GHĀZĀLĪ AND "RELIGIONSWISSENSCHAFT"

Some Notes on the Mathkhat al-Ahwār
For Professor Charles J. Adams

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I.

As if to excuse himself for a sin of youth, the "Proof of Islam" Abū Ḥamīd Muhammad al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) intimates in the opening pages of the "Defierer from the Error" (Al-Manṣūḥ min al-Dalāl) that he had been a Comparative Religionsist of sorts. Given his "thirst after a comprehension of things as they really are," he says, and thanks to his "inborn rationality" (ghaṭiṣẓūrān) and "God-given nature" (ṣirātun min Allāh), he felt free "at the age of adolescence from the bonds of "blind imitation" (taqqāf) and the constrictions of "inherited beliefs," particularly when he observed that "Christian youths always grow up to be Christians, Jewish youths to be Jews and Jewish youths to be Muslims." Moreover, he had not learned of the Prophetic Tradition which says that "Everyone born is born according to the fira: it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian?" Thus he felt moved to discover what that "original nature" (al-fira al-ṣirā责任感) really was, and what the "beliefs accidentally derived (al-dāriq) from taqqāf of parents and masters" really were.¹

Whatever the autobiographical value of this famous "confession" may be, it certainly implies that the difference between the traditional practice of religion, including his own, and the "natural" or "God-given" capacity of the human mind to know "the truth as it really is," was a genuine problem for Ghazālī. Julian Obermann in his classic if controversial study of Ghazālī's "philosophical and religious subjectivism" considered it to be nothing less than "the most important problem of Religionswissenschaft" itself. To Obermann, such a "Wissenschaft" rather than the religious tradition of Islam was

therefore for true subject matter of Ghazali's major work, the "Revival of the Sciences of Religion" (Ishq 'Ullam al-Din).

The problem is clearly related to a fundamental distinction Ghazali himself makes in the Hadith between two kinds of "science": the "prophecy" religious sciences" (Ulum dhilalka), by which he means the "legal sciences" (Ulum shar'iyya), and the "scientific sciences" (Ulum nafiiyya). The former are those "derived by way of tafsir from the prophecies" whereas the latter are rooted in the firas, and it is by virtue of the firas, says Ghazali, that every human "trust" is capable, in principle, of knowing the "true realities" (ma'rifat al-khaliqa) and the "essence of God" (ma'rifat al-sayyid). But while this "subjectivist" optimism concerning the capacity of the human firas may have prepared the ground for a philosopher like Ibn Tufail (d. 581/1185) to develop the idea of the "philosopher angelized," it was not, of course, the purpose of the "Proof of Islam" to call the "objective" givers of the religion "derived by way of tafsir from the prophecies" into question. The "deliverer from the error" on the contrary recommended tafsir of "the prophecies" and confounded, in fact, only one kind of "authoritative teaching" (tariqah), namely, the one practiced by the followers of the Ismaili imams. And it seems a safe guess that the "error" meant was, conceivably, the main reason challenge to the established Sugo order in the first of the "New Deeds" of Harun al-Shafi'i (d. 518/1124). Quite generally speaking, Onezistal opinion has come a long way from "appropriating Ghazali," as Jusef van Es puts it, "with the categories of bourgeois liberalism." Ghazali's frequent polemics against all prose he felt were undermining...
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It is, notably the tāwfiq "Eisoterics" (al-Bağṣyūs), but also the "Philosophers" (al-Philāṣīq) in general and the "Libertines" (al-Hābiyyūs), make it indeed somewhat difficult to see in him an ancestor of modern "Religionswissenschaft," particularly if that child of the European Enlightenment can be distinguished from more traditional theological concerns by what Charles Austin aptly calls the "evinc" approach to the faith of other men. On the other hand, it is also a fact that Ghażālī himself wrote a treatise on "enlightenment" of a certain kind, known as "The Niche for Lights" (Mishkāt al-Anwār), and this famous treatise, which is presently available in one critical and several traditional editions of the Arabic text, plus no less than four translations into various European languages,9 would seem to show him capable of a surprisingly relaxed attitude, indeed an "evinc" approach to religious doctrines and sects — provided that it is entirely authentic. That, however, is precisely the problem raised by W. Montgomery Watt is a thought-provoking though ultimately inconclusive theological analysis of the final section — the "Veils-section" as he calls it — which was published in the J.R.A.S. for 1969.9 Watt's article was written partly in refutation of the views expressed by the first European student of the Mishkāt in particular, the Reverend W.H.T. Gardner, whose pioneer-study on "the Ghażālī-problem," published in English in Der Islam, 1914, was in fact almost exclusively devoted to the very same final section on the "Veils."11 Of course Gardner's "problem" was not the authenticity of the text, which, he took for granted, but whether or not


