have found comfort in his religious convictions with complete submission to the teachings of the Qur'ān and the moments when his doubts and scepticism might have overwhelmed him, clamouring for indubitable certainty. It is certainly very difficult to map the exact chronology of the spiritual development of such a complex mind as that of al-Ghazālī's. The usual method of working out the history of the mental development of an author on the basis of the chronological order of his works is not possible in the case of al-Ghazāli for our knowledge of his works is incomplete both with regard to their extent and relative order, not to speak of exact dating.[24] None of his works, not even

field of transcendental problems, yet it would not be altogether right to say that Ghazālian epistemology is a mere intuitive critique of knowledge. Keeping other works of his in view, it may be said that his philosophy is mainly directed to the vindication that intellect and intuition must at the end supplement each other. Cf. M. Umaruddin, *The Ethical Philosophy of al-Ghazzāli*, Aligarh, 1949, Vol. I, Part III, pp. 228–259.

[22] Cf. M. Fakhry, *Islamic Occasionalism*, London, 1958, pp. 25–48; also D. B. Macdonald, "Continuous Re-creation and Atomism," *Isis*, Vol. IX, 1927, pp. 326–44.

[23] Cf. S. M. Iqbāl, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, London 1908, pp. 55, 100; also A. S. Tritton, *Muslim Theology*, London, 1947, pp. 84, 90.

[24] For the chronological order of al-Ghazālī's works, cf. Louis Massignon *Recueil de textes*, p. 93, and Introduction to Maurice Bouyges' edition of *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*, Beirut 1927. An allied and quite important, though very difficult, problem for a student of al-Ghazāli is the authenticity of his works. Cf. M. Asin Palacios, *La espiritualdidad Algazal*, Madrid 1934, Vol. IV, pp. 385–90, and W. M. Watt, "The Authenticity of the Works Attributed to al-Ghazāli," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1952, pp. 24–45, along with his article "A Forgery in al-Ghazālī's *Mishkāt*?" in the same Journal of the year 1949, pp. 5–22. Cf. also Shibli Nu'māni, *op. cit.*, pp. 80–84, and M. Ḥanīf Nadawi, *op. cit.*, pp. 54–58. A consolidated study of these references shows that there are in all thirteen works the authenticity of which is a matter of dispute besides three considerable sections of works otherwise

al-Munqidh which has often been compared with the *Confessions* of Augustine allows us a peep into the inward workings of his soul.[25] It is merely a schematized description of his spiritual development and not an existential study of the "phenomenology" of his soul: he has simply arranged in a logical order what must necessarily have come to him in a broken and sporadic form.

Nevertheless, *al-Munqidh* is our most valuable source to determine al-Ghazālī's relative position with regard to the various schools of thought around him. He had been moving through them all these years, studying them very closely in his quest for certainty, and of them he now gives us a critical evaluation in a summary fashion. He divides the various "seekers" after truth into the four distinct groups: Theologians, Mystics, Authoritarians *(Ta'līmites)*, and Philosophers.

His criticism of the theologians is very mild. He himself had been brought up in their tradition and was thoroughly saturated into their system. It is doubtful if he ever parted company with them completely. He did not cease to be a theologian even when he became a mystic and his criticism of the philosophers was essentially from the standpoint of a theologian. Only he was dissatisfied with the scholastic method of the theologians, for it could not bring any intellectual certainty; their doctrines, he deemed, however, to be correct. His belief in God, Prophecy, and Last Judgment were too deeply rooted in him to be shaken altogether; his scepticism with regard to them, if at all, was a temporary phase; he only very much desired a confirmation of these fundamental beliefs either on some philosophical grounds or through some sort of first-hand experience.

So far as the mystics were concerned, al-Ghazāli found himself hardly in a position to level any criticism against them except for the extravagantly pantheistic utterances or antinomian tendencies of some of the intoxicated Sufis.[26] They were essentially men of feeling *(arbāb al-aḥwāl)* rather than men of words *(aṣḥāb al-aqwāl)* and he had himself early realized the importance of experiences and states rather than that of definitions and dogmas. The claims of the mystics he knew could not be challenged by one who lacked their experiences.

Al-Ghazāli held a very poor opinion of the pretensions of those whom he called the party of *ta'līm* or authoritative instruction also known as Ismā'īlīyyah and Bāṭinīyyah.[27] Theirs was a kind of Muslim popery or Montanist movement.

admitted to be authentic. The "problem of authenticity" requires very careful further investigation.

[25] Cf. Henrich Frick, *Ghazālī's Selbstbiographie, ein Vergleich mit Augustins Konfessionen*, Leipzig, 1919, esp. p. 80.

[26] See next chapter (pp. 617–24).

[27] Ismā'ilites or Bāṭinites were known as Ta'līmites in Khurāsān. Al-Ghazāli wrote quite a number of books against them; those mentioned in *al-Munqidh* (p. 52) are: (1) *Al-Mustaẓhiri*, (2) *Ḥujjat al-Ḥaqq*, (3) *Mufaṣṣil al-Khilāf*, (4) *Durj*, (5) *Qusṭās al-Mustaqīm*. The first work is the most elaborate of them all. For the doctrines of the Ta'līmites, cf. Ḥanīf Nadawi, *Sargudhasht-i Ghazāli*, pp. 19–54; also the article "Ismā'īlīya," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

They renounced reason and held that truth can be attained only by a submissive acceptance of the pronouncements of an infallible Imām. This doctrine indeed was a part of the propaganda of the Fāṭimid Caliphate (297/909–555/1160) with its centre in Cairo and, thus, had its moorings in the political chaos of the day. Al-Ghazālī's examination of the Ta'līmites was certainly due to his love for thoroughness in his search for truth, but perhaps he also wanted to make clear his position with regard to an ideology having political strings behind it.

It was the fourth class of the seekers of truth, namely, the philosophers, who engaged his attention most of all and troubled his mind more than anyone else.

D

ATTACK ON THE PHILOSOPHERS

1. *Introduction.*—Al-Ghazālī's critical examination of the method and doctrines of the philosophers is the most exciting and important phase of his intellectual inquiry. He was not at all against philosophical investigation as such. His early interest in philosophy is evidenced by the treatises that he wrote on logic such as *Mi'yar al-'Ilm fi Fann al-Manṭiq*: "The Touchstone of Science in Logic" (quite an elaborate treatise) and *Miḥakk al-Naẓar fi al-Manṭiq*: "The Touchstone of Speculation in Logic" (a smaller work). In the history of Muslim thought his is the first instance of a theologian who was thoroughly schooled in the ways of the philosophers; the doctors of Islam before him either had a dread of philosophy, considering it a dangerous study, or dabbled in it just to qualify themselves for polemics against the philosophers. But al-Ghazāli very strongly realized that to refute a system before literally inhabiting it and getting thoroughly immersed into its very depths was to act blindly. "A man," he tells us, "cannot grasp what is defective in any of the sciences unless he has so complete a grasp of the science in question that he equals its most learned exponents in the appreciation of its fundamental principles and even goes beyond and surpasses them. . . ."[28] In all intellectual honesty he refrained from saying a word against the philosophers till he had completely mastered their systems.

He applied himself so assiduously to the study of the entire sweep of Greek philosophy current in his time and attained such a firm grasp of its problems and methods[29] that he produced one of the best compendia of it in Arabic entitled as *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifah* (The Intentions of the Philosophers). This compendium was such a faithful exposition of Aristotelianism that when it

[28] *al-Munqidh*, p. 29. Cf. also preface to *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifah*.

[29] *Ibid.* Al-Ghazālī's statement that, in spite of his arduous duty of teaching and engagement in writing he could master all the sciences of the philosophers unaided by an instructor within the span of two years, is perhaps a story to be taken with a grain of salt.

came to be known to the Christian scholastics through a Latin translation made as early as 540/1145 by the Spanish philosopher and translator Dominicus Gundisalvus,[30] it was taken to be the work of a genuine Peripatetic. Albert the Great (d. 679/1280), Thomas Aquinas (d. 673/1274), and Roger Bacon (d. 694/1294) all repeatedly mentioned the name of the author of the "Intentions of the Philosophers" along with ibn Sīna and ibn Rushd as the true representatives of Arab Aristotelianism.[31] But never did Arab Aristotelianism find a more vigorous foe than al-Ghazāli. His compendium in philosophy was merely propaedeutic to his *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* (The Incoherence of the Philosophers)[32] in which he levelled a devastating attack on the doctrine of the Muslim Peripatetics with a dialectic as subtle as any in the history of philosophy.

Al-Ghazāli, for the purposes of his scrutiny, divided the philosophers into three main groups: The materialists *(dahrīyyūn)*,[33] the naturalists or the deists *(tabī'īyyūn)*, and the theists *(ilāhīyyūn)*. The materialists completely dispensed with the idea of God and believed that the universe has existed eternally without a creator: a self-subsisting system that operates and develops by itself, has its own laws, and can be understood by itself. The naturalists or the deists, struck by the wonders of creation and informed of a running purpose and wisdom in the scheme of things while engaged in their manifold researches into the sciences of phenomena, admitted the existence of a wise Creator or Deity, but rejected the spirituality and immortality of the human soul. They explained the soul away in naturalistic terms as an epiphenomenon

[30] The date 1506 C.E. for the Latin translation of *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifah* given in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th edition, Vol. II, p. 188b, is incorrect. This is the date when it was for the first time printed in Venice. Gundisalvus' translation under the title *Logica et Philosophia Algazelis Arabes* was made in collaboration with John of Seville to whose name it is sometimes ascribed. It might have been the case that John translated it from Arabic into Castilian and Gundisalvus from Castilian into Latin; cf. G. Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*, Baltimore, 1931, Vol. II, pp. 169–72.

