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.

and the scholastic theologians he brought home the fact that the basis of all religious certainty is the first-hand living experience of God. He indeed did his best to vitalize the Law and the doctrine of Islam through this emphasis on the living religious experience, and this is evident from the very title of his *magnum opus*, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Revivification of the Sciences of Religion). But the mystical teaching of al-Ghazāli found in *Iḥyā'*, meant for all to read, must be studied in conjunction with what is given in his other works dealing more specially with the Sufi doctrine such as *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, *al-Ma'ārij al-'Aqlīyyah*, *Mukāshafat al-Qulūb* and the like. The theory developed in these works represents what may be labelled as theosophical mysticism and this cannot be properly understood without reference to al-Ghazāli's specific views about the nature of God and the human soul. From the point of view of our present study his mystical views with regard to God and soul may be profitably compared with those of the philosophers, i.e., al-Fārābi, ibn Sīna, and their followers.

2. *God.*—The philosophers have particularly emphasized the absolute unity of God. No positive attributes can be ascribed to God for that leads to the subject-predicate dualism. Even existence can only be referred to Him. He is above all distinctions and above all the categories of thought. This over-emphasis on unity shorn of all qualities reduces God to a mere contentless inanity. He becomes an ineffable, indescribable, impredicable something. Such is the result of the dialectic of the philosophers' monistic reductionism. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, some of them, following Aristotle, have described God as thought thinking thought. That which He knows comes into being emanating from the over-effulgence of His Being, but He does not positively will anything, for willing implies a need—a deficiency. He recognizes only Himself or at best His first emanent, the first intelligence, and, thus, is purely transcendent to this world of change and multiplicity.

Like the philosophers, al-Ghazāli lays stress on the unity of God: God is the sole-existent and the ultimate cause and ground of all being, the only self-subsisting reality. Yet He possesses the fullness of being, all the attributes mentioned in the Qur'ān inhere in Him, only the modality of this inherence is rationally unknowable. We should, however, understand that all His attributes are spiritual. He is perfect goodness and perfect beauty: the supreme object of love.[2] He is the light of lights, the eternal wisdom, the creative truth, but above all He is the eternal will.

To the philosophers God is primarily thought or intelligence, but to al-Ghazāli He is primarily a will which is the cause of creation. "The First Principle," he says, "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."[3] So Ultimate Reality is

[2] Cf. *Iḥyā'*, Cairo, 1340/1921, Vol. IV, p. 259 *et. sqq.*

[3] *Tahāfut*, p. 88; see note No. 38 in the preceding chapter.

essentially will. The entire choir of the heavens and the furniture of the earth are the direct work of God, produced out of sheer nothingness simply through His terrific "Be."[4] God has created the universe through His will, sustains it through His will, and one day will let it pass away by His will. According to the philosophers, God wills the world because He thinks of it. According to al-Ghazāli, "God has cognizance of the world because He wills it and in His willing it."[5]

Like the philosophers, al-Ghazāli also emphasizes the transcendent aspect of God. He is exalted beyond the limitations of space and time, for He is the creator of space and time. He was before time and space were. But He is also immanent in this spatio-temporal order; His eternal wisdom and supreme beauty manifest themselves through the wonders and glory of His creation. His eternal will is in action throughout the universe; it is in the swing of the sun and the moon and in the alternation of day and night. Everywhere around is the touch and working of God.[6] Al-Ghazāli's God is not the Absolute of the philosophers who is bleak and cold, but a personal God, a living God. He desires intercourse with His creatures and makes it possible for them to enter into fellowship with Himself through prayer and contemplation and, above all, through the gift of mystical gnosis.

3. *Soul.*—The difference between al-Ghazāli and the philosophers with regard to the nature of the soul is not so very well marked. He only insists, like Kant,[7] that the philosophers through their rational arguments cannot give any conclusive proof for the spirituality, substantiality, unity, immortality, etc., of the human soul. His attack on the philosophers on this issue is as incisive and analytic as that of Kant but probably more violent. He actually smashes one by one all the ten arguments which he himself expounds as forcefully as they could be in favour of their thesis.[8] Like Kant, again, he does not disagree with their basic position but only with their method. He even joins the philosophers in their refutation of the position of some of the scholastic theologians, who maintained that the soul is a kind of subtle body or an accident and not a substance.[9] What is more and rather strange, while determining the place of the soul in the realm of beings, al-Ghazāli talks the very language of

[4] Qur'ān, ii, 117; xvi, 40.

[5] T. J. de Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, English trans. by E. R. Jones, London, 1933, p. 163.

[6] Cf. Qur'ān, iii, 189, 190; vi, 100; x, 5, 6; xiii, 3, 4, etc.; cf. also al-Ghazāli's *al-Ḥikmah fi Makhlūqāt Allah*, Cairo, 1321/1903.

[7] Cf. M. Saeed Sheikh, "Kant's Critique of Rational Psychology and Its Paralogisms," *[Proceedings of the Sixth] Pakistan Philosophical Congress*, Lahore, 1959, pp. 185–93.

[8] Cf. *Tahāfut*, pp. 200–20. For a comparison of al-Ghazāli's and ibn Sīnā's views with regard to soul, cf. Sulaimān Dunya, *al-Ḥaqīqah fi Naẓr al-Ghazāli*, Egypt, 1367/1947, pp. 356–455.

[9] Cf. article "Nafs," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, esp. sections 9 and 10; also *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifah* (Urdu translation) by M. Ḥanīf Nadawi, Lahore, 1959, pp. 323–32.

the Neo-Platonic philosophers. His cosmological triad of the divine world *('ālam al-malakūt)*, the celestial world *('ālam al-jabrūt)*, and the material, phenomenal world *('ālam al-mulk w-al-shahādah)* runs closely parallel to that of Plotinus consisting of the universal mind, the universal soul, and matter.[10] Like Plotinus, he seems to vouchsafe that the human soul belongs to *'ālam al-jabarūt*, i.e., midway between the divine world and the material world, and so is neither purely eternal like the former nor merely temporal like the latter but partakes of them both.

Al-Ghazālī's conception of the human soul, however, is essentially based on the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Tradition. The interesting thing about this conception is that it runs parallel to his conception of God. Soul like God is a unity and like Him it is primarily and essentially a will. Further, as God is both transcendent to and immanent in the universe so is soul with reference to body. "Man is made in the image of God,"[11] is a saying of the Holy Prophet and it is twice stated in the Qur'ān that "Allah breathed into man of His own spirit."[12] The soul is a mirror illumined by the divine spark reflecting the qualities and even the essence of God. "Not only are man's attributes," says al-Ghazāli, "a reflection of God's attributes but the mode of existence of man's soul affords an insight into God's mode of existence. . . ." Knowledge of the self is the key to the knowledge of God, for so is the oft-quoted tradition: "He who knows himself knows his Lord." "Both God and soul," al-Ghazāli adds, "are invisible, indivisible, unconfined by space and time, and outside the categories of quantity and quality: nor can the ideas of shape, colour, or size attach to them. . . ."[13]

The soul of man is different from everything else in the sensuous world. There are two worlds: the world of command *(amr)* and the created world *(khalq)*.[14] Everything devoid of quantity and dimension belongs to the world of *amr*. Soul belongs to the world of *amr* also because it proceeds from the command of God: "Say, the spirit proceedeth at the command of my Lord"[15] is God's instruction to the Prophet. It is the world of *amr* that rules the created world; the command is the divine force which directs and regulates the world. Thus soul is a spiritual principle which having life in itself vitalizes the body and controls it and regulates it. Body is the instrument and vehicle of the soul. God is primarily a will and man is akin to God especially in respect of will. *Volo ergo sum* is the dictum on which al-Ghazāli builds his mystical

[10] See *Ihyā'*, Cairo 1340/1921, p. 54. Cf. also D. B. Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology . . .*, London, 1903, pp. 234, 235, and A. J. Wensinck, *The Relation between al-Ghazālī's Cosmology and His Mysticism*, Amsterdam, 1933.

[11] See *Kīmiya-i Sa'ādat*, Urdu trans. by M. 'Ināyat Ullah, Lahore, n.d., pp. 8, 36. Also cf. Qur'ān, xxx, 30.