"Ghazzâlî the Sûfî" had remained faithful to "orthodox Islam." Having decided, though hesitantly, that the metaphysical (sic) Gh. the Sûfî was still that of kalâm, not fikrâ, just as much as his in pre-Sûfî days, 11 Gâinî returned never the less to the question in the introduction to his translation of the whole Miskîkî, speaking now of Ghazzâlî's "tortured thought" and emphasizing that the final section "contains the most numerous and the most interesting problems for the study of Ghazzâlî's inner life, thought and conviction", that it supplies "rich material for an unusually inside view of Ghazzâlî's real views concerning men, doctrines, religions and sects," and that it amounts to "hardly less than an outline of philosophy of religion." 12

This "philosophy of religion," then, was the cause of the dispute over the authenticity of the "Veil-section." For Watt, there could be no such thing as an "unusually inside view" if that meant "esoteric." He argued against Gâinî that this philosophy is "definitely Neoplatonic in its outlook," that this makes it "incompatible" with Ghazzâlî's "authentic" religious thought as expressed in the Miskîkî and other works of the later period, including the main part of the Miskîkî itself; and that in conclusion, the "Veil-section" but not the rest of the book must be imputed to a presumably "Neoplatonist forger."

Against Watt's "forgery"-theory, 13 Ablârîmînasîd Bâdawî advanced, apparently already in 1948, the argument that the whole Miskîkî is found in a collective manuscript of Ghazzâlî's works which is dated only four years after Ghazzâlî's death (c. 509 A.H.). 14 This is the sânî Şehît Âli Pâşâ 1712, one of the two used by Âzîzî for his edition of the standard text. 15 Watt, too, mentions this manuscript in his recent article on Ghazzâlî in The Encyclopedia of Religion but chooses to ignore the fact that it contains the Miskîkî. Instead, he still maintains that "the facts... strengthen the case for regarding as inauthentic works which cannot be harmonized with what is expressed in books like the Miskîkî and the Hâfîzî." 16

In what follows, I shall argue that the "philosophy of religion" of the "Veil-section" is, indeed, "heretical" in the sense in which Watt (ibid.) still uses this term, meaning that it "cannot be harmonized" with the theological