[31] This confusion was caused by the fact that the Latin translation of *Maqāṣid* in circulation amongst the seventh/thirteenth-century Scholastics did not contain the short introduction in which al-Ghazāli speaks disparagingly of the philosophers' metaphysics and makes it clear that his ultimate purpose to make an objective and dispassionate study of it is to refute it in *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*. It may be added that al-Ghazāli again mentions his intention to write the *Tahāfut* in the ending paragraph of the book. How this was overlooked by the Latin scholastics is anybody's guess.

[32] Maurice Bougyes in Introduction to his edition of *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* points out that the word "incoherence" does not give an exact meaning of *Tahāfut* and that al-Ghazāli has used it sometimes with reference to philosophers and sometimes with reference to their doctrines. He, therefore, suggests that it would be better to retain the original word *Tahāfut*.

[33] The Dahrīyyūn are those who teach the eternity of time and matter. It is, however, difficult to give a precise translation of the term; in its actual usage in Arabic philosophy, Dahrīyyūn are sometimes hardly distinguishable from the Ṭabī'īyyūn. Cf. the article "Dahrīyyah," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

of the body and believed that the death of the latter led to the complete non-existence of the former. Belief in heaven, hell, resurrection, and judgment they considered as old wives' tales or pious fictions.

Al-Ghazāli discussed the theists at length for they, according to him, held a comparatively more final position and exposed the defects of the materialists and the naturalists quite effectively, thus saving him from doing so for himself. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle he listed as theists but concentrated on Aristotle who had criticized all his predecessors and even had refuted his own teacher, excusing himself of this by saying: "Plato is dear to us. And truth is dear, too. Nay, truth is dearer than Plato."[34]

As far as the transmission of Aristotle's philosophy in Arabic was concerned, al-Ghazāli found that none of the Muslim philosophers had accomplished anything comparable to the achievements of al-Fārābi and ibn Sīna. These two were Aristotle's most faithful and capable translators and commentators; the works of others were marked with disorder and confusion. Thus al-Ghazāli came finally to concentrate on that philosophical thought of his day which had emerged from the writings of these two theistic philosophers (particularly ibn Sīna) and applied himself to its examination in a systematic manner. He divided the philosophical sciences into mathematics, logic, physics, politics, ethics, and metaphysics, and went into their details in order to see if there really was anything false or untenable. He was most scientific in his approach: ready to accept whatever he found to be based on the evidence of factual data or susceptible of proof by argument in conformity with the principles of reason. He had least hesitation in accepting as true much of what the philosophers taught with regard to their sciences of mathematics, logic, and physics; he even had no serious quarrel with them in the spheres of politics and ethics. The most grievous errors of the theistic philosophers, he found, consisted in their metaphysical views which, unlike mathematical and natural sciences, were not grounded in compelling reason or positive inquiry but on conjecture and fanciful speculations. Had their metaphysics been so very well grounded in sound reasoning as their mathematical sciences were, they would have agreed amongst themselves on metaphysical issues as they did on the mathematical ones. But, above all, what al-Ghazāli saw to his dismay was that the philosophies of al-Fārābi and ibn Sīna at points did violence without any philosophic warrant or justification to the principles of religion as enunciated in the Qur'ān. His empirical and theological spirit revolted very strongly against this. The positive facts of religion could not be sacrificed for sheer metaphysical speculations, nor could they be interpreted externally from the point of view of a preconceived system of philosophy. These had to be interpreted intrinsically and reckoned on their own grounds. The Muslim philosophers had failed to take this empirical standpoint. They had also been slow in realizing that notwithstanding a great breadth of outlook that the

[34] Cf. Aristotle's *Ethica Nichomachea*, section 6, p. 1096 a15.

study of Greek philosophy had brought to the Muslims, there was in the ultimate analysis quite a gulf between the inspiration of the Qur'ānic teachings and the spirit of Hellenism.[35] Carried away by their enthusiasm to bring a reconciliation between philosophy and religion, al-Fārābi and ibn Sīna, according to al-Ghazāli, had so compressed the dogmas of Islamic religion within the moulds of Aristotelian and Plotinian systems as to fall either into a morass of inconsistencies or get implicated into heretical positions.

All this al-Ghazāli brought out with most accomplished understanding and admirable skill, and with a "transcendental" dialectic as subtle as that of Kant's in his *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* which indeed is the most important of all his works from the point of view of our present study. Within less than a hundred years it called forth the most stimulating rejoinder (entitled *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut)* from the celebrated ibn Rushd and then a rejoinder of a rejoinder from Muṣliḥ al-Dīn Muṣṭafa ibn Yūsuf al-Bursawi generally known as Khwājah Zādah, a Turkish theologian who died in 893/1488.[36] These works, particularly the first two, taken together epitomize the essential problems arising from the impact of classical philosophy on the teachings of religion.[37]

2. *Method and Problems of* Tahāfut.—It is generally believed that al-Ghazāli wrote his *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* during the period of his doubts, but in fact the work is essentially of a polemical nature and shows in him an odd combination of scepticism and ecstatic assurances. The general effect of the teaching of the philosophers, al-Ghazāli felt, was so ruinous to the religious and moral life of the masses that his well-nigh apostolic humanism revolted against it and he dedicated himself to an open warfare against the philosophers. There is no doubt about the theological inspiration and the polemical spirit of the *Tahāfut* but then we add most emphatically that neither of them seriously affects the great philosophical value of this work.[38] The modern reader cannot fail to be struck with clear anticipations of Hume (d. 1190/1776), Schleiermacher (d. 1250/1834), Ritschl (d. 1307/1889), and others, and even of the logical positivists of our day in some of the arguments and the general *motif* of the *Tahāfut*. His general position may be briefly described to be that the truths

[35] Cf. M. Iqbāl, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 3–4. What really hinted at here is the Platonic and Neo-Platonic bias in the Hellenic thought which inculcates a dichotomy between the empirical and the transcendental—the secular and the spiritual.

[36] All the three works can be found in one volume published by Maṭba't al-'Ālamīyyah, Egypt, 1302–1303/1884–1885: al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*, 92 pp.; ibn Rushd's *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, 141 pp., and Khwājah Zādah's *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*, 137 pp.

[37] For an analytical account of the contents of *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* and *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, cf. A. F. van Mehren, "Études sur la philosophie d'Averrhoes concernant son rapport avec celle d'Avicenne et Gazzali," *Le Muséon*, Vol. VII, pp. 613–27; Vol. VIII, pp. 5–20, Louvain, 1888–1889.

[38] Cf. al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*, English translation by Ṣabīḥ Aḥmad Kamāli, The Pakistan Philosophical Congress, Lahore, 1958, pp. 1–3. All references to the *Tahāfut* are to this translation.

of the positive facts of religion can neither be proved nor disproved, and to do otherwise leads the philosophers to take more often than not quite nonsensical positions.

Al-Ghazāli assails the philosophers on twenty points[39] (beginning with creation and ending with the last things) and endeavours to show that their dogmas of the eternity and the everlastingness of the world are false; their assertion that God is the creator of the world is dishonest for it is flagrantly inconsistent with their dogma of the eternity of the world; that they fail to prove the existence, the unity, the simplicity and the incorporeality of God or God's knowledge either of the universals or of the particulars; that their views with regard to the souls of the celestial spheres, and the spheres' knowledge of the particulars and the purpose of their movement are unfounded; that their theory of causation which attributes effects to the very nature of the causes is false; and that they cannot establish the spirituality of the soul, nor prove its immortality; and, finally, that their denial of the resurrection of the bodies in the life hereafter is philosophically unwarranted. Al-Ghazāli charges the philosophers with infidelity on three counts, viz., (1) eternity of the world; (2) denial of God's knowledge of the particulars, and (3) denial of bodily resurrection. For the rest their views are heretical or born of religious indifference. But in all they are involved in contradictions and suffer from confusion of thought.

The problem which al-Ghazāli considers the most important is that of the eternity *(qidam)* of the world to which he allots the greatest space, almost a quarter of his book. This has been one of the most challenging and uncompromising problems in the conflict between religion and philosophy. The advocates of orthodoxy considered the eternality of the universe to be the most pernicious thesis of the philosophers and vehemently combated against it. Al-Ash'ari (d. 324/935) wrote a refutation of it in his *Kitāb al-Fuṣūl* which probably is the earliest scholastic treatise dealing with this question,[40] and ibn Ḥazm (d. 457/1064) made the doctrine a dividing line between the orthodox and the heterodox sects. The orthodox could not possibly concede the philosophers' claim of the eternality of the world, for with them there is nothing eternal but God; all else is created *(ḥādiṯ)*. To make anything co-eternal with God is to violate the strict principle of monotheism, for that infringes the absoluteness and infinity of God and reduces Him to the position of an artificer: a Demiurge. Virtually, the doctrine drives one to the materialists' position that the world is an independent universe, a self-subsistent system, which develops by itself, and can be understood by itself. All this was hard to swallow for a theologian like al-Ghazāli.