[12] Qur'ān, xv, 29; xxxviii, 72.

[13] *Kīmiya-i Sa'ādat*, English trans. by Claud Field, *The Alchemy of Happiness*, Lahore, n.d., pp. 19, 35.

[14] See *Kīmiya-i Sa'ādat*, Urdu trans., p. 10.

[15] Qur'ān, xvii, 85.

psychology and epistemology. The essential element of the soul is not thought which in the final analysis is based upon the bodily perceptions and the categories of thought but will which created them both for its own purposes. Man in himself has the infinite spiritual possibilities and it is through his will that he comes to realize them and thus brings himself close to the mind and will of God till God says: "O soul at rest! return to thy Lord, satisfied with Him, giving satisfaction unto Him. So enter among My servants and enter My garden."[16] This final encounter of the soul with God through the unfolding of its own spiritual possibilities and the realization of its inmost aspirations is attained by walking on a mystic Path, under the guidance of a ***shaikh***, and constitutes what is the very essence and acme of religious experience.

4. *Religious Experience and Moral and Intellectual Values.*—Whatever the essence or inner content of religious experience may be, it certainly is not a mere state of pure contemplation or knowledge as the philosophers proclaim it to be. It is a vital experience which must translate itself into good action. Religion without good works, according to al-Ghazāli, is a dead religion. The life of the true mystics is the best life and their character the purest character. "Were the intellect of the intellectuals and the learning of the learned and the scholarship of the scholars . . . brought together to improve the life and character of the mystics, they would find no way of doing so."[17] Indeed, the source from which the philosophers derive their ethical theories is the lives and teachings of these moral geniuses, i.e., the saints and the mystics. In the final analysis the mystics themselves are illumined by the light of the lamp of the prophetic revelation. But what if you were to doubt the prophethood of a prophet? So close is the relation between the inner religious life and the outer moral expression of it that you can move from one back to the other. The authenticity of a prophet can be attested by applying a moral test, that is, by making a close study of his conduct, by assessing the transformations which his creative will has wrought in human history and by evaluating the new socio-politico-legal system that he has introduced and established in a society. Of the truths of religion, we acquire not a theoretical but a moral certainty: the deed is more important than mere idea, the will is more ultimate than pure intellect.

Though the philosophers do not deny the importance of transforming truth values into moral values, ideas into deeds, so far as their theory of prophecy is concerned, yet in pursuance of the dominant Hellenic tradition they seem to hold that knowledge without consequent action has its own intrinsic value. Good deeds are preparatory to correct thinking. The ultimate perfection of the soul consists in God-like contemplation, in a state of pure knowledge which though not without joy is certainly without action. Al-Ghazāli strongly revolted against this extreme intellectualism of the philo-

[16] *Ibid.*, lxxxix, 27–30.

[17] *Munqidh*, p. 60; see note No. 1 in the preceding chapter.

sophers, yet he did not remain altogether unaffected by it. It is indeed futile to look for any lifeless consistency in his attitudes which make a happy synthesis of voluntarism, pragmatism, and idealism. He concedes, for example, that a prophet is a person endowed with extraordinary intellect which enables him to attain contact with the active intellect, the proximate source of prophetic revelation.[18] Like the philosophers, he also affirms that perfection of the soul consists in knowledge, albeit intuitive knowledge; like them, he also shows predilections for knowledge for its own sake. "The ink of the scholar is better than the blood of the martyr."[19] It is certainly true so far as by knowledge we here understand knowledge of the religious sciences, but it is also in a sense true of all other sciences. Knowledge of the sciences dealing with things that God has made is regarded by al-Ghazāli as a necessary prelude to the knowledge of God Himself. The study of all branches of knowledge and taking the greatest share of most of them is a necessary part of the mystic discipline. "If the soul has not been exercised in the sciences dealing with fact and demonstration, it will acquire mental phantasms which will be mistaken by it to be truths descending upon it. . . . Many Sufis remain stuck for years in such figments of imagination, but they certainly would have been saved from these, had they first followed the path of scientific study and acquired by laborious learning as much of the demonstrative sciences as human power could encompass. . . ."[20]

It has almost become a fashion to label al-Ghazāli as an anti-intellectualist and to ascribe to him much of the backwardness of Muslim community ever since the sixth/twelfth century: its conservatism and its anti-liberalism.[21] It is alleged that al-Ghazāli through his emphasis on fundamentalism and spiritualism initiated a movement in Muslim thought that killed all zest for philosophic inquiry and scientific reflection, if it did not outright create an antipathy for them. The anti-intellectualism or the anti-liberalism of the Muslim community is a highly complex sociological phenomenon and its causes shall have to be explored in a great many areas; it would be too much of an oversimplification of facts to ascribe it to a single name, however great that name may be. We have only to remember that al-Ghazāli never left philosophy altogether and that he himself was very well acquainted with the scientific knowledge of his day,[22] most of which he accepted as true. The charge of the kind mentioned above may be made only with reference to some one

[18] Cf. F. Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam*, London, 1958, p. 96.

[19] *Iḥyā'*, Urdu trans. by M. Aḥsan Ṣiddīqi, Lucknow, 1955, Vol. I, pp. 11 *et sqq.*

[20] Cf. *Mīzān al-'Amal*, Cairo, 1342/1923, pp. 35, 36; also *Iḥyā'*, Part I, Book I, Section 7 on *'Aql* (Intellect).

[21] Cf. P. K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, London, 1949, p. 432; Max Meyerhof, *The Legacy of Islam*, ed. T. Arnold and A. Guillaume, Oxford, 1931, p. 337; and Will Durant, *The Age of Faith*, New York, 1950, pp. 256, 257, 332.

[22] He himself wrote a treatise on astronomy. Cf. Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*, Baltimore, 1927, Vol. I, p. 753.

particular work but it cannot at all be justified if the whole course of his works is taken into consideration.

Considering, however, the number and complexity of the subjects with which his works deal, the various levels of readers for whom they were written and the fact of his own spiritual development, it is not always possible to reconcile his various views and attitudes and to defend him against all charges of inconsistency.[23] One such difficulty arises when, after having considered his views about the nature of the soul and God, we come to formulate his position with regard to the relation between the two. Whether his conception of this relation makes an allowance for pantheism, is a question which has puzzled some students of al-Ghazāli.[24]

5. *Pantheism.*—Al-Ghazāli's view of God as being both immanent and transcendent, his firm belief in God being a personal God who allows His creatures to enter into communion with Him, his emphasis on God's being a creator who created the universe at a specific time through an act of volition, one and all, can hardly fit into any scheme of pantheism. The description of the mystic's experience of God at the higher reaches of his ecstatic flights as identification *(ittiḥād)* or unification *(wuṣūl)* with God or inherence or indwelling *(ḥulūl)* in Him, al-Ghazāli has expressly mentioned as false and erroneous.[25] At best the mystics can claim only a nearness to or proximity with God and no more. But it has been pointed out that in his doctrine of the soul he makes it resemble God so closely both in essence and qualities that there remains hardly any difference between the two. Al-Ghazāli is aware of this dangerous deduction and asserts most emphatically that there is one special quality *(akhaṣṣu waṣfihi)* which belongs to God alone and of which none else partakes and that is the quality of self-subsistence. God is self-subsistent *(qayyūm)*[26] while everything else exists through Him and not through its own essence. "Nay, things through their own essence have nothing

[23] The charge of esotericism, in the narrow sense of the theory of two-fold truth, against al-Ghazāli, is, however, unfounded. Cf. W. Montgomery Watt, "A Forgery in al-Ghazāli's *Mishkāt*?", *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, 1949, pp. 5–22; also article "al-Ghazzāli," (section 3), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. This question is connected with the problem of the authenticity of al-Ghazāli's works.