12 Ibid. 140.
13 The Sâne 6.3 and 65.
14 Ablârîmînasîd Bâdawî, Ma'alluf fi al-Ghazzâlî, 2nd ed., Kâywân, 1971, 193-188. Other Ghazzâlîan works mentioned in this collective manuscript include, according to Bâdawî, the following: Işârât al-'Awâlîm (ibid. 213); Al-Qâti's al-Makâmîm (Ibid. 190-195); Fâridat al-Tabînî (ibid. 166d.).
15 Miskîkî (ibid) St.
views considered "orthodox" by Watt, although it is by no means "incompatible" with major points made by Ghazālī in the Ḥadīṣ, and certainly not with the major part of the Misāḥkār itself. The "heretical" nature (in the above sense) of the "Veils-section" seems rather obvious, first of all, from the fact that it actually reproduces basic ideas on "Religionswissenschaft" from the "Risālah On Doctrines and Religions," i.e. Risālah 42 of the highly "orthodox" "Encyclopedia of the Brethren of Purity" (Ikhwān al-Safā), as will be shown below in some detail. As is well-known, the "orthodox" Ghazālī of the Manqūṣīh proclaims this "Encyclopedia" in no uncertain terms, although he acknowledges at the same time that there may be some superficial similarity between the ideas "cited by the author of the Book of the Brethren of Purity in order to entice the credulous to accept his falsehood", and his own.17 "Worse" still, the "Veils-section" not only incorporates more or less obvious "Neoplatonic" ideas, but specifically "Batinī" doctrines, which Ghazālī himself had earlier (i.e. in his "Sīrat al-nabi") identified as such and denounced as "dualism," and places them, moreover, far above any theological and even "philosophical" views (see section iii below). No wonder that the mysterious "doctrine of the 'Vice-governor (al-mujīri')" in which it seems to culminate has puzzled Ghazālī-exegetes since the earliest times, even though it is clearly not identical with the final message of the book (see section iv below).

It must be emphasized again, however, that none of all this seems really "incompatible" with the complex character and thought of a man like Ghazālī. Perhaps, then, it is Professor Watt's concept of Ghazālī's single-minded "orthodoxy," rather than the authenticity of the "Veils-section," which ought to be called into question. Yet in spite of the manuscript Şehit Ali Paşa 1712, and contrary to the now prevailing opinion based on it, it also must be pointed out that the authenticity-question is not yet entirely settled. Some doubt remains with regard to the text as we have it -- and it comes from quite unexpected quarters, as will be shown in the final section of this article.

17 Al-Munqīṣīh ed. F. Jahān, 261,833, and 3194. M. Watt, Faith and Practice 41ff. and 53. The possibility of Ghazālī's indebtedness to the Ikhwān has been evoked several times, notably by H. Luzzatto-Yaféh (Shadows, passion) and Suzanne Dowdy, Arabische Philosophie und Wissenschaft in der Encyclopädie... (u.a.), Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1974, 7 and passim; but no systematic study of the question has, to my knowledge, appeared so far.
Although apparently written before the Mungah (i.e., before roughly 500 A.D.) though probably not much earlier, the Mishkât is in any case, and even in its undigested parts, a far more "cohesive" treatise than the latter. Its full title, as referred to by Khâshâ from his Persian manuscript, the "Ellixir of Happiness" (Kintâ'î-yi-Safâ'is), and confirmed by A'ayt al-Qâdir al-Hamadânî (d. 525/1132), is actually "The Niche for the Lights and the F Irriter for the Secrettes" (Mishkât al-Awrâr wa-Mu'allît al-Awrâr). As we have it, the text is divided into three major "secerttes" (sâtâr). The first two among these develop an onomological and epistemological theory derived from the word "light" as found in two parts of the Qur'ânic "Light-vonce" (24:35), respectively. Thus, Section One, on "God is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth," deals with categories of physical and spiritual "lights," ending up with the conclusion that God, being the sole, "truly existent" (al-munajjî al-haqq), is truly Light. "Light" is defined in this context as the absolute or ideal "Reality through which all things appear." It is as such indiscernible or "hidden" precisely because of the "intensity" (shihâda) of its (or His) own "manifestness" (zâd lâraq zûhrâ). The main theme of Section Two, on the other hand, is the Qur'ânic "Light upon light" in the second part of the "Light-vonce." This is explained in relation to the human "Niche," and in terms of a theory of symbolism strongly reminiscent of Avicenna's, as a general

18 That the Mishkât (or part of it) was written before the Mungah may be inferred from the following: 1. in quoted by Khâshâ in his Kintâ'î-yi-Safâ'is (see below, p. 15). 2. This Persian Kintâ'î must be the one referred to by Khâshâ in the Mungah (as Ayyûs, 50th line 14) as Kintâ'î al-Safâ'is (cf. Charles-Père de Foucauld, Nomadie - Les nations nomades dans la littérature persane du livre au 7e-8e siècle. Paris: Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1986, 224ff.).