The philosophers like al-Fārābi and ibn Sīna as Muslims did not deny that

[39] It is noteworthy that Simon van den Bergh has listed forty contradictions in Aristotle's philosophy; see his English translation of Averroës' *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, London, 1954, Vol. II, p. 215.

[40] Cf. Ibn 'Asākir, *Tabyīn Kādhib al-Muftari*, Damascus, 1347/1928, p. 128.

God is an eternal creator of the universe, but as true Aristotelians believed that God's activity consists merely in bringing forth in the state of actuality the virtual possibilities inherent in the prime matter which was alleged to be co-eternal with Him. This was in conformity with the Aristotelian notion of change not as a passage from non-being into being, which would make it unintelligible, but as a process by which what is merely "potential being" passes over, through "form," into "actual being."[41] So God as an eternal creator constantly combines matter with new forms; He did not create the universe out of sheer nothingness at a definite time in the past. As a corollary they believed in the infinity of time.

Al-Ghazāli, on the other hand, in accordance with the obvious teachings of the Qur'ān, firmly holds the position that the world was created by God out of absolute nothingness[42] at a certain moment in the past which is at a finite interval from the present. He created not only forms but also matter and time along with them which had a definite beginning and hence is finite.

The two positions as outlined above readily remind one of Kant's thesis and antithesis in the first antinomy[43] which present an impossible problem in the sense that conditions requisite for their verification or falsification are *de facto* impossible. One is tempted to say that al-Ghazāli does recognize the impossibility of the problem for he clearly proclaims that he does not intend to defend his own position but only to refute that of the philosophers. This is true in general of all the other disputations in *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*. The arguments of the philosophers are presented with very considerable plausibility, but the dialectical skill and philosophical acumen which al-Ghazāli employs to refute them are also overwhelming. Though the whole discussion is surcharged with a polemical spirit, yet one cannot fail to see that al-Ghazāli's standpoint throughout remains highly scientific and logical; he does not succumb merely to verbal quibbles. He clearly says that he does not have any quarrel with the philosophers on the usages of terms.[44]

Al-Ghazāli's quarrel with the philosophers is because many of their particular arguments are logically false and the various positions that they take in their system as a whole are inconsistent with one another, but, above all, because some of their basic assumptions are unfounded. These assumptions, al-Ghazāli proves most powerfully, can neither be demonstrated logically, nor are they self-evident through "intuition." Such, for example, is the assumption that every event has a cause or that causes produce their effects necessarily. The

[41] Aristotle's notion of potentiality fails to solve the riddle of becoming as propounded by the Eleatics and later by the Megarics. W. D. Ross says, "The conception of potentiality has often been used to cover mere barrenness of thought." Cf. his *Aristotle*, London, 1923, pp. 176–78. The Ash'arites like the Megarics denied the existence of potentiality. Cf. S. van den Bergh, *op. cit.*, pp. 37–40.

[42] For the thesis of *creatio ex nihilo*, cf. the Qur'ān, ii, 117; xxx, 27; xxxv, 1.

[43] *Critique of Pure Reason*, 2nd ed., pp. 454–61.

[44] *Tahāfut*, p. 5. It may be noted here that the Muslim philosophers and theologians sometimes used different terminology with regard to the same subject.

Muslim philosophers have accepted these assumptions merely in the dogmatic tradition of Aristotelian philosophy. The faulty reasonings of the philosophers or the inconsistencies in their positions are remediable but not so the uncritical acceptance of their assumptions. Al-Ghazāli for himself is not prepared to accept any part of the Aristotelian system except the first principles of logic and rules of syllogism—nothing else until and unless it has logical coerciveness about it. On the other hand, he is not prepared to reject any of the doctrines of religion until and unless it is disproved with a similar logical rigour and cogency. Nothing is "possible" in philosophy till it is logically necessary, and nothing is "impossible" in religion till it is logically self-contradictory. Apparently, this is a double-faced criterion to judge variously the truths of philosophic assumptions and those of religious assumptions, but from the point of view of philosophy of religion it is perfectly justified. Philosopher *qua* philosopher has to accept the facts of religion as given by religion; this is the *sine qua non* of any empirical philosophy of religion. Thus, in spite of the fact that al-Ghazālī's whole polemic against the philosophers derives its inspiration from the Ash'arite theology, his method remains in its essentials purely philosophical, fulfilling in its own way some of the most important requirements of the modern and even contemporary approaches to the problems of the philosophy of religion.[45]

These few observations with regard to al-Ghazālī's method in the *Tahāfut* were necessary before we could enter into some of the detailed arguments which he gives in the refutation of the philosophers' various positions.

3. *Eternity of the World.*—The proof of the philosophers for the eternity of the world starts with certain assumptions with regard to the notions of cause and will. These they take to be true axiomatically: (1) Every effect has a cause. (2) Cause must be the action of some external force other than the effect. (3) Cause or an act of will when executed must immediately lead to the effect.[46] For world's coming from non-existence to existence there certainly should have been some cause; this cause could not be a physical cause for *ex hypothesi* none yet existed. If this cause arose from an act of will by God at some specific time, then the divine will itself should have been determined by some other cause. This cause which led God to change His mind should certainly be outside His mind; but again this was not possible, for nothing outside Him yet existed. Thus, one is forced to conclude that either nothing ever arose from the being of God—which is not true, for the world does exist—or that the world must have been in existence from all eternity, as an immediate effect of His eternal will.

Al-Ghazāli declines to subscribe to any one of the assumptions as stated

[45] Cf. M. Saeed Sheikh, "Philosophy of Religion: Its Meaning and Scope," *[Proceedings of the Fifth] Pakistan Philosophical Congress*, Lahore, 1958, pp. 37–51.

[46] Cf. G. F. Hourani, "Alghazali and the Philosophers on the Origin of the World," *The Muslim World* (1958), Vol. XLVIII, No. 3, pp. 183–91.

above and shows that belief in the origination of the world from the eternal will of God at a specific moment of time as chosen by Him involves no violation of the fundamental principles of logic. The assumptions of the philosophers, that every effect has a cause and that a cause is a force external to its effect, do not have a logical coerciveness about them. It is quite legitimate to believe that God's will does not have any cause or at least that this cause does not lie outside His will but in itself. Similarly, it is not logically necessary that the effect should follow a cause immediately, for it is not logically contradictory to hold the notion of "a delayed effect." It is possible to think that God's will is eternal and yet an object of that will has occurred at some period in time. Here a distinction should be made between the eternity of God's will and the eternity of the object of His will. God, for example, can eternally will that Socrates and Plato should be born at such and such a time and that the one should be born before the other. Hence it is not logically illegitimate to affirm the orthodox belief that God eternally willed that the world should come into being at such and such a definite moment in time.

But the philosophers point out a real difficulty here. According to them, it is impossible to find out a differentiating principle for God's eternal choice of a particular moment for the creation of the world. All moments of time are completely similar; how is it possible to choose between two completely similar things? Why, in short, was the world not created earlier or later than when it was created? One of the answers to this is that there arises no question of world's being created earlier or later, for time yet was not; time too was created along with the creation of the world, i.e., both world and time are finite in duration. Al-Ghazāli adds further that should one assume with the philosophers that time is infinite, then at any present moment that infinite time has been brought to an end and a time that has an end is not infinite but finite. It is noteworthy that this is exactly the argument given by Kant in the thesis of his first antinomy.

Al-Ghazāli's real standpoint, however, is that God just arbitrarily chose one particular moment rather than another for world's coming into being. We need ask no more about this choice, for God's will is completely undetermined. His will does not depend upon distinctions in the outside world, for it is itself the producer of all the distinctions therein. This creating of the distinctions in fact is the true significance of God's will. God chooses a particular moment for the creation of the universe as He chooses a particular direction for the movement of the spheres of the (Ptolemaic) heaven, in some cases from east to west, in others from west to east (as described in the Aristotelian astronomy) even when the reversal of directions would have made no difference. There is no way to explain God's choice either in one case or the other.

The difficulty posed by the philosophers arises because of their misguided attempt to understand the nature of divine will altogether in the terms of man's will. Certainly, God's will is not like man's, as God's knowledge is not like man's knowledge. So far as God's knowledge is concerned, the philoso-

phers avowedly admit that it differs from man's knowledge in so many respects that in their final position it becomes indeed an inexplicable mystery. God, according to them, possesses the knowledge of all the universals without this knowledge necessitating plurality, without its being additional to His essence, and without its multiplying in proportion to the multiplicity of the objects known. Some of them assert after Aristotle that God is the knower, the knowledge, and the known, and that the three are one. Should we judge all this by what applies to man's knowledge, it will be found to be an utter impossibility. While the philosophers admit that God's knowledge cannot be compared with man's knowledge, they insist upon drawing a comparison between God's will and man's will. This is exactly what al-Ghazāli calls the incoherence of the philosophers and, according to him, their thought-system taken as a whole reveals quite a number of such incoherences. Indeed, the philosophers' very notion of eternal creation is self-contradictory and meaningless. Is it sense to speak of a creation of that which exists eternally? If God and the prime matter are both eternal existents, does it make sense to say that one is the cause of the other? Can the relation between two existents *qua* existents be regarded as a causal one?