[24] Cf. M. Iqbāl, ". . . to this day it is difficult to define, with accuracy, his view of the nature of God. In him, like Borger and Solger in Germany, Ṣūfī Pantheism and the Ash'arite dogma of personality appear to harmonize together, a reconciliation which makes it difficult to say whether he was a Pantheist, or a Personal Pantheist of the type of Lotze" (*The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, p. 75). Also C. R. Upper, "Alghazālī's Thought Concerning the Nature of Man and Union with God," *The Muslim World*, 1952, Vol. XLII, pp. 23–32. C. R. Upper ends this article by a significant remark: "Al-Ghazālī's occasional pantheism is indubitable, yet his orthodoxy is impeccable. How this can be is the secret between him and Allah." For the great synthetic acumen and creativity of al-Ghazāli in having a *via media* between the various positions, cf. S. R. Shafīq, "Some Abiding Teachings of al-Ghazāli," *The Muslim World*, Vol. XLIV, No. 1, 1954, pp. 43–48.

[25] Cf. *Munqidh*, p. 61.

[26] Cf. Qur'ān, ii, 255.

but non-existence, and existence comes to them only from something else, by way of a loan." But surely there is the lurking danger of pantheism in such a statement if it is stretched to its logical limits. If the contingency of the world should be over-emphasized, it becomes nothing more than a show of shadows having no reality or actuality of its own whatsoever. All actuality is devoured by the being of God. This conclusion is confirmed by al-Ghazālī's own approval of the pantheistic formula: *la huwa illa huwa* (there is no it but He) to which may be added his statement: "He is everything: He is that He is: none but He has ipseity or heity at all."[27] To this may be added that al-Ghazālī has taken a very lenient view of some of the obviously pantheistic utterances of the Sufis of extreme type such as "I am the Creative Truth;"[28] "Glory be to Me! How great is My glory"; "Within this robe is naught but Allah,"[29] etc. Statements of this kind clearly indicate a sense of complete self-deification. But al-Ghazālī has no word of condemnation for them except the comment that "the words of passionate lovers in the state of ecstasy should be concealed and not spoken of." True, the statements of this kind should not be taken strictly philosophically but only as emotive expressions indicative of a deep inner experience which has many phases and aspects and a language and a logic of its own. But then al-Ghazālī seems to forget sometimes the advice he has so strongly given to those who have attained the mystic state that they should not try to speak the unspeakable and follow the poet who said:

"What I experience I shall not try to say;
Call me happy, but ask me no more."[30]

B

ETHICS

Al-Ghazālī is the best known Muslim writer on moral subjects. But there are some critics[31] who have recently made attempts to belittle the importance of his ethical theory by trying to show that it is entirely, or at least mainly, derived from the Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic doctrines and from the writings of the Muslim philosophers whose systems were Hellenic in spirit. Al-Ghazālī was, undoubtedly, a widely read scholar and was, therefore, well versed in the ethical thought of the Greeks, which did influence him. But it would be basically wrong to say that he was dependent on Greek philosophy for his

[27] Cf. *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, English translation by W. H. T. Gairdner, Lahore, p. 62.

[28] Saying of al-Ḥallāj (executed 309/922). Cf. R. A. Nicholson, *The Idea of Personality in Sufism*, Cambridge, 1923, p. 32.

[29] Sayings ascribed to abu Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmi, who is probably the first of the intoxicated Sufis.

[30] *Munqidh*, p. 61.

[31] Margaret Smith, Dr. Zaki Mubārak, and others.

inspiration. He was, in fact, against the philosophers and their heretical doctrines. Throughout his writings, al-Ghazāli takes his stand upon Islamic teachings and invariably quotes from the Qur'ān and the traditions in support of his views. Following the Qur'ān, for example, he lays emphasis on spiritual values like gratitude *(shukr)*, repentance *(taubah)*, reliance *(tawakkul)*, fear *(khauf)* of God, etc., which were completely unknown to the Greeks. Similarly, al-Ghazāli is thoroughly Islamic in taking the perfect human representation of the moral ideal in the Prophet of Islam (peace be on him), whom God Himself testifies to have the highest character.[32] Further, we can legitimately say that the notion of the love of God as the *summum bonum*, leading directly to the beatific vision in the next world, has nothing like it in Greek philosophy. This is undeniably based upon the Qur'ānic teachings. All these assertions will become clearer as we proceed with the detailed discussion.

Asceticism is the spirit that runs throughout al-Ghazāli's ethics. He does not deal with the heroic virtues like courage, etc., in detail, and lays greater emphasis on the purification of the heart after one has severed all ties with this world, at least in spirit. He says: "The experienced guide and teacher should bring home to the disciple that he should root out anger and keep no wealth . . . otherwise if he gets the slightest hint that both wealth and self-assertion are good and necessary in a certain measure, he will get an excuse for avarice and self-assertion, and to whatever limits he goes he will imagine that he is permitted as far as that. So he ought to be told to eradicate these tendencies."[33] Again, in *Minhāj al-'Ābidīn*, al-Ghazāli differentiates between two kinds of virtues: positive, i.e., good actions, and negative, i.e., the abandonment of bad ones. The negative side is better and more excellent. To elucidate this point further, he discusses the question in *Iḥyā'* whether marriage or celibacy is better. After counting the advantages and the disadvantages of both, he ultimately tends to the conclusion that celibacy is better. One may marry, he grants, provided one is at the same time like the unmarried, i.e., lives always in the presence of God. All this has a colouring of otherworldliness.

Avoidance of the world is, however, not put forward as an end-in-itself. It has been over-emphasized by al-Ghazāli simply to counteract the tendencies to vice, luxury, and pride, which were so common in his days. The curbing or controlling of passions has been stressed merely to achieve moderation; otherwise he fully knows the psychology of human nature. He is quite aware of the social spirit of the Qur'ān and of the Prophet's teaching that there is no asceticism in Islam.[34] Accordingly, al-Ghazāli does sometimes lay emphasis on our duties and obligations to other individuals and to society as a whole. *Jihād* has been mentioned as a necessary obligatory duty; even prayers have to be sacrificed, if need be, during a war. In the chapter on "Renunciation

[32] Qur'ān, lxviii, 4.

[33] Al-Ghazāli, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, Part III, p. 50.

[34] *Ḥadīth*: Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Vol. IV, p. 226.

of the World," in the *Iḥyā'* he warns against its evils and holds that renunciation is a grievous sin if a man has dependants who need his support. He defends music by saying that "gaiety and sport refresh and cheer the heart and bring relief to the tired mind . . ., rest prepares a man for work, and sport and gaiety for grave and serious pursuits."[35] Further, among virtues, he includes good appearance *(ḥusn al-hai'ah)* with adornment which is sensible and has no tinge of ostentation in it. Similarly, there are the virtues of self-respect, dignity, etc., which point to a man's relation with other individuals and presuppose a social set-up.

Before discussing al-Ghazālī's theory of ethics we may consider the problem which forms the basis of all ethical systems, viz., the problem of the freedom of the will. The fact that man can change from the state of the insinuating self *(al-nafs al-ammārah)* to the state of the self at peace *(al-nafs al-muṭma'innah)* through a good deal of conscious struggle and deliberate effort necessarily suggests that he is free in his will. The Mu'tazilites had taught that the freedom of the will is an *a priori* certainty, that man possesses power *(qudrah)* over his actions and is their real author. The Ash'arites, who represented the orthodox reaction, however, held that "Man cannot create anything. God is the only creator. Nor does man's power produce any effect on his action at all. God creates in His creature power *(qudrah)* and choice *(ikhtiyār)*. He then creates in him action corresponding to the power and choice thus created. So the action of the creature is created by God as to initiative and as to production, but it is *acquired* by the creature. By acquisition *(kasb)* is meant that it corresponds to the creature's power and choice previously created in him, without his having had the slightest effect on the action."[36] This position comes very close to the "pre-established harmony" of Leibniz. It, thus, gives us at the most only a consciousness of freedom, and not freedom in the real sense of the term.