19 Kintâ'î-yi-Safâ'is ed. A'ayt al-Qâdir al-Hamadânî. 50. Although Khâshâ here refers to for exploitation of the "Fisils-section" in the Kintâ'î, he does not by itself prove the authenticity of the disputed "Fisils-section," because he quotes the tradition with "seven rays of lights" only (cf. below, note 28). He may, in fact, be referring to a passage in Section Two (Mishkât 107).


21 Yaar full side figures show in same manuscript, but the apparently oldest ms. has, oddly enough, Khâshâ al-Mishkât with Mishkât in its title. See A.A. Affé, Mishkât 4 and 6. The present mishkât ll seem to be mishkât i.e., I'm not sure what mishkât is the old ms. occurring in the next item (Mishkât 74, etc.).

22 Mishkât 16: 59-63.

process of insight-perception, mapped out on a five-fold scale ranging from physical sensation (the "Niche" itself) to imagination (the "Glass") to primary intuicition (the "Land"), cogestion (the "Olive-tree"), and pure inspiration of prophesy or awqaf (the "Owl that would almost see by itself"). It also consists an interpretation of the Tradition according to which "God created Adam after the Form of the Merciful" (الله یساس عالمین). This "Form," Ghazâlî insists, is the symbol but not the symbolized. Its "presence" (شاهد al-rahim) enables man to "know" God, even though it is not identical with the "Form of God" (شیر یلل), as such.

Section Three, however, is based on the non-canonical though famous Tradition according to which "God has seventy (or "seven hundred" or "seventy thousands") Veils of Light and Darkness: were He to remove them, then the Splendors of His Face would burn everyone reaching Him by his sight (or "everything reached by His sight"). According to Montgomery Watt, the "presumed forgeter" has "chosen the interpretation of this Tradition as a means of putting his goods into the hands of the customers he cannot gain by lawful means." To substantiate such an accusation, Watt builds his case upon a ser.

ries of arguments of "form and matter," all of which are designed to demonstrate that there is a real contrast or contradiction between the whole - "Veils-section" on the one hand, and the rest of the Miskâl as well as the rest of Ghazâlî's later writings in general, on the other hand.

With regard to the "Veils-Tradition," Watt rightly points out that Ghazâlî usually quotes it with "seven veils of light" only, not "veils of darkness." While this may have some significance, it is of course purely cir-

"Fire" - see Avicenna = the active intellect - in this context. In Section One, however, he does identify it with the divine "Spirit" and/or the "Angel of seventy thousand fixed" (Mishkât, 76; and Ibn Tâjûl evidently identifies this particular angel with the active intellect (Kitâb al-nafus al-aswâq; L. Crusius, 129, 5. Or. French transl. 132). See also below, note 17.

Mishkât 76-81.

Miskâl 7. Note, however, that Ghazâlî quotes the same Tradition with "šârāk in Section One (Mishkât 44), where he applies it purely and simply to the intellect (al-šârâk), a "light sent from the Light of God," which neatly transcends any material dimension.

On this Tradition, and its impact on the full concept of the mystical path, cf. my Naṣṣ al-Din ʿAbd al-Rahîm, Le Révélateur des Mystères, Leipzig, Voss, 1985, esp. 111 ff. For further ref.


J.S. 1949, 9. 9 ibid, 13: 23; 12: 202, 204. 9 In this sense, some of the passages addressed
cummisartial evidence and does not by itself carry much weight as an argument for the "forgery"-theory even in Wasit's own presentation. Furthermore, it would entail the additional hypothesis that the introduction to the Miṣkūn has been manipulated by the "forger" as well, since a full quotation of the Tradition (with veils of light and darkness) is found there in the first place; 29 and we can always argue against this that the major theme of the treatise explains the presence of "veils of darkness" anyway, in Section One, there is after all the quality of "the Heavens and the Earth," and Section Two ends with a short comment on the Qur'anic "darkness-verse" (24:40)