Further, the philosophers put different constructions upon their notions of space and time. They assume time to be infinite and space to be finite, and yet consider time to be co-implicant of movement in space. Al-Ghazāli insists rightly that one who believes in the finitude of space must in consistency assume the existence of finite time, particularly when one holds the Aristotelian position that space, time, and movement in space are all related to one another.[47] And if they insist that it is impossible to think of empty space, they should equally realize that it is impossible to conceive of an empty time.

These are just a few of the inconsistencies of the philosophers pointed out by al-Ghazāli in the course of his disputation with regard to the eternity of the world and they could be mentioned here only very briefly, considering the space at our disposal. One further point of criticism may, however, be added for its importance in the history of modern philosophy. Prior to its origination, the philosophers hold, the world must have either been possible *(mumkin)*, or impossible *(mumtani')*, or necessary *(wājib)*. It is impossible that it should have been impossible; for that which is impossible in itself is never brought into existence. Again, it is impossible for it to have been necessary in itself, for that which is necessary in itself is never deprived of existence. It follows then that the existence of the world must have always been possible in itself, otherwise it would never have come to be. This possibility cannot inhere in possibility itself, nor in the agent, nor in no-substratum, for the possible is that which is in the process of *becoming* actual. Hence the subject of possibility is some substratum which is susceptible of possibility, and this is matter. Now, this matter cannot be considered to have been originated. If it had been originated, the possibility of its existence would have preceded its

[47] Cf. W. D. Ross, *op. cit.*, pp. 89 *et sqq.*

existence. In that case possibility would have existed in itself, but possibility existing in itself is unintelligible. Hence matter is eternal and it is only the passing over of the forms to matter which is originated.

In rebutting this highly sophisticated argument of the philosophers al-Ghazāli points out in Kantian fashion that possibility like impossibility is a purely subjective notion to which nothing need correspond in reality. If possibility requires an existent to correspond to it, so would impossibility require something to correspond to it, but avowedly there is no existing thing in concrete reality to which impossibility may be referred. Hence possibility like impossibility is merely a concept; the assumption of an existing substratum to which this concept may be related is to have a metaphysical jump from mere thought to actual existence and is to commit as we understand now an ontological fallacy.

4. *Theory of Emanation.*—The entire argument of the philosophers with regard to the eternity of the world is, thus, full of contradictions and unproved assumptions, but the most manifest of their inconsistencies and the sheer baselessness of their assumptions become signally conspicuous when they come to explain the origination of the world from the being of God in the terms of the Plotinian Theory of Emanation. Plotinus considers the world to be a necessary outflow from the being of God like light from the sun[48] or better as Spinoza described it later like the properties of a triangle from a triangle.[49] Muslim philosophers' subscription to this view according to al-Ghazāli is the clearest evidence that their verbal avowal of creation is a mere dissimulation and duplicity. The problem of emanation with the philosophers, however, arises because of their over-emphasis on the abstract unity and absolute perfection of God. Creation through an act of volition implies both will and knowledge, and these cannot be predicated of God as attributes apart from His essence without doing violence to His absolute unity. Further, both will and knowledge are limitations: will in particular implies a deficiency in a being who wills, for it means that he desires or wants to have that which he lacks. Hence the philosophers elaborated an ingenious theory of emanation which contrives to erect a cosmological staircase between the stable stillness of God's unity and the changing and varied multiplicity of the world. This staircase is constituted of a finely graded series of intelligences and souls of celestial spheres, each emanating from the other in an hierarchical fashion. The view that the celestial spheres are perfect and have souls and intelligences superior to that of man had the overwhelming authority of Aristotle[50] and further it was possible and even fascinating to conceive of them in terms of angels as described by the theologians.

[48] Plotinus uses the light metaphor, for he conceived light to be incorporeal after Posidonius of Rhodes (c. 135–50 B. C.) who is perhaps the first to propound the notion of emanation.

[49] Cf. Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part I, Section 17, note.

[50] Cf. Aristotle, *De Caelo*, 285 a 29, 292 a 20, b 1.

The emanationism of the Muslim philosophers in the final analysis worked under two governing principles: First, it is not thinkable that from God who is a pure unity anything could proceed except that which is itself a unity. This gave rise to the formula: from one only one can follow. Secondly, being has two aspects: it is either necessary *(wājib)* or possible *(mumkin)*; it is either essence *(māhīyyah)* or existence *(annīyyah)*. In the case of God alone are essence and existence identical; in all other beings essence is separate from existence. From this it follows that all things are possible by their essence, and they become necessary by the existence given to them by God.

The first emanation from the existence of the First Principle *(al-mabdā' al-awwal)*, the Necessary Being *(al-wājib al-wujūd)*, i.e., God, is the first intelligence *(al-'aql al-awwal)* which is numerically one. Its existence is possible in itself and necessary through the First Principle; further, it knows its own essence as well as the essence of the First Principle. From its two-fold existence and two-fold knowledge springs a multiplicity of knowledge and existence. The first intelligence, in fact, has three kinds of knowledge: of the First Principle, of its own essence in so far as it is necessary, and of its possible being. One might ask: What is the source of this three-foldness in the first intelligence when the principle from which it emanates is one? The answer is: From the First Principle only one proceeds, i.e., the essence of the first intelligence by which it knows itself. Now, its knowledge of its principle is evidently necessary, although this necessity is not derived from that principle. Again, being possible in itself the first intelligence cannot owe its possibility to the First Principle but possesses it in its own self. Though only one should proceed from one, yet it is possible that the first effect may come to possess not from the First Principle but by itself certain necessary qualities which express some relation or negation of relation and give rise to plurality. Thus, from the three kinds of knowledge possessed by the first intelligence emanate three beings, but only one from each kind. As it knows its principle there proceeds from it a second intelligence; as it knows its essence there proceeds from it the first soul of the highest sphere (which is the ninth heaven); and as it knows itself as possible in itself there proceeds from it the body of that sphere. In a similar fashion from the second intelligence emanates the third intelligence, the soul of the stellar sphere and the body of that sphere. From the third intelligence emanates the fourth intelligence, the soul of the sphere of Saturn and the body of that sphere. From the fourth intelligence emanates the fifth intelligence, the soul of the sphere of Jupiter and the body of that sphere. Now there are, according to the then current Ptolemaic system, only nine celestial spheres in all including the sphere of the fixed stars all in concentric circles with earth in the centre.[51] So, starting from the First Principle the emanations proceed on till the last or the tenth intelligence appears and

[51] The nine spheres are as follows: the first sphere, the sphere of the fixed stars, the sphere of Saturn, the sphere of Jupiter, the sphere of Mars, the sphere of the Sun, the sphere of Venus, the sphere of Mercury, and the sphere of the Moon.

with it the last sphere of the moon and its soul. The tenth intelligence, also called the active intellect *(al-'aql al-fa"āl)*,[52] acts in our world. It produces the first matter *(hayūla)* which is passive and formless but which is the basis of the four elements from which all creatures arise. The composition and decomposition of the elements is the cause of generation and corruption of all bodies. But all these transformations take place under the influence of the movement of the spheres. As the active intellect is the producer of matter, so it is the dispenser of forms, *dator formarum (wāhib al-ṣuwar)*. It gives to each matter its proper form and it also gives each body a soul (which in fact is its form) when that body is ready to receive it. Thus, active intellect is also the source of the existence of the human souls. But the human soul does not feel at home in its physical abode and yearns for nothing less than the First Principle Himself. Hence it starts its spiritual journey back to the original source traversing through the various stages of the intelligences of the spheres. This is a rounded though brief description of the emanationistic world-view so enthusiastically elaborated by the Muslim philosophers, by ibn Sīna, for example, in both of his major works on philosophy, viz., *Kitāb al-Shifā'* and *Kitāb al-Najāt* and by al-Fārābi in his *al-Madīnat al-Fāḍilah*.[53]

Determinism implicit in this emanationistic world-view is so opposed to the theistic voluntarism of the Ash'arite world-view that al-Ghazāli launches the most vehement attack against it. His strictures against this grand cosmological construction made out of so many various foreign imported ideas are the strongest and the bitterest of all others that may be found in the entire *Tahāfut*. All this, he inveighs, is arbitrary reasoning, idle speculation; a wild guess work; darkness piled upon darkness. If someone says he saw things of this kind in a dream, it would be inferred that he was suffering from some disease. Even an insane person could not rest satisfied with such postulates.[54] In our own times, to say nothing of the scientists, F. R. Tennant who may be described as an eminent "religious positivist" holds the theory of emanation more or less in the same estimation.[55]

Al-Ghazāli's criticism of the emanationistic argument consists in showing, on the one hand, that it fails to account for the multiplicity and composition in

[52] Some of the Muslim thinkers have referred to the Qur'ān, lxxviii, 38, in support of the notion of the active intellect, e. g., al-Baiḍāwi in his *Anwār al-Tanzīl*, ed. H. O. Fleischer, Leipzig, 1846–48, Vol. II, p. 383, also *Iḥyā'* (Urdu Tr.), Vol. III, p. 5, where al-Ghazāli refers to the Tradition that "the first thing that God created was the Intellect."