Over this question al-Ghazāli finds himself on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, God is represented as the disposer of everything. He is the unmoved mover of the material world and the only efficient cause of all creation. Whatever happens in the heavens or on the earth happens according to a necessary system and a predetermined plan. Not even a leaf can move without His decree; His law is supreme everywhere. "Whomsoever God wishes to guide, He expands his breast to Islam; but whomsoever He wishes to lead astray He makes his breast tight and strait."[37] And, on the other hand, man is shown to be responsible for his actions and for deserving place either in hell or in heaven. This implies complete moral freedom. Al-Ghazāli seeks to reconcile both these tendencies on the basis of an analysis of the human mind. The heart or the soul of man, according to him, is furnished with two kinds of impressions. Either there are sensations

[35] Al-Ghazāli, *Iḥyā'*, Part II, Chap. on Music.
[36] D. B. Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology*, p. 192.
[37] Qur'ān, vi, 125.

through which one gets the sensible qualities of the outside world, or there is reflection or internal sense which supplies the mind with its own operations. These impressions, which al-Ghazāli calls *khwāṭir* (Locke would call them "simple ideas" and James Ward would term them "presentations"), are, according to him, the spring and fountain-head of all activity. Whatever the heart intends, resolves, etc., must come to it as knowledge in the form of such impressions. These impressions or ideas have an inherent tendency to express themselves in overt movements. They have a motive part of their own and are capable of exciting a strong impulse or inclination *(raghbah)* in the first instance. This inclination must, if the action is to take place, be followed by decision or conviction *(i'tiqād)*. (These three stages correspond pretty closely to what psychologists call respectively appetite, desire, and wish.) Conviction, in turn, is followed by resolution or the will to act *(irādah)*. Will excites power and then the action comes.

The first two stages of this process, viz., impression and inclination, are recognized to be beyond man's complete control; if an individual merely thinks intently of falling forward, swaying forward begins. So "the conclusion would be that, while the occurrence of a strong desire or inclination may come without man's responsibility, his reason is free to make a decision and his will is free to accept the decision of reason as good and to implement the corresponding action. In such a case, man would be free to do what he desires, but the complete control of his desire would be beyond his power."[38] Thus, al-Ghazāli tries to reconcile the positions of the determinists and the indeterminists.

In fact, al-Ghazāli recognizes three stages of being. The lowest is the material world where the absolute necessity of God's will is all in all. Second is the stage of the sensuous and the psychical world where a relative sort of freedom is recognized. Lastly comes God who is absolutely free. But His freedom is not like that of a man who arrives at decisions after hesitation and deliberation over different alternatives. This is impossible in the case of God. "To speak of choice between alternatives is to suggest that other than the best might be chosen and this would be inconsistent with the idea of perfection."[39]

Thus, having established human freedom and responsibility and having justified his discussion of ethical questions, al-Ghazāli goes on to present before us his notion of the moral ideal and the means that are to be adopted for its realization. The path is long and difficult and needs a great deal of patience and perseverance on the part of the seeker. Slowly and steadily, by leading a virtuous life, he has to take his soul towards perfection so that it might be able to attain the knowledge of God and consequently divine love, which is the *summum bonum* or the Highest Good in this world. This will lead to the beatific vision in the world to come. It should, however, be remembered

[38] Donaldson, *Studies in Muslim Ethics*, p. 156.
[39] W. R. Sorley, *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 446.

that man cannot move a single step forward without the help of God. He is guided throughout by the gift of God *(taufīq)*. *Taufīq* manifests itself in various forms:

1. Guidance from God *(hidāyah)* is the very condition of all virtues. It stands for the telling of the moral from the immoral, the good from the bad and the right from the wrong. Unless these distinctions are clearly seen, we cannot be supposed to do any good action or avoid evil.
2. Direction *(rushd)*. Mere knowledge of good actions might be necessary but is not sufficient for their performance. We should also have the will to do them. This is "direction."
3. Setting aright *(tasdīd)*. It is the power from God which makes the body obey the will in order to realize the end.
4. Confirmation *(tā'īd)*. It makes circumstances congenial for the actualization of the will.

Helped by God in this way the individual proceeds to exercise virtues which gradually raise the heart higher and higher up towards the ideal.

Before taking up this enterprise, however, the soul or the heart is to be subjected to a thorough surgical operation and cleansed of all impurities. "He will indeed be successful who purifies it and he will fail who corrupts it."[40] It is only when the heart has thus been freed of its fetters and the veils of darkness and ignorance have been rent asunder that anything positive can be attempted. Al-Ghazāli explains it by an allegory. Once the Chinese and the Greeks held a contest on the art of drawing and painting. One part of a big room was given to the Chinese and the other to the Greeks. In between was hung a curtain so that they might not see the work of each other. The Greeks decorated the wall with many rare colours, but the Chinese proceeded to brighten their side and polish it. When the curtain was raised, the beautiful art of the former was reflected on the latter's wall in its original beauty and charm. Such is the way of the saints who strive for the purification of their heart to make it worthy of the knowledge of God Most High. But what are these impurities and what are they due to? What is that which darkens and casts gloom upon the soul of man? Al-Ghazālī's answer is: love of the world—the root from which all the multifarious sins and vices spring. The pious people avoid it and seek loneliness. "Be in the world as if you are a stranger or journeying upon the road."[41] On seeing a dead goat, the Prophet of Islam (peace be on him) is reported to have said, "The world has lesser value in the eyes of God than this goat has for its owner."

Let us now discuss briefly al-Ghazālī's enumeration of the main kinds of vices that result from the love of the world, the removal of which from the heart is incumbent upon us.

[40] Qur'ān, xc, 9–10.
[41] Ibn Ḥāji, *Bulūgh al-Marām*, "Bāb al-Zuhd w-al-War'."

First, there are those vices which are connected with a particular part of the body. Hunger is one of them. It is, no doubt, a very important biological function and, thus, indispensable for the preservation of life. But when it transgresses its limits and becomes gluttony, it is the cause of immense evil and disturbance. "Eat and drink," says God, "but be not prodigal. Verily He loves not the prodigal."[42] Over-eating dulls the intellect and weakens the memory. It also causes too much sleep which, besides being a wastage of time, slackens the mind; the light of wisdom is dimmed and one becomes unable to differentiate good from evil.[43] Further, the glutton forgets what need and hunger are. Gradually, he becomes oblivious of, and unsympathetic to, the poor and those who have really nothing to eat. So one should eat only as much as is barely sufficient to sustain oneself, out of what one has earned honestly.[44]

The second group of vices belonging to this category are those arising out of the sex instinct. This instinct is supposed to be the most powerful in man,[45] and so are its distractions from the right path. The sex appetite must always be directed, controlled, and managed by reason and should not be allowed to run wild: adultery is a moral and social as well as religious evil. Further, says al-Ghazāli, the seeker after the ideal should not marry in the earlier stages of his search, for the wife and children may prove a hindrance. But if, in spite of wilful determination, he is not able to control himself, he may marry and then perform all his duties as a husband.

Lastly, we come to the vices of speech, which are many. Talkativeness, using indecent words, ridiculing, abusing, cursing, etc., belong to this kind. Similarly, lying is also a heinous sin: "A painful doom is theirs because they lie."[46] Lying, however, loses its immoral sting in special circumstances when the end in view is good. We can, for instance, legitimately make use of it as a war tactic. "War is deception itself,"[47] goes the tradition. Slandering and tale-bearing are also very prominent vices of speech. "Don't backbite one another,"[48] says God. Similarly, we have been prohibited from making false promises because it is the characteristic of hypocrites *(munāfiqūn)*.[49]

Next, there are vices arising out of self-assertion. When working in its proper limits, this instinct is, no doubt, natural. But the lack or excess of it makes it an evil. A person who has no self-assertion has no self-respect. He is disgracefully meek and silent and dare not make his personality felt. Excessive self-assertion, on the other hand, degenerates into vices like anger *(ghaḍab)*, malice *(ḥiqd)*, pride *(kibr)*, and vanity *('ujb)*. Man is roused to

[42] Qur'ān, vii, 31.
[43] Al-Ghazāli, *Iḥyā'*, Part III, p. 72.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 66.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 85.
[46] Qur'ān, ii, 10.
[47] *Jāmi' Tirmidhi*, Maṭba'ah Mujtabā'i, p. 201.
[48] Qur'ān, xlix, 12.
[49] *Al-Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, "Bāb al-Kabā'ir wa 'Alāmāt al-Nifāq."

anger when some desire of his is not fulfilled, when another person possesses the thing which, he thinks, should rightfully belong to him. When not gratified, anger often turns into malice, which consists in the desire that the desired thing should be lost to the possessor also. It is a feeling of pain at another's good. Sometimes, however, there is no feeling of pain but simply a strong desire that one should also possess a thing like the one the other has. This is known as emulation *(ghibṭah)* and is not undesirable. We can overcome the vices of excessive self-assertion by forbearance, mildness, forgiveness, humility, etc.