Wan also contends that "the Veils-section has no preparation trade in the previous part." Even the paradoxical "veiling" (hiŷjân) of the "usury Manifest" (helloyd), adhered to at the end of Section One, does not, in Wan's estimation, "prepare in the slightest for the explanation of the Veils-tradition as found in the existing texts of the Miṣkūn." 30 Yet the opening page of Section Three refers precisely to this paradoxical "veiling" of the "Marīst" (muṣalâlah). 31 God being "manifest in Himself and to Himself" (muṣaṣṣal fi dhâlîn bi-dhâlîn), the text states, "the Veil necessarily exists [only] in relation to something subject to it (maḥjûn, = "veiled"); and those subject to it among the creatures are of three kinds (quâm, henceforth = "classes"); those veiled by sheer darkness, those veiled by pure light, and those veiled by light joined with darkness." In fact, this explanation of the Tradition provides the basis for nothing less than a systematic classification of all conceivable human attitudes vis-à-vis the "usury Manifest" in terms of their relative "veiledness" (including, to begin with, the total absence of any religious attitude (aʿlāḥ, cf. below) in "those veiled by sheer darkness." They constitute the "primitive" or "first class." The "second class" will be made up of all those "veiled by light joined with darkness," and it includes the religions of the "idol-worshippers" as well as various theological doctrines of the Muṣṭakalīmûn, whereas the "third class," i.e. "those veiled by pure light," refers to cosmological doctrines held by the "philosophers," among others (see below).

This basic structure is evidently intended to be all-comprehensive in a logical and not in an empirical or historical sense. It cannot be exhaustive

from the Miṣkūn by either Wasit or Delafield has the Tradition with "veils of darkness." See also below, n. 185.

29 According to Wasit (J.R.A.S. 1499, 22), it "of course could have been added by the forger." Rashdî Delafield (1908) and Aflât (Miṣkūn, introd. 31); on the contrary, take it as an argument in favor of the authenticity.


31 Miṣkūn 84, 5.

away, as only "the prophetic power" able to comprehend "all the secrets of the Miṣkūn-section" does suggest "prophetic power," excepted in the sense that the prophet is, of course, the prototype. As 3.4.32 this text does not advocate "passheuristic" treatise in the sense that the "One manifest it shall show" is the phenomenon. 33 Grazzzi in several places "phenomenology" of the "Veils-of in relation to Abraham's "Lords." Al-Maṣāfīd al-Ansâarih plies the same logic of ambiguous "knowability" of God through the example illustrating the apparent "unknowability" of God is one namely, the originally Buddhist "the Blind": each among the blind (he) touched upon with an eye (lary) was actually right from his pri money were of course altogether in connection between this portable a

32 ibid. 84, 12.

33 ibid. 91-93, Abraham stands for the seas, Muhammad for the one with "manifestation" (taâlîl). Grazzzi in earlier analysis in De Islam 1914, 1.


Anyway, as only "the prophetic power" (al-qawma al-nabawiyya) would be able to comprehend "all the seventy thousand veils." 32 Although the end of the "Veils-section" does suggest the availability of absolute Truth in this "prophetic power," exemplified in the figures of Abraham and Muhammad who are, of course, the prototypes of the Sufi "Attainers" (al-wâsâlîn, class 3.4.), 33 this text does not advocate any particular "orthodoxy." Nor is it a "pantheistic" treatise in the sense that it would obliterate the essential distinction between the "One manifest in Himself and to Himself" and his "divine show" in the phainomena.