[53] Cf. *Kitāb al-Shifā'*, "Metaphysics," Section ix, Chapter 6; *al-Najāt*, Cairo, 1331/1912 pp. 448 *et sqq.*; *al-Madīnat al-Fāḍilah*, Cairo, 1368/1948 p. 19. For the Aristotelian ingredients in the theory of emanation as explained above, cf. W. D. Ross, *op. cit.*, pp. 181 *et sqq.*; A. E. Taylor, *Aristotle*, London, 1943, pp. 98 *et sqq.*; and A. H. Armstrong, *The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe in the Philosophy of Plotinus*, Cambridge, 1940, by index.

[54] Cf. *Tahāfut*, pp. 77, 87.

[55] Cf. F. R. Tennant, *Philosophical Theology*, Cambridge, 1930, Vol. II, pp. 125 *et sqq.*, 153 *et sqq.*

the universe and, on the other, that it does not at all succeed in safeguarding the absolute unity of God. If the formula ever so glibly repeated that from one only one proceeds should be observed strictly logically, then all the beings in the world would be units, each of which would be an effect of some other unit above it, as it would be the cause of some other unit below it in a linear fashion. But in fact this is not the case. Every object, according to the philosophers themselves, is composed at least of form and matter. How does a composite thing such as a body then come into existence? Does it have only one cause? If the answer is in the affirmative, then the assertion that only one proceeds from one becomes null and void. If, on the other hand, a composite thing has a composite cause, then the same question will be repeated in the case of this cause so on and so forth till one arrives at a point where the compound necessarily meets the simple. This contact between the compound effect and the unitary cause wherever it occurs would falsify the principle that only one proceeds from one. Now, strictly speaking, all the existents in the universe are characterized by composition and only the First Principle, i.e., God, alone can be said to possess true simplicity or unity, for in Him alone there is the complete identity of essence and existence. This would lead us necessarily to the conclusion that either the principle of "only one from one" fails to account for the composition and multiplicity which is apparent in the universe or that even God does not possess a genuine unity. But the philosophers cloak the issue with their artificial subtleties and the grandiose constructions they put upon their emanationistic foundations.

What earthly and even unearthly relation is there, al-Ghazāli questions rightly, between the first intelligence's having a possible existence and the body of the sphere of the second intelligence which is supposed to proceed from it? Neither logic nor experience can substantiate this wild supposition and as such it is no more than pure nonsense. Further, how is it possible that from two kinds of knowledge of the first intelligence, that is, knowledge of the First Principle and that of itself, should arise two kinds of existence, first, that of the second intelligence and, second, that of the soul of the highest sphere? How can the knowledge of a thing lead to the existence of a thing (as we would now put it after Kant) without committing an obvious ontological fallacy? How can the knower emanate from the knowing, al-Ghazāli rightly wonders, as does F. R. Tennant, and like him deplores that of all the people, philosophers should believe in such mythical nonsense.[56]

Even if the triplicity with which the philosophers characterize the first intelligence should be taken for granted (which indeed cannot be done) it fails to account for all that they want to deduce from it. The body of the highest sphere, which according to them proceeds only from one aspect of the essence of the first intelligence, is surely not unitary in nature but composite and that in three ways.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 154.

First, as stated above, it is composed of form and matter, as indeed all bodies are according to the philosophers' own admission. True, form and matter always exist conjointly in all bodies, yet they are so different from each other that one cannot be the cause of the other. Hence, form and matter of the body of the highest sphere require two principles for their existence and not one. A unitary aspect of the three-fold character of the first intelligence fails to account for it.

Secondly, the body of this sphere has a definite size. Its having a definite size is something additional to the bare fact of its existence. Certainly, it could have come into existence with a different size, bigger or smaller than what it is. Hence, over and above that which necessitated the existence of the body of the sphere, there should be an additional cause to account for the adoption of this particular size.

Thirdly, in the highest heaven, there are marked out two points as its poles, which are fixed. This fact was admitted by the philosophers in accordance with the Aristotelian astronomy. Now, either all the parts of the highest sphere are similar in which case it is impossible to explain why two points should be chosen in perference to all the others as its poles; or they are different, some of them possessing properties which are not possessed by the others. Hence, we require yet another aspect in the first intelligence to be the cause for differences in the various parts of the highest sphere which differences alone would justify the choice of two points therein to be the poles.

In view of what has been stated above, it is sheer "ignorance" on the part of the philosophers to hold that the body of the highest sphere has emanated only from one aspect of the essence of first intelligence. Either the principle that only one proceeds from one is true, in which case the first intelligence which is not a mere triplicity but a whole multiplicity remains unexplained, or this principle is an empty formula signifying nothing, and, thus, making it possible that "many may proceed from one." In the latter case the infinite variety and plurality of the world can be directly derived from the unity of God and there is no need to erect an emanationistic staircase between Him and the world.

The above principle certainly collapses when we come to the second intelligence, for it is supposed to be, in one of its aspects, the cause of the sphere of the fixed stars. These are twelve hundred or so (according to the then Greek or Arab astronomers' reckoning)[57] and are different in magnitude, shape, position, colour, and in respect of their special function in nature, etc. Each one of these factors in every single star needs a separate cause as its

[57] In Ptolemy's *Almagest* the number of stars mentioned is 1,025. This number was generally accepted by the Arab astronomers. 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Umar al-Ṣūfi (291/903–376/986), one of the greatest Muslim astronomers, in his work *Kitāb al-Kawākib al-Thābitah al-Muṣawwar* (Illustrated Book of the Fixed Stars), adds that there are many more stars than 1,025, but they are so faint that it is not possible to count them.

determinant *(murajjiḥ)*. All this necessitates a bewildering multiplicity in the second intelligence and also indirectly presupposes the same in the first intelligence in so far as the latter is the emanative cause of the former.

Should the above arguments fail to convince the philosophers, there is another way to show that the first intelligence is more than a mere triplicity. Is the self-knowledge of the first intelligence identical with its essence or other than it? It is not possible that it should be identical, for knowledge is not the same thing as that which is known. Hence, the first intelligence is not a triplicity but a quadruplicity, to wit: its essence, its knowledge of itself, its knowledge of the First Principle, and its being a possible existent by itself. To all these four aspects there can be added yet another, namely, its being a necessary being whose necessity is derived from an external cause. All this proves that the first intelligence has five aspects and not three, as arbitrarily assumed by the philosophers. Whether the first intelligence has five aspects or three, it certainly is not of purely unitary character according to the philosophers' own admission. This shows that there is something in the effect which is not present in the cause, i.e., the First Principle, and this is scandalous.

Not only does the formula that only one proceeds from one become shamefacedly invalid right at the outset, but further, according to al-Ghazāli, the entire emanationistic line of argument does great violence to the concept of God's unity and, thus, nullifies the very purpose for which it is adopted. There is no reason, according to him, that the very arguments which the philosophers advance to establish the triple character of the first intelligence should not be applied to God Himself. One of the aspects of plurality in the first intelligence according to the philosophers is its being a possible existent by itself. It may be asked: Is its being possible identical with its existence or other than it? If it is identical, no plurality would arise from it. If it is other than its existence, then why should it not be possible to say that there is as much plurality in the First Principle, i.e., God Himself, for He not only has existence but is necessary in His existence? The necessity of existence as such is other than existence itself. In truth, existence may be considered to be a generic concept divided into necessary and possible. If one specific difference is an addition to existence *per se* in one case, it should be considered so in the other also. If the philosophers insist that the possibility of existence is other than existence in the case of the first intelligence, through the same argument they should admit that necessity of existence is different from existence in the case of the First Principle. Similarly, al-Ghazāli asks: Is the first intelligence's knowledge of its principle identical with its existence and with its knowledge of itself or other than the two? If it is identical, then there will be no plurality in its nature. But if it is other than the two, then such a plurality exists also in the First Principle, for He too knows Himself as well as what is other than Himself. Thus, al-Ghazāli contends that either there can be no plurality in the first intelligence or if it is there, then it is for the same reasons in the First Principle too, and, therefore, the beings characterized by diversity and plurality

would directly proceed from Him. Al-Ghazāli forces this conclusion upon the philosophers through their own logic.

For himself al-Ghazāli believes that: "The First Principle is an omnipotent and willing agent; He does what He wills, and ordains as He likes, and He creates the similar and dissimilar things alike, whenever and in whatever manner He wills? The impossibility of such a belief is neither a self-evident truth, nor a matter of inferential knowledge."[58] Al-Ghazāli frankly and rightly confesses that the problem of God's relation with the universe in the final analysis remains ever beyond the comprehension of human understanding. The inquiry into the manner in which the world proceeded from God's will, he urges, is "an idle and aimless venture." The *modus operandi* of God's creative activity is wholly inexplicable and this inexplicability is inevitable; indeed, if it were explicable, it would not be "creative." Explanation in all its forms establishes some connection or similarity with what is experienced, whereas God's creativity is an activity through which the experients and what is experienced by them come to be. How can human comprehension envisage the mode of God's act of creation when it is itself the creature of that act?