Anger, malice, and emulation are aroused when man is not in possession of the objects of his desire. Pride and vanity, on the contrary, occur when he has secured such objects. Vanity is a sense of self-admiration. The individual regards his possessions as great, has no fear of losing them, and forgets that they are merely gifts of God. If he is vain about his intellect, wisdom, and opinion, all development in knowledge ceases and all progress is congealed. A proud man, on the other hand, actively compares himself with others, is rightly or wrongly aware of some religious or worldly perfection in himself, and feels elated and raised above them. He looks down upon them and expects respect from them as a superior. Learned men, worshippers, and devotees are very much prone to this evil. The cure of pride lies in recognizing God and one's own self. By this he would come to know that pride becomes God and greatness belongs to Him alone. Further, he should remember his humble beginnings and recognize the filthy stuff he is made of. Let him consider the origin and end of his forefathers and of the proud persons like Pharaoh and Nimrūd who tried to equal God Almighty. Let him consider also that beauty, wealth, and friendship are all transitory and unreliable.

To the third category of vices belong the love of wealth *(ḥubb al-māl)* and of position *(ḥubb al-jāh)*, hypocrisy *(riyā')*, and wilful self-deception *(ghurūr)*. Wealth in itself, however, is not bad. It is the use of it that makes it so. Wealth can be spent on the poor and the needy to alleviate their sufferings, but can also lead directly to sins or can supply means for them. Those who love money often forget God and He, in turn, prepares and reserves for them a painful doom.[50] Love of wealth may lead to avarice: the more one has, the more one desires. It can also lead to miserliness, which means not spending even where one is duty-bound to spend. The cure of all these evils is to give away all that is superfluous and keep only as much as is essential for supporting life and getting peace of mind. We must further be convinced in our hearts that wealth, like shadows, is a transitory affair and that God is sufficient for us and our children. We should hasten to spend when occasion demands, setting aside the checks and hesitations arising within.

Love of position means the desire to win and dominate the hearts of others. It is generally gained by creating in others a conviction that one possesses

[50] Qur'ān, ix, 34.

the so-called qualities of perfection such as beauty, strength, ancestory. Real perfection, however, lies in knowledge and freedom: knowledge of God and spiritual values, and freedom from the vices and the rebellious nature of passions. Just as wealth is allowed if used as a means for some good, so may we win the admiration of those whose help is necessary to realize the ideal. But if position is sought for its own sake, it is a vice and should be eradicated. One must impress upon oneself that position is not everlasting and that death is a leveller. One should also know that a prominent person creates enemies very easily.

The lover of position generally falls into hypocrisy and tries to deceive people that he possesses something which actually he does not. An individual, for example, may pretend to be a pious man by a thin, lean, neglected body, long prayers, virtuous and humble talk, and so on. In religious matters, hypocrisy has been condemned very much by both the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. This deadly disease must be cured, otherwise all the so-called virtuous actions, the inner spiritual basis being absent, will be entirely useless and unacceptable to God. One must perform all good actions, including the religious observances and acts of worship, in secret. We may perform them in the open if our sincere intention is that others may also be persuaded thereby to do the same. Love of position also gives rise to self-deception. The individual is convinced that he has something which he really does not have. Four classes of people among the believers are, according to al-Ghazāli, very likely to involve themselves in this evil. They are, for example, such religious devotees as do not have the real sense of values. They do not realize what is more important and what is less important and, by performing the latter, they assume themselves to be exempt from the former. For instance, they take greater care in the correct pronunciation of the words of the Qur'ān than in understanding their true meanings. Instead of helping a hungry neighbour, they would go on pilgrimage to Mecca. Some dress themselves poorly and meekly and think they have become saints thereby. All these persons are deceiving themselves as to the true nature of things. Similar is the case with the Sufis. Some of them learn only the terminology of the real Sufis and think they are likewise able to see God. Some are always wondering about the power and majesty of God and do nothing more. Some do actually try to cleanse the heart and perform good actions but wrongly think that they have passed most of the stages and are the true lovers of God. Again, there are some who make a distinction between *Sharī'ah* and *ṭarīqah* and regard themselves above *Sharī'ah*. They give up the performance of obligatory duties and religious observances. The same is the case with the learned and the rich, who are generally involved in one kind of self-delusion or another.

Thus, we end the brief and synoptic survey of al-Ghazālī's account of the main vices of character. Now we turn to virtues, which are the redeeming qualities *(al-munjiyāt)* and represent the positive efforts of the seeker towards God. Al-Ghazāli has given us a detailed, interesting, and illuminating

discussion on this topic in the fourth quarter of his "Revivification of Religious Sciences." The virtues that, speaking chronologically, come first are repentance, abstinence, poverty, and patience. Repentance belongs to the purgative period of life which is an indispensable prerequisite for the higher stages. It means abandoning the sins of which man is conscious and resolving never to return to them. It is a sort of spiritual conversion. "Those who repent and believe and do righteous work, for such Allah will change their evil deeds to good deeds."[51] The penitent knows that his heart has been shrouded in the mist and darkness of sins, feels contrition and shame, and abandons them for ever. Love of the world, which is the root of all vices, has, however, to be removed first; the passions have to be subjected to a strict control and the devil within has to be turned out. But, certainly, we do not give up the world for nothing. We do get something in return: "... the ascetic who renounces what is sensual and material knows that what is abandoned is of small value in relation to what is gained, just as the merchant knows that what he receives in exchange is better than what is sold, otherwise he would not sell."[52] Al-Ghazāli compares the ascetic with a person who is prevented from entering into the palace by a dog at the gate. He throws a morsel towards it and thus, by distracting its attention, enters and gets his desires from the king. The dog is like Satan, who prevents him from going towards God, and the morsel of bread is like the world by the sacrifice of which we can get something better.

This brings us to the virtue of abstinence *(zuhd)*. Repentance is simply turning away from something, whereas abstinence includes turning away from as well as towards something better and more excellent. As a term in Sufistic literature, it signifies severing the heart's attachment from all worldly things, purging it of the rubbish, and then adorning it with the love of God. Abstinence can, in fact, have three grades. We might be inspired and motivated by the love of God itself, by the hope of reward, or by the fear of punishment. The highest grade is the love of God which makes us sacrifice all considerations of heaven and hell for the sake of God. This is absolute abstinence *(zuhd al-muṭlaq)*. We are reminded here of the fable of a saint who was carrying in one hand a flame and in the other a glass of water with the alleged purpose of burning heaven with the one and quenching the fire of hell with the other, so that everyone acts sincerely to attain nearness to God.

The individual who renounces the world is a poor man *(faqīr)* in the terminology of al-Ghazāli and, in fact, of all mystics. So poverty is to be wilfully cultivated. The *faqīrs* are of various kinds: the abstinent *(zāhid)*, who is pained when wealth comes to him; the satisfied *(rāḍi)*, who is neither pleased at the possession of wealth nor pained at its loss, and when it comes to him he does not positively hate it; the contented *(qāni')*, who wants to

[51] *Ibid.*, xxv, 70.
[52] Margaret Smith, *Al-Ghazāli: The Mystic*, pp. 167–68.

get wealth but does not actively pursue this desire; the greedy *(harīṣ)*, who has a very strong desire to get property but is somehow or other unable to do so; the constrained *(muḍṭar)*, who, being in a state of want, such as starvation or nakedness, is ill at ease and in consternation. The first of these, i.e., one in the state of being a *zāhid*, is the best. The *zāhid* is the one who, being busy in enjoying the love of God, is indifferent to all worldly losses and gains.