Ghazâlî in several places of the Ihya' actually alludes to such a "phenomenology" of the "Veils of Light" and its "ambiguity" (wâdâqâ'î), notably in relation to Abraham's "Lords" (Sira 6:76, cf. below) and Hâllâj's Âdî Tâ-Huqûq. 34 In Al-Maqâ'id al-Arâd fî Sharh Mâ'dîn' Amârî al-Hâlîn 'alâ-Hunnî he applies the same logic of ambiguity systematically to the problem of the "knowability" of God through the divine Attributes. 35 Perhaps the most telling example illustrating the apparent contradiction between "knowability" and "unknowability" of God is one which Ghazâlî cites at various occasions, namely, the originally Buddhist tale of the "Elegant and the Community of the Blind": each among the blind having identified the far part of the Elephant he happened to touch upon with an object already "known" to him (such as a pillar) was actually right from his point of "view" (mâdâqa mûn wa'hîn), although they were of course altogether unable to "know" the Elephant as such. 36 A connection between this parable and the "Veils-tradition" is in fact suggested.

32 ibid. 94, 12.
33 ibid. 91-93. Abraham, stands for the one who gradually "ascends" to reach "attainment" at the end; Muhammad for the one who is right from the beginning granted the experience of "manifestations" (wâdâqâ') Gaëtano in The Night 13f. confuses the issue, contrary to his own earlier analysis in Den Islam 1914, 129.

by Ghazâlî himself in the relevant passage of the Kûnîyû-yi Surûdat (see below, n. 116).

Now any phenomenological approach to religion may be characterized, as Charles Adams has pointed out, by “two important concerns”: one is the principle called epochê or “bracketing” one’s own convictions, the other being “the construction of taxonomic schemes for classifying phenomena across the boundaries of religious communities, cultures and even epochs”; while the former is surely “irrelevant” by definition, the latter, the logos of taxonomic schemes, is bound to introduce criteria which tend to reflect the ultimate values of the observer himself.37 The same thing may be said, with only a small grain of salt added, about the “Vellei-section”: it is certainly an exercise in epochê; and the taxonomic logic of the “velles” reveals perhaps more about the ultimate values of the author than any particular doctrine to be derived from it. As far as those implicit values are concerned, one can only agree with Watt’s general characterization of the “Vellei-section”: it is, as he puts it, “definitely Neoplatonic in its outlook.”38 But so is the rest of the Miskhâtî! It is neither self-evident, nor does Watt demonstrate, that “the rest of the Miskhâtî, on the other hand, is, as definitely, not Neoplatonic.”39 It may well be that the theory of lights propounded in Section One “is not an instance of explicit profession of a Neoplatonic doctrine” (emphasis added),40 as Watt argues, following Gârdner’s linguistic argument to that effect; but there is no “explicit profession of this sort” in the “Vellei-section” either – a claim Watt simply takes over from Averroës for the sake of his argument, as we shall see later (section iv). As a matter of fact, Neoplatonic (and Platonic) influence on the undisputed part of the Miskhâtî seems far more obvious, and has been amply demonstrated by A.J. Wensinck;41 and Ghazâlî himself evidently felt obliged to explain its allegedly “philosophical doctrine” (nukhût-i falsâtîfî) when challenged by his theological opponents, as is clear from a Persian letter, written probably in 503 or 504 A.H.42

Particularly damaging for Watt’s argumentum ad contrario is the fact that traces of one and the same particular source – and one certainly not to be clas-

37 "Islamic Religious Tradition" 49-52.
38 J.R.A.S. 1949, 8.
39 ibid.
40 ibid., 15. Gârdner, Der Islam 1914, 138f.
41 "Ghurelî’s Misliyüt es-çavâle (Niche of Light)” in Semiotische Studien uit de natuurwetenschap van Prof. Dr A. J. Wessinck, Leiden, A.W. Sijthoff’s Uitgeverij N.V., 1941, 192-212.
42 Miskhât-i Firdûsî i Ghazâlî bî nâm-i Fârûqî al-Ashûrî min Ramûsî Ilîçat ud-Islam ed. 3Abâtab i Şîh, Tehran, Sanûf/Tâhînî, 1360 (repr. of 1333/1954 ed.), 12. For the date of this letter, see Derschem Krewitsky, Briefe und Reden des Abu