The philosophers try to avoid the charge of plurality with regard to the First Principle so far as His knowledge is concerned by affirming that the First Principle does not know anything other than Himself and that His self-knowledge is the same thing as His essence; so the knowledge, the knower, and the object of knowledge are all one in Him. This indeed was originally the position of Aristotle according to whom God is describable as thought thinking itself. In Aristotle's own words, ". . . it must be itself that thought thinks, and its thinking is thinking on thinking."[59] This view of God as reflective thought, reflective in the literal sense of turning back upon itself, has been subjected to severe criticism by al-Ghazāli. According to him, self-knowledge of a literal and direct sort is an impossibility. He argues with Plotinus that self-knowledge even in the case of God implies an epistemological subject-object dualism and, therefore, would impede the philosophers' thesis of the absolute unity of the First Principle. Not only the Aristotelian conception of God as thought thinking thought does not absolve the philosophers from introducing plurality in the First Principle, but further lands them into many more difficulties with regard to their emanationistic world-view. Consider, for example, the relativ epositions of the First Principle and the first intelligence in terms of their knowledge. The First Principle which is the emanative cause of the first intelligence does not know anything other than Himself, whereas the latter knows not only its cause but further knows itself and the three

[58] Cf. *Tahāfut*, p. 88. Al-Ghazāli, in support of his agnosticism with regard to the *modus operandi* of God's creativity, alludes at the end to the tradition: "Think over the product of God's creative activity: do not think over His essence." Cf. *Takhrīj al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Irāqi* appended to *Iḥyā'*, Part IV, p. 410; also the Qur'ān, xviii, 15, which is referred to by al-Ghazāli earlier, i.e., on p. 80.

[59] *Metaphysica*, p. 1072 b 20. Cf. also *De Anima*, p. 424 a 18.

effects which proceed from it, viz., the second intelligence, the soul of the highest sphere, and the body of that sphere. It is a strange theory, al-Ghazāli observes, which makes the effect have the knowledge of its cause but not the cause of its effect. The necessity of a cause possessing the knowledge of its effect is more compelling than the necessity of an effect possessing the knowledge of its cause. In fact, the philosophers make the first intelligence superior to and "nobler" than the First Principle in so far as from the First Principle only one thing proceeds, while from the first intelligence three things proceed. Further, the First Principle does not know what proceeds from Him; in fact, He does not know anything other than Himself, while the first intelligence knows itself, its cause, and its three effects. Al-Ghazāli feels so bitter at the Aristotelian conception of God as thought thinking itself that he goes to the length of saying that the philosophers by limiting God's knowledge to the sphere of self-knowledge virtually reduce Him to the status of the dead.[60]

5. *God's Knowledge of the Particulars.*[61]—Al-Ghazāli is very emphatic and uncompromising with regard to the all-circumscribing knowledge of God: "God knows the creeping of the black ant upon the rugged rock in a dark night, and He perceives the movement of the mote in the midst of the air."[62] Ibn Sīna also subscribes to the view that God knows everything: "Nothing, not even as much as a particle of dust in the heavens or on the earth, remains hidden from His knowledge."[63] Yet, interestingly enough, al-Ghazāli does not hesitate to level a charge of infidelity against him on this score for, according to ibn Sīna, though God knows all the particulars, He knows them only in a universal way. This means that God cannot have the perceptual knowledge of particular things but knows them by way of a universal knowledge. Ibn Sīna realizes the difficulty of his position and so adds that the understanding of it needs great intellectual subtlety. The reasons that he advances to deny perceptual knowledge to God are fully recognized by al-Ghazāli. Perceptual knowledge is characterized both temporally and spatially, whereas God is above both time and space and so it is not possible to ascribe perceptual knowledge to Him. A particular event occurs at a particular moment of time and suffers change with the passage of time. Change in the object of perception implies a change in the content of perception itself which obviously leads to change in the subject of perception, i.e., in the percipient himself. But change in God is unthinkable; therefore, perception of a particular event is not

[60] Cf. *Tahāfut*, p. 80.

[61] Problem thirteenth of *Tahāfut*, pp. 153–62; cf. also other passages pertaining to God's knowledge by index. For a clear and balanced exposition of the philosopher's position with regard to this problem, see *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifah* (Urdu trans. by M. Ḥanīf Nadawi, *Qadīm Yūnāni Falsafah*), Lahore, 1959, pp. 168–78.

[62] Cf. *Iḥyā'*, Vol. II, Bk. ii, Section I, English trans. by D. B. Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology*, London, 1903, p. 302.

[63] Ibn Sīna says this in his *Kitāb al-Shifā'*: "Metaphysics," VIII, 6. It is really an allusion to a verse of the Qur'ān (x, 61): ". . . and not the weight of an atom in the earth or in the heaven is hidden from thy Lord . . . "; also xxxiv, 3.

possible for Him. Similarly, to distinguish between one particular object and another in space is possible only through the senses and implies a special relation of a sensible thing to the percipient as being near to or far from him or in a definite position, and this is impossible where God is concerned. Hence, it is not possible for God to have *perceptual* knowledge of the particulars. His knowledge can only be that which rises above the particular "nows" and the particular "heres," that is to say, is of conceptual or universal nature.

Ibn Sīnā's position as briefly outlined above seems to be very well grounded in sound reasoning and is quite understandable, yet, according to al-Ghazāli, it is so pernicious to religion that it altogether demolishes the entire edifice of religious Law (hence his charge of infidelity). The theory implies that God cannot know any new state that emerges in John—He cannot know that John has becomes an infidel or a true believer, for He can know only the unbelief or the belief of man in general in a universal manner and not in specific relation to individuals. Yes, God cannot know Muḥammad's proclaiming himself a prophet at the time when he did. And the same will be true of every other prophet, for God only knows that among men there are some who claim prophecy, and that such and such are their attributes; but He cannot know a particular prophet as an individual, for that is to be known only by the senses. There certainly is a point in what al-Ghazāli says here for it is really difficult to show any relation between the temporal and the timeless, yet the above criticism of his is a little wide of the mark for it is based on a misinterpretation of ibn Sīnā's position. By the statement that God does not have *perceptual* knowledge of the particulars, ibn Sīna does not mean to say that God does not have the knowledge of the particulars or that His knowledge is restricted only to that of the universals or general concepts. Ibn Sīna insists that God does have knowledge of the particulars; only this knowledge comes to Him not through sensuous perception but through intellectual perception, not from moment to moment but eternally.

Ibn Sīna starts with the Aristotelian conception that God has only self-knowledge but adds emphatically that His self-knowledge necessarily implies knowledge of all the existent things in the universe in so far as He is the principal or the ultimate source of them all. There is not a single existent particular which does not proceed from Him directly or indirectly and the existence of which does not become in some way necessary through Him. The coming into existence of particular events and objects is due to the action and interaction of the various causes but ultimately all these have to be traced back to the First Cause. God, the First Cause, has the full prescience of the working of the various causes which originate from Him, and knows the effects produced by them and the time involved in their occurrence and recurrence. Thus, God knows the particular events even when they occur to a single individual under specific conditions and at particular times in so far as they are fully explicable in terms of general laws and all-pervasive causal nexus. This may be illustrated with reference to an analogous human situation. An astronomer

who has full understanding of the general laws governing the movements of the heavenly bodies can, through his proper calculations, describe the various phenomena such as the particular eclipses and the conjunctions of the stars. The analogy, however, though helpful, cannot be stretched to an identity, for, strictly speaking, there is nothing in our experience to compare with divine knowledge. Our knowledge is liable to error and is fragmentary, whereas God's knowledge is infallible and all-embracing, so much so that the whole universe is known to Him in one single congruous manifestation which is not affected by time. God is immediately aware of the entire sweep of history regarded as an ordered string of specific events in an eternal now. Further, God not only knows but is also the very ground of the objects that He knows. The universe proceeds from the essence of God verily because of His knowledge of the universe: the ideal representation of the universal system is the very cause of its emanation. Had God not known the universe with all its concrete particularities, the universe would never have come into being. This indeed is a very original and quite ingenious theory with regard to God's knowledge of the particulars. Yet it is undoubtedly of highly speculative nature and so al-Ghazāli is all out to bring quite an arsenal of criticism against it with a dialectical analyticity and rigour not incomparable to those of the logical positivists of our own day. He is not at all prepared to accept any of the assumptions of the philosophers until and unless they should either be statable in the form of analytical propositions or be verifiable through some kind of intuitive experience. The attribution of knowledge to God as it is, but particularly that of "the other," cannot go without jeopardizing to some extent at least His absolute unity and simplicity which otherwise are so much emphasized, rather over-emphasized by the philosophers. Above all, the theory, like any of its kind, fails to relate in any satisfactory manner the eternality of God's knowledge with the transciency of human experience, which relation indeed is the very crux of religious experience. And so far as it suffers from the presuppositions of the intellectualistic-deterministic world-view of the philosophers, al-Ghazāli simply has no patience with it. For one, it suggests a block universe such as makes little allowance if any at all even for the exercise of God's will. These are just a few general remarks to indicate the mode and the various lines of al-Ghazāli's arguments against the philosophers; they may now be substantiated and amplified by listing some of the actual points of his criticism.

The statement that God's self-knowledge necessarily implies the knowledge of all the existent particulars in the universe cannot be logically validated, nor can it be verified on the basis of any analogous human experience. God's self-knowledge and His knowledge of others do not have the relation of logical entailment, for it is possible to imagine the existence of the one without imagining the existence of the other at the same time. Looking to our own experience it would be wrong to claim that man's knowledge of what is other than himself is identical with his self-knowledge and with his essence.