All the virtues considered above—repentance, abstinence, poverty—demand an immense amount of courage and steadfastness. They are not possible to attain without unswerving passion, which is doubly more difficult to cultivate, impatience being in the very nature of man.[53] It, however, does not mean toleration of things that are illegal and against religion. If a man wrongs us, we may pay him back in the same coin; if he strikes us, we can strike him too (though forgiveness is also commendable). Patience in the real sense of the term has three grades: patience in performing a religious duty, patience in avoiding actions prohibited by God, and patience over sufferings and difficulties in the arduous path towards Him. The last grade is the noblest.

Gratitude *(shukr)* too is a necessary virtue and also so difficult that only a few can exercise it.[54] It is, according to al-Ghazāli, complementary to patience: he who eats until he is satisfied and is thankful is in the same station as he who fasts and is patient. Further, gratitude is based upon man's knowledge that all that comes to him comes from God and upon the feeling of joy over it. If one is pleased with the gift only, without any reference to the Giver, it is no gratitude: "Gratitude is the vision of the Giver, not the gift." Secondly, we may be pleased with the Giver over a gift because it is a sign of His pleasure. This is gratitude, no doubt, but of a low variety. The highest stage is reached when we are pleased with the Giver and determine to use His gift in order to attain greater and greater nearness to Him. "If ye give thanks," says God, "I shall give you more, but if ye are thankless, My punishment is dire."[55]

After repentance from sin and successful renunciation of the world, the individual directs his attention towards his own self with a view to making it submissive and obedient to the will of God. The process has various steps and stages: assigning the task to the self *(mushārātah)*, watching over the self *(murāqabah)*, taking critical account of the self *(muḥāsabah)*, punishing the self *(mu'āqabah)*, exerting the self *(mujāhadah)*, and upbraiding the self *(mu'ātabah)*. The whole affair which results in self-mastery is so difficult that it has been called the bigger *jihād (al-jihād al-akbar)*, while the physical fighting against the enemies of Islam is the smaller *jihād (al-jihād al-aṣghar)*. We have constantly to keep a vigilant eye on our thoughts and actions and check ourselves at every step. We have to convince our hearts of the omni-

[53] Qur'ān, lxx, 19.
[54] *Ibid.*, xxxiv, 13.
[55] *Ibid.*, xiv, 7.

presence of God and His omniscience: that God knows even what lies hidden in the innermost depths of our being. Such a conviction creates in the soul an all-pervading reverence for God. Single-mindedness *(ikhlāṣ)* is the fruit of the self thoroughly mastered and trained. A fashioned soul has only one motive force, and that is the desire for nearness to God; the lesser purposes are weeded out.

Single-mindedness leads to the virtue of truthfulness *(ṣidq)*. Truthfulness is there in words, intentions, and actions. Truthfulness in words consists in making a statement which is unequivocal and clear and is not aimed at deceiving others. We can, however, in some cases make ambiguous and false statements if thereby we are aiming at the betterment of society. Such special cases may be war tactics, restoration of happy relations between husband and wife, amity among Muslims, and so on. Further, our intention must be rightful and true. The right direction of intention is very important because actions are judged only by intentions[56]: if our intention is good and the result incidentally turns out to be bad, we are not to blame; conversely, if our intention is evil, we are culpable whatever its outcome. Lastly, truthfulness in actions lies in the fact that the inward state of a person is literally translated into outward behaviour without any tinge of hypocrisy. The highest truthfulness which is at the same time most difficult to attain is the complete realization of the various attitudes of the soul towards God, e.g., trust, hope, love, etc.[57]

Fear *(khauf)* and hope *(rajā')* also mark stages in moral progress. Fear may be of the wrath and the awe-inspiring attributes of God, or it may be produced in man by the consciousness of his guilt and the apprehension of divine displeasure. A nobler kind of fear is aroused by the feeling of separation from God who is the ultimate goal of all our aspirations. Hope, on the other hand, is a pleasant tendency. It consists in the expectation, after the individual has tried his best, of the divine love in the world and of the beatific vision in the hereafter. Fear is the result of knowledge—the knowledge of our infirmity as compared with the supremacy of our ideal: hope is the result of assured faith in the loving kindness of our Lord in acceding to our requests and prayers. It lies at a higher plane because it strengthens love and enables man to realize the goal.

The highest virtue, according to al-Ghazāli, is reliance *(tawakkul)*, which is based on the knowledge of God's oneness or unification *(tauḥīd)*. Those who profess belief in unification may be classified into three groups: those, including hypocrites, who confess the unity with the tongue only; those who believe on the basis of some so-called reliable authority; and those who, on the evidence of their direct, intuitive perception, believe that God is the unmoved mover of the material world and the ultimate cause of all creation and that He alone has real or absolute existence. The last stage is the highest. It signifies "that the servant can abandon himself to God in complete trust and merge his will

[56] The opening *ḥadīth* in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri*.
[57] Al-Ghazāli, *Iḥyā'*, Part IV, pp. 334–35.

in the divine will. The servant no longer finds his own powers and personality to be self-sufficient and has allowed God to dominate his life . . . he considers himself as a dead body moved by the divine decree and is content that the divine strength should replace his own human weakness."[58] Reliance, therefore, is the casting of the soul into self-surrender and the withdrawal of it from self-assertion.

The moral soldier who is sincerely set upon his task must also form the habit of meditation and reflection. He has to reflect on the works of God, on the alternation of day and night, on the waxing and waning of the moon, on the rise and fall of nations, and on the general management of this cosmological scheme. For that purpose seclusion away from the active hustle and bustle of society is very necessary. A heart preoccupied with worldly things has no place for the knowledge of God. The true significance of meditation is a firm conviction in the omnipresence of God, which results from the realization that He is aware of what we do under cover of darkness and of what lies buried in the innermost depths of our heart. Further, from meditation and reflection the soul is led on to contemplation, which is of three kinds: (i) contemplation *bi al-ḥaqq*, i.e., the seeing of things pointing towards divine unity; (ii) contemplation *li al-ḥaqq*; i.e., seeing signs of the Creator in created things; and, finally, (iii) the contemplation of God Himself. This form of contemplation surely and undeniably leads to His love, the final aim of all moral endeavour. The last stage of contemplation and the love of God are not, however, the results of, but are simply occasioned by, our concentration and thinking. There is nothing like a causal necessity here. The sacred knowledge is direct and immediate and is due to God only. The Sufi has the impression that something has dropped upon him "as gentle rain from heaven," a gift of God due to His grace and mercy.

The highest contemplation is the valence of love, absorption of all human attributes in the vision of God, and then annihilation in the everlastingness of God. But why in the first instance should mere contemplation lead to His love? In answer, al-Ghazāli explains at length how God is the ultimate and absolute source of all the causes because of which objects are loved. The sentiment of love is, broadly speaking, of four kinds:

(i) Self-love. An egoistic tendency is ingrained in the very nature of man. Instincts and the so-called organic needs point towards that fact. Our soul, life, or the pure ego is, certainly, the dearest to us, but beyond that we also love what William James would call our material and social selves.

(ii) Love of a benefactor for the benefits received from him. This is also a sort of self-love, though an indirect one. We love others because they promote our own cause in one way or another. We love the physician because he looks after our health and the engineer because he beautifies our material environments and, thus, makes our lives comfortable and happy.

[58] Margaret Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 167–68.

(iii) Love of beauty. Beauty has almost universally been recognized as a thing of intrinsic value. It means the orderly and systematic arrangement of parts, and this is not the quality of material things only; it lies in the activities and the behaviour of man and in his ideas and concepts. Whatever is beautiful is loved by us for its own sake.

(iv) Love due to the harmonious interaction and secret affinity between two souls. A thief loves a thief and a noble person loves a noble friend.

Now, if love exists for all these separate causes, will not that individual be loved who holds all these in their supreme and perfect form? Such an individual is God Himself, the possessor of the most lovable qualities. It is to Him that we owe our very existence. He is the only real benefactor and from Him all benefits are received. If we get something from a human being, it really comes from God. Had He willed otherwise, we would not have been able to get it. Thirdly, God also possesses the attributes of beauty. There is beauty in His design and in His creative behaviour. "God is beautiful and loves beauty,"[59] said the Holy Prophet. Lastly, the human soul has affinity with its divine source: God has created man after His own image. So once we know God with all these attributes and also know where we stand in relation to Him, our love for Him becomes a necessity. And then He loves us too. "Verily Allah loves the repentant and those who purify themselves."[60]

But the lover who claims to love the Most Lovable must show some signs. The first sign, according to al-Ghazāli, is that the lover has no fear of death, for it means meeting the Beloved face to face and having a direct vision of Him. This world is a hindrance and a barrier which obstructs the lover's path. The sooner it is done away with, the better. Another mark of the true lover is that the remembrance of God ever remains fresh in his heart. Once the fire of love is kindled, it cannot be extinguished. It remains ever ablaze and the flames go on rising higher and higher. The lover, in fact, feels happy in this condition. That is why he often seeks undisturbed loneliness to brighten these flames by contemplation and onesided thought. Further, the lover sacrifices his will for that of the Beloved. His likes and dislikes, his behaviour and his ways of life are entirely directed and controlled by God. Lastly, the intensity of love for God demands that we should love all His activities. So also we should love our fellow-men for they are all His servants and creatures.

Love includes longing *(shauq)*, for every lover pines to see the beloved when absent. The lover of God craves for the vision of God which would be the noblest grace and the highest delight held out to him. Again, love results in affability *(uns)*, which, according to al-Ghazāli, is one of the most glorious fruits of love and signifies the feeling of pleasure and delight consequent upon God's nearness and the perception of His beauty and perfection. Thirdly, successful love means satisfaction *(riḍā')*. This includes the satisfaction of

[59] *Al-Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* "Bāb al-Ghaḍab w-al-Kibr."
[60] Qur'ān, ii, 222.

God with men and the satisfaction of men with Him. "God is satisfied with them and they with God."[61] This is the stage of the tranquil soul *(al-nafs al-muṭma'innah)*. "O tranquil soul!" God will say, "return to thy Lord well-pleased (with Him) and well-pleasing (Him), so enter among My servants and enter into My garden."[62]

Now, because love is consequent upon the knowledge and contemplation of God, the lover is the gnostic *('ārif)*. Gnosis *(ma'rifah)*, however, is a gem, a precious thing which is not to be wasted: the sun which enlightens the heart of the gnostic, says al-Ghazāli, is more radiant than our physical sun; for that sun sets and may be eclipsed, but the sun of gnosis knows no eclipse nor does it set. It is an invaluable gift to be given only to those who deserve it and to be given more or less according to the degree of self-mortification to which they attain. The limited human mind is not capable of grasping the entire expanse of divine majesty. The more one knows of God, the more one loves Him. The height of contemplation is reached when plurality passes away entirely, when there is complete cessation of conscious perception of things other than the Beloved, and the individual sees God everywhere. It was in this state that one said, "I am the Truth"; and another, "Glory be to Me! How great is My majesty"; and another, "Under this robe is naught but God." This is the state of absolute unicity and identity.

The gnostic and the lover of God in this world will see God in the next world. The Mu'tazilites had denied the beatific vision because it involved a directing of the eyes on the part of the seer and the position on the part of the seen. They said that because God is beyond space, the question of limiting Him to a particular place and direction does not arise. But al-Ghazāli meets their objection by saying that this vision, like meditation, will not have any references to the eye or any other sense-organ. It will be without their mediation. Similarly, just as the conception of God is free from the implication of spatial and temporal characteristics, so will the vision of Him be beyond all such limitations and boundaries.

C

INFLUENCE

Al-Ghazāli's influence within Islam has been both profound and most widespread: his works have been and still are being read and studied from West Africa to Oceania more than those of any other Muslim writer, and his teaching has been accepted and made a rule of life more than that of any other theologian. It has been claimed and rightly so that "al-Ghazāli's influence, taken singly, on the Muslim community has been perhaps greater than that of all the scholastic theologians."

[61] *Ibid.*, xeviii, 8.
[62] *Ibid.*, lxxxix, 27–30.

But we hasten to add that, like any other original thinker in the world, al-Ghazāli did not go without his share of criticism. The unprecedented attempt on his part to make orthodoxy mystical and mysticism orthodox, and both philosophical, naturally incurred suspicion and criticism from all schools of thought and all shades of opinion both before and after his death. Liberals have criticized him for his conservatism, and conservatives for his liberalism; philosophers for his orthodoxy, and the orthodox for his philosophy.

Al-Ghazāli's constant use of philosophical language and his mode of argument and preoccupation with Sufism led Ṭarṭūshi (d. 520/1126), al-Mazāri (d. 536/1141), ibn Jauzi (d. 597/1200), ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643/1245), ibn Taimīyyah (d. 728/1328), ibn Qayyim (d. 751/1350) and other famous theologians of the orthodox school to denounce him publicly as "one of the misguided." Ibn Jauzi is reported to have once exclaimed: "How cheaply has al-Ghazāli traded theology for Sufism!"[63] Ibn Taimīyyah, on the other hand, has accused him of having traded "theology" for philosophy. Qāḍi abu 'Abd Allah Muḥammad ibn Ḥamdīn of Cordova went so far as to issue a decree *(fatwa)* against al-Ghazāli's works, with the result that all his books including the *Iḥyā'*[64] were burnt and destroyed throughout Spain and the possession of them was forbidden on the threat of confiscation of property or even on that of death. The destruction of his philosophical and even theological writings was also ordered in North Africa during the reign of the Marrākush Sulṭān 'Ali ibn Yūsuf ibn Tāshifīn (477/1084–537/1142), who was fanatically orthodox in his religious views. Both of these incidents, however, bear ample testimony to the fact that al-Ghazāli's writings had gained a very wide circulation in the Muslim West even as early as that.

Amongst the philosophers, al-Ghazāli's most renowned and bitterest critic was ibn Rushd (520/1126–595/1198). He took up a point-by-point refutation of al-Ghazāli's arguments against the philosophers as given in the *Tahāfut* and named his own work *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* (576/1180). Ibn Rushd's defence of the philosophers is as subtle and vigorous as is al-Ghazāli's attack against them. Ibn Rushd indeed handles his arguments with accomplished understanding and ingenious skill, yet, in the considered opinion of those who are competent to judge, al-Ghazāli's arguments are in the final analysis more telling than those of his adversary.[65] Ibn Rushd in the course of his discussion accuses al-Ghazāli of hypocrisy and insincerity by saying that his polemics against the philosophers was merely to win the favour of the orthodox;[66] there is nothing to substantiate this charge. He also accused al-Ghazāli of inconsisten-

[63] Cf. Jamāl al-Dīn ibn al-Jauzi, *al-Nāmūs fi Talbīs Iblīs*, Cairo, 1340/1921, p. 377.

[64] For the theologians' various objections to *Iḥyā'* and an answer to them, see M. Ḥanīf Nadawi, *Afkār-i Ghazāli*, Lahore, 1956, pp. 61–73.

[65] Cf., e.g., Majid Fakhry, *Islamic Occasionalism*, London, 1958, pp. 103 *et sqq.*

[66] Cf. also ibn Rushd, *al-Kashf 'an Manāhij al-Adillah*, Cairo, 1319/1901, pp. 57, *et sq.*

cies in his thought. He alleges, for example, that in the *Mishkāt al-Anwār* al-Ghazāli lends wholehearted support to the theory of emanation which he had so vehemently criticised in the *Tahāfut*.[67] Al-Ghazāli's teaching, according to him, is sometimes detrimental to religion and sometimes to philosophy and sometimes to both. It is said, on the report of ibn Taimīyyah, that ibn Rushd was so struck by the duplicity of al-Ghazāli's thought that he would often quote the following verse with reference to him. "One day you are a Yemenite when you meet a man from Yemen. But when you see someone from Ma'add you assert you are from 'Adnān!"[68]

The charge of inconsistency against al-Ghazāli has also been made by another Muslim philosopher, namely ibn Ṭufail (d. 501/1185), who says that in his works meant for general readers al-Ghazāli is "bound in one place and loose in another and has denied certain things and then declared them to be true." In spite of his pointing out certain contradictions in al-Ghazāli's works, ibn Ṭufail had on the whole great admiration[69] for his teaching, and the influence of it can be seen in his own greatly admired philosophical romance: *Ḥayy Bin Yaqẓān*.