It may be said that God does not know other things in the first intention *(al-*

wajh al-awwal) but that He knows His essence as the principle of the universe and from this His knowledge of the universe follows in the second intention *(al-wajh al-thāni)*, i.e., by way of a logical inference. Now, the statement of the philosophers that God knows Himself directly only as the principle of the universe, according to al-Ghazāli, is as much an arbitrary assumption as the earlier statement and is exposed to exactly the same kind of criticism. According to the philosophers' own admission, it would suffice that God should know only His essence; the knowledge of His being the principle of the universe is additional to it and is not logically implicated in it. Just as it is possible for a man to know himself without knowing that he is "an effect of God" (for his being an effect is a relation to this cause), even so it is possible for God to know Himself without knowing that He is the principle or cause. The principle or cause is merely the relation that He bears to His effect, the universe. His knowledge of His *relation* to the universe is not by any means entailed by His knowledge of His own essence. Do not the philosophers themselves in their doctrine with regard to the attributes of God affirm the possibility only of negative or relational statements about God on the plea that negations or relations add nothing to His essence?[64] The knowledge of the relation, therefore, cannot be identical with the knowledge of the essence. Hence the philosophers' assumption that God knows His essence and thereby also knows Himself as the principle of the universe, remains unproved logically and unverified experientially. Al-Ghazāli raises many more points of criticism of a similar nature which fully bring out the "positivistic" and "analytic" thrusts in his thought. This type of criticism should have been sufficient with al-Ghazāli, for it served his purpose of refuting the philosophers quite effectively, but his religious calling and persuasion impell him to launch many more attacks on the philosophers. They do not aim so much at the complete smashing of the philosophers' arguments as to bring out either inconsistencies in their various positions or more so the difficulties of a religious nature in accepting them.

Al-Ghazāli fully appreciates the motive of the philosophers in elaborating their theory with regard to the nature of God's knowledge of the particulars, which is no other than that of safeguarding the immutability and the unity of God. Eliminating the factor of time or change altogether in God's knowledge, however, has difficulties of its own which will be noted presently, but there is another aspect of the philosophers' treatment of the problem of God's knowledge which lands them into a morass of contradictions and annuls the very purpose for which it is belaboured, i.e., that of establishing the unity of God. Granted that God's knowledge remains unaffected by change, for it rises above the distinction of "is," "was" and "will," yet how can God's knowledge remain unaffected by the multiplicity and diversity of the objects that He knows? How can it be claimed that knowledge remains unitary even

[64] *Ibid.*; cf. also *al-Najāt*, pp. 408 *et sqq.*

when the things known are unlimited in number and are different, for knowledge has to conform to the nature of the things known? If the change in the objects of cognition necessarily presupposes change in the subject, multiplicity and difference in the former presuppose the same in the latter.

"Would that I could understand," says al-Ghazāli, "how an intelligent person can allow himself to disbelieve the oneness of the knowledge of a thing whose states are divisible into the Past, the Present, and the Future; while he would not disbelieve the oneness of knowledge which relates to all the different Genera and Species. Verily the difference and the disparity among the diverse Genera and Species is more marked than the difference which may actually be found to exist among the states of a thing divisible in accordance with the division of time. If that difference does not necessitate multiplicity and difference, how can this do so either?"[65]

Though the philosophers ascribe omniscience and fore-knowledge to God, they make His knowledge a sort of mirror which passively reflects in an eternal now the details of an already finished sequence of events just as we in a particular present moment have the memory of a fixed and inalterable sequence of past events. Thus, God's knowledge of time is restricted only to the relational aspect of time, i.e., that of the sequence of before and after or of earlier and later. There is, however, another aspect of time which typically characterizes the human experience and forms its very essence, namely, that of the ever-fleeting, ever-changing now. This is the time which is born afresh at every moment, the time in which the future is perpetually flowing through the present into the past. Now, according to the philosophers' thesis of God's knowledge as explained above, in God's eternal being there can be no counterpart of the experience of this living time in which we humans move and act. God may know, for example, that my acts of religious devotion are subsequent to my religious conversion, but He cannot know *now* that I am acting or have acted in such and such a way. So God in His supra-temporal transcendence would remain impervious to my religious solicitations, for I am eternally doomed to the tyranny of this ever-fleeting, ever-trembling now.[66] Should this be true and should I come to realize it, I may cry in despair: "Of what use is God to me!" Such is the catastrophe to which the philosophers' over-emphasis upon the eternality and changelessness of God's knowledge leads through its very incumbent logic. The problem of the relation of the eternality of God to

[65] *Tahāfut*, p. 159. Even though al-Ghazāli is not justified in alleging that philosophers restrict God's knowledge merely to the universals, namely, the genera, the species, and the universal accidents, yet his criticism of the philosophers on this point is not vitiated by this misunderstanding and he is quite right in pointing out the inconsistency in their position.

[66] Aristotle's conception of time is essentially intellectualistic and static, whereas al-Ghazāli's standpoint with regard to time, in keeping with his theistic occasionalism, is intuitionistic and dynamic much like Bergson's *durée*. Cf. Louis Massignon, "Time in Islamic Thought" in *Man and Time (Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks)*, London, 1958, pp. 108–14. Also M. F. Cleugh, *Time*, London, 1937.

the temporality of human experience is almost an impossible problem and the philosophers of all times have stumbled over it. It may be suggested, however, that God is transcendental to both time and change and yet in some mysterious way immanent in it. Viewed superficially, this seems to be an apparent logical contradiction, but, adds al-Ghazāli, the philosophers dare not point this out for they themselves have affirmed with regard to their doctrine of the eternity of the world that the world is eternal and yet at the same time subject to change.

The statement that God not only knows the universe but, further, that this knowledge is the very ground and the cause of the universe, though very significant in itself, is made by the philosophers essentially within the framework of their deterministic-emanationistic world-view and as such, according to al-Ghazāli, involves them into an embarrassing predicament. There is no sense in talking about the knowledge of an agent when his action is a "natural action" in the sense that it follows from him necessarily and is not the result of his volition. We do not say that knowledge of light possessed by the sun is the requisite condition for the emanation of light from the sun, and this in fact is the analogy which the philosophers have employed to explain the procession of the world from the being of God. Further, according to them, the universe has not been produced by God all at once but has proceeded from Him through "the intermediaries and the other consequences and the consequences of those consequences all indirectly connected with these intermediaries."[67] Even if it should be granted that the necessary procession of something from an agent requires the knowledge by him of that which proceeds, God's knowledge at best would be only that of the first intelligence and of nothing besides. That which proceeds from something which proceeds from God may not be necessarily known to Him. Knowledge is not necessary in the case of the indirect consequences of volitional actions; how can it be so in the case of the indirect consequences of necessary actions? Thus, the assertion of the philosophers that God's knowledge is the very ground and cause of that which He knows loses its entire significance because of its moorings in the Plotinian scheme of emanationism.

Through a strange irony of logic the emanationistic argument of the philosophers, instead of building a staircase between God and the world, creates almost an unbridgeable gulf between the two. It certainly leads to the conclusion that God is directly related only to the first intelligence, i.e., the first item of the series of emanations between God and the world; on the other hand, the world is directly related only to the lowest end of that series. Further, the argument makes the world an independent and autonomous system, which can be understood by itself because of its insistence on an inexorable causal necessity such as pervades the entire scheme of things. This conception of a through and through causally determined universe rooted in the intellectual-

[67] Cf. *Tahāfut*, p. 189.

emanationistic metaphysics of the philosophers was so radically different from his own dynamic-occasionalistic world-view grounded in the theistic-voluntaristic metaphysics of the Ash'arite tradition that al-Ghazāli declared a complete parting of the way with them. Their world-view, al-Ghazāli made it clear, militates particularly against the fundamental Islamic doctrine of God's providence and omnipotence, and leaves no possibility for the happening of miracles such as turning of a rod into a serpent, denaturing fire of its capacity to burn, revivification of the dead, splitting of the moon (all so clearly referred to in the Qur'ān).[68] There certainly is no scope for the exercise of God's free-will in a universe in which there is no real becoming and in which the future is already given in the present as its necessary effect. Nor, in view of the reign of the inexorable law of causal necessity in such a universe, is there any possibility for the miracles, except those which can be "naturalized" through scientific explanation.

6. *Causality.*—Al-Ghazālī's desire to vindicate the truth of the religious position mentioned above led him to make a highly critical and acute analysis of the philosophers' concept of causality. This analysis, which bears a strikingly close similarity to that of Hume's, brings[69] out clearly the most remarkable originality and acumen of al-Ghazālī's thought. The problem that engaged him at the outset of his inquiry with regard to the seventeenth disputation in the *Tahāfut* is the problem of the alleged necessity of the causal connection as maintained and insisted on by the philosophers. He challenges the validity of this necessity right as he opens the discussion.[70] "In our view," he asserts, "the connection between what are believed to be cause and effect is not necessary." The reason that he offers for the justification of his position is that the relation between cause and effect is not that of logical entailment. The affirmation of the one does not imply the affirmation of the other, nor does the denial of the one imply the denial of the other. Neither the existence nor the non-existence of the one is necessarily presupposed by the existence or the non-existence of the other. The relation between quenching of thirst and drinking, satiety and eating, burning and fire, or light and sunrise, etc., is not a necessary relation, for in no case does the one term logically imply the other. There is nothing logically contradictory in assuming that fire may not burn, and drinking may not quench thirst, and so on.