Indeed, the amount of criticism levelled against al-Ghazāli[70] is itself the proof of his widespread influence. The number of al-Ghazāli's followers and admirers who accepted his teaching and spread it is immensely greater than that of his critics; it is neither possible nor useful here to give a long catalogue of names. One fact, however, becomes conspicuous that it includes mostly people of two types, namely, the orthodox theologians and the Sufis, or those who were equally qualified as both. This makes it clear that the influence of al-Ghazāli within Islam expressed itself simultaneously in two different traditions, i.e., those of mysticism and orthodoxy, and, thus, along with the other forces of history went a long way in determining the permanent attitudes in the religious consciousness of the Islamic community, namely, the attitudes of spiritualization and fundamentalism.

Of all the works of al-Ghazāli it is in his *Iḥyā'* that he tries to maintain an equidistant poise between these two aspects of the religious consciousness. *Iḥyā'* indeed is still the most widely read of all the works of al-Ghazāli in all

[67] Cf. *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, English translation by W. H. T. Gairdner, Lahore, pp. 17–21.

[68] Quoted by F. Rahman, *op. cit.*, London, 1958, p. 112. It is significant to note that S. van den Bergh concludes in his introduction to *Averroes' Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* that resemblances between Ghazāli and Averroes seem sometimes greater than their differences, pp. xxxv, xxxvi.

[69] Cf. ibn Ṭufail, *Ḥayy Bin Yaqẓān* (Urdu trans. by Ẓafar Aḥmad Ṣiddīqi), Aligarh, 1955, pp. 26–30.

[70] For a modern criticism of al-Ghazāli cf. M. Zaki 'Abd al-Salām Mubārak, *al-Akhlāq 'ind al-Ghazzāli*, Cairo, 1924 (Urdu trans. by Nūr al-Ḥasan Khān, Lahore, 1956). Very recently F. Rahman in his short treatment of al-Ghazāli's views on prophecy in the above-cited work has made a very strong charge of inconsistency against him.

sections of the community, if not in its entirety at least in the form of fragments and summaries which are available in large numbers.[71] It has been so eulogized by some that they have not hesitated to call it the second Qur'ān, and the theologians and traditionalists have not tired of writing voluminous commentaries on it.

But it is not within Islam only that al-Ghazālī's influence exerted itself so strongly; it also had its impact on Western, particularly Jewish and Christian, thought, and indeed has flowed right into the most modern of our philosophical traditions. The influence of al-Ghazāli on modern European philosophy is a fascinating subject. It will be dealt with in the next volume in the chapter on "The Influence of Muslim Philosophy on the West."

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[71] With the exception of al-Ghazālī's own *Kīmiya-i Sa'ādat* (in Persian), the first of such summaries was written by al-Ghazālī's own brother, Aḥmad al-Ghazālī (d. 520/1126), under the title *Lubāb al-Iḥyā'*. A list of these may be found in Sayyid Murtaḍā's *Ittiḥāf al-Sādah*, Cairo, 1311/1893, p. 41.

for it); *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān*, Egypt (an exposition of the faith of the orthodox on the basis of the Qur'ān); *Kitāb al-Arba'īn*, Cairo, 1328/1910 (a second part of the preceding work); *Kīmiya-i Sa'ādat* (in Persian), lithograph edition, Bombay (a summary of *Iḥyā'*; to be distinguished from a spurious work of the same title in Arabic); *al-Qusṭās al-Mustaqīm*, Cairo, 1318/1900 (a smaller work against the Bāṭinites); *Iljām al-'Awāmm 'an 'Ilm al-Kalām*, Egypt, 1309/1891 (a work on the science of dogmatics); *Ayyuha al-Walad*, Egypt, 1343/1924 (advice in the sphere of ascetic theology); *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*, Damascus, 1358/1939 (autobiographical); *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, Egypt, 1343/1924 (on mysticism: an exposition of the light verse in the Qur'ān; the authenticity of the veil-section at the end is questionable; cf. note No. 24 above).

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Chapter XXXII

FAKHR AL-DĪN RĀZI

A

LIFE, SIGNIFICANCE OF THOUGHT, AND WORKS

The intellectual life of Islam after the attacks of Ash'ari and Ghazāli upon rationalistic philosophy can be largely described as the gradual transition from the rationalism of Aristotelian philosophy toward the intuitive and illuminative wisdom of the Ishrāqis[1] and Sufis. Although Islam began to weaken politically and culturally during the later part of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate, Muslim thought especially in the Shī'ah world continued the process of divorcing itself from the categories of Peripatetic philosophy. One of the most influential and colourful figures in this movement, who played a major role in the attack against the rationalists, was Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzi, who is considered

[1] For the definition and description of this term refer to chapter on "Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardi Maqtūl."

to be the reviver of Islam in the sixth/twelfth century as Ghazāli was in the fifth/eleventh.[2] Rāzi is in many ways a second Ghazāli; in fact, he may without exaggeration be considered to be one of the greatest Muslim theologians.

Abu al-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn 'Umar, known as Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzi and also as Imām Fakhr, ibn al-Khaṭīb, and *Imām al-Mushakkikīn* (the Imām of the Doubters),[3] was born in Rayy in northern Persia in 543/1149 in a family of scholars who came originally from Ṭabaristān. His father, Ḍiā' al-Dīn, was a well-known scholar in Rayy and was Imām Fakhr's first teacher. Later, Fakhr al-Dīn studied philosophy with Muḥammad al-Baghawi and Majd al-Dīn al-Jīli (the latter being also the teacher of Shaikh al-Ishrāq Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardi) and theology with Kamāl al-Dīn Simnāni in Rayy and Marāghah, and soon became a master of all the sciences of his time including even the mathematical, medical, and natural sciences.[4]

Having completed his formal studies, Imām Fakhr set out for Khwārizm to combat the Mu'tazilites, and from there journeyed to Transoxiana and was warmly accepted at the Courts of the Ghūr rulers, Ghiyāth al-Dīn and his brother Shihāb al-Dīn. But this stay terminated soon due to the opposition and jealousy of certain scholars and courtiers. Consequently, Imām Fakhr left the Ghūr Court for Ghaznah, where he taught for a while, and finally settled in Herāt where, under the patronage of Khwārizm Shāh 'Ala al-Dīn, a special school was built for him. There he spent the rest of his life as a teacher and preacher in comfort and honour among a large number of disciples and students who came from all over the Muslim world to study under him. He passed away at the height of fame and glory in 606/1209.[5]

The career of Imām Fakhr is in many ways a repetition of that of Ghazālī's. Like his great predecessor, he was of the Shāfi'i school, well versed in all the sciences and philosophy and yet opposed to many aspects of the Greek heritage, a critic of the Muslim philosophers, and drawn towards Sufism.[6] In theology,

[2] According to a *ḥadīth*, in each century God sends a great sage and scholar into the world to strengthen Islam. Muslim historians, following this *ḥadīth*, have searched during each century for the fittest person to receive this honour.

[3] He was given this title because he doubted so many of the views of the previous philosophers and even of the theologians.

[4] In the *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, ibn Khallikān writes that Imām Rāzi was the greatest authority on the Greek sciences *('ulūm al-awā'il)* in his time. The best sources for the biography of Rāzi are ibn abi Uṣaibi'ah, *'Uyūn al-Anbā'*, ibn al-Qifṭi, *Tārikh al-Ḥukamā'*, ibn Khallikān, *Kitāb Wafayāt al-A'yān*, Shams al-Dīn Shahrazūri, *Nuzhat al-Arwāḥ wa Rauḍat al-Afrāḥ*, and ibn Taqi al-Dīn al-Subki, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyat al-Kubra*.

[5] Al-Subki, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyat al-Kubra*, Maṭba'at al-Ḥusainīyyah, Cairo, 1324/1906, Vol. V, pp. 33–40.

[6] Although not a great Sufi figure like Ghazāli, Imām Rāzi was nevertheless sympathetic towards Sufism, especially in the later period of his life. Subki, *op. cit.*, p. 35, writes that Rāzi was himself a Sufi, and some of his poems and frequent quotations from the Sufi masters like Ḥallāj and abu Sa'īd certainly point in this direction.