The alleged necessity of the causal connection is not logically warranted because through no amount of logical reasoning can we deduce the effect from

[68] Miracles ascribed to the prophets Moses, Abraham, Jesus, and Muḥammad respectively; cf. the Qur'ān, xx, 17–23, xxviii, 31; xxi, 68, 69, xx, 124, xxxvii, 97, 98; iii, 48; v, 110; and liv, 1.

[69] Cf. Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, Bk. I, Part iii. Cf. also Ḥanīf Nadawi, *Sargudhasht-i Ghazāli*, pp. 62–76; also article "Ghazāli ka Naẓrīyyah-i Ta'līl," *Thaqāfat* (Urdu), Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore, July 1959, Vol. VII, No. 7, pp. 11–19.

[70] The real starting point of the discussion on causality belongs to the later part of the sixteenth disputation. See *Tahāfut*, p. 181.

the cause. At best it is based on observation or experience. We observe that objects succeed one another or that similar objects are constantly conjoined. Now, this proves succession, not causation, or conjunction, not connection. The fire which is an inanimate object has no power to produce the effect of burning; "observation shows only that one is *with* the other and not that it is *by* it," i.e., the effect happens *with* the cause and not *through* it *('indahu la bihi)*.[71]

The notion of necessity is valid only in the case of logical relations such as identity, implication, disjunction, etc. In the sphere of mere natural relations necessity has no scope. In the order of nature, unlike the order of thought, we deal merely with the contingent and alogical entities which remain unrelated to each other except in the minds of the perceiver. Objects as such are not connected with one another; only the ideas of them get connected in our mind by association. The relation between fire and burning is not a necessary relation, for it does not belong to the realm of necessity but to that of possibility such as may happen or may not happen depending on the will of God. "It is only," al-Ghazāli enunciates clearly, "when something possible is repeated over and over again (so as to form the Norm), that its pursuance of a uniform course in accordance with the Norm in the past is indelibly impressed upon our minds."[72] Thus, if there is any semblance of necessity in the order of natural relations such as that of cause and effect, it is merely because the two terms which in nature remain extrinsic to each other, through constant repetition become conjoined in our consciousness. Causal necessity is just the habit of our mind: it is merely a psychological necessity and not a logical necessity. The psychological necessity differs from logical necessity in this that its denial like the latter does not involve us in a logical impossibility. Hence the miracles, such as the fire not burning the body of Abraham when he was thrown into it, are not impossible to think. Al-Ghazāli insists that the denial of miracles can be justified only when it should be proved that they are logically impossible and where such proof is not forthcoming their denial is sheer ignorance and obduracy.

It is interesting to note further that al-Ghazāli, in the course of his discussion of the principle of causality and the possibility of miracles, comes close to propounding the notion of the composite nature of a cause and also that of plurality of causes. Cause he understands to be the sum total of many contributory factors, some of which are positive while others negative, and all of which have to be considered in conjunction. Take the case of a man seeing a coloured object: he should possess sound vision, he should open his eyes, there should be no obstruction between the eyes and the object of vision, the object should be a coloured one, the atmosphere should be not dark but have sufficient light, etc. Any one condition by itself cannot be taken to be a cause and a single negative condition such as the blindness of the

[71] *Tahāfut*, p. 186.

[72] *Ibid.*, p. 189.

person or the darkness of atmosphere may make the cause non-operative though logically not impossible. The relation of cause and effect is based on observation and observation as such does not rule out the possibility that the same effect might follow some cause other than the apparent one. Even where we recognize that there are many causes for the same effect, we cannot limit the number of causes just to those which we ourselves have observed. So there are many causes for the same effect[73] and a cause is a sum total of many conditions. In view of this it is not possible to negate an effect on the negation of one particular cause but on the negation of all the various causes. This latter possibility, however, is emphatically discounted by al-Ghazāli so far as we are concerned, for it presupposes a complete and exhaustive knowledge of all the causes and their conditions, which knowledge we humans can never come to possess. Moreover, causes by themselves are inert entities; will and action cannot be attributed to them. They act only through the power and agency of God.[74] The only will is the absolutely free-will of God which works unconstrained by any extraneous law or incumbency except the self-imposed law of contradiction. Thus, the things to which God's power extends include mysterious and wonderful facts such as "elude the discernment of human sensibility." Indeed, God's power extends to all kinds of logical possibilities such as turning of a rod into a serpent, or the revivification of the dead. For the same reason it is not impossible for Him to bring about the resurrection of bodies in the life hereafter and all other things with regard to paradise and hell which have been mentioned in the Qur'ān.[75] To deny them is both illogical and irreligious. One may add that, according to al-Ghazāli, not only all miracles are natural but also all nature is miraculous.[76] Nature, however, seems to be pervaded by a causal nexus only because as a rule God does not choose to interrupt the continuity of events by a miracle; it is possible, however, that He might intervene at any moment that He deems fit. Such a standpoint may make one sceptical of the phenomena of nature, but it may equally lead one to an acute mystical sense of the presence of God to all things. Scepticism of this kind and mysticism need not always be antithetical—the former may as well lead to the latter. This indeed is said to have had happened in the case of al-Ghazāli.

[73] Cf. Mill's doctrine of the Plurality of Causes, *System of Logic*, Bk. III, Chap. X, Section 2.

[74] It is interesting to note that Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese call al-Ghazālī's conception of God as Etiolatry, i.e., cause-worshipping; cf. their compendium: *Philosophers Speak of God*, Chicago, 1953, pp. 106–11, esp. p. 109.

[75] Cf. Qur'ān, xiii, 5; xvi, 38; xvii, 49–51, 98, 99.

[76] In spite of Hume's notorious repudiation of the miraculous (*Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section, 10, Parts 1 & 2), his notion of causality through its own logic can be finally resolved to the Ghazālian or better the Ash'arite position expressed in this statement. Cf. A. E. Taylor, "David Hume and the Miraculous," in his *Philosophical Studies*, London, 1934, pp. 330–65; also F. R. Tennant, *Miracle and Its Philosophical Presuppositions*, Cambridge, 1925, p. 84.

Chapter XXXI

AL-GHAZĀLI (Continued)

A

MYSTICISM

1. *Introduction.*—It will not be quite true to say that al-Ghazālī's final resort to Sufi-mysticism was merely the result of his disillusionment with philosophy and dissatisfaction with scholastic theology. This is only a part of the truth; his own confessional statement to this effect in *al-Munqidh* seems to be rather an over-statement of the actual facts. Sufistic influences had all along been working upon his mind right from his early childhood. We need only recall that his father was a pious dervish and his guardian a Sufi devout, that in his youth he studied[1] and even practised Sufism first under Yūsuf al-Nassāj in Ṭūs and then under al-Fārmadhi at Nishāpūr and that his own brother Aḥmad al-Ghazāli (d. 520/1126) made a name as a great Sufi. It is not improbable that he should have also learnt of Sufism from his teacher Imām al-Ḥaramain, for it is reported that the Imām himself had been the pupil of the renowned Sufi abu Nu'aim al-Iṣfahāni (d. 430/1038). So al-Ghazālī's eventual adoption of the Sufi way of life was in reality a continuation of these early influences and not simply the consequence of his failure to find the philosophical solution of theological problems. Further, it has to be emphasized that, in spite of his explicit official denunciation of philosophy, al-Ghazāli could never completely part company with it. His Sufi-mysticism was as much influenced by his thorough study of philosophy as by theology; in its final development it was the mysticism of a philosopher and a theologian. There is a marked note of Hellenic thought in his mystical doctrines and even the tracings of Neo-Platonism, and yet paradoxical though it may seem they remain circumscribed within the limits of orthodoxy. His is surely a sober kind of mysticism carefully eschewing all kinds of pantheistic extravagances and severely criticizing the antinomian tendencies of the intoxicated Sufis. On the one hand, he tried to make mysticism orthodox and, on the other, orthodoxy mystical. It is the mystical element in religion, he insisted, which is most vital and makes religious life a reality. Both to the philosophers

[1] In the *Munqidh* al-Ghazāli expressly mentions that he had studied the *Qūt al-Qulūb* of abu Ṭālib al-Makki (d. 386/996), the works of Hārith al-Muḥāsibi (d. 243/857), and the fragments of al-Junaid (d. 298/910), al-Shibli (d. 334/945), and abu Yazīd al-Bisṭāmi (d. 261/875). At the end he adds that he had read the discourses of all the leading Sufis. In al-Ghazālī's works, indeed, there are references to be found to all the great mystics of Islam. For al-Ghazālī's Sufistic sources, cf. Margaret Smith, *Al-Ghazāli: The Mystic*, London, 1944, pp. 123–32. For a comparison of *Qūt al-Qulūb* and *Iḥyā'* cf. Shibli Nu'māni, *al-Ghazāli*, Lahore, 1956, p. 107; for the comparison of Muḥāsibi's *Kitāb al-Waṣāya* and *Munqidh*, cf. A. J. Arberry, *Sufism*, London, 1950, pp. 47–50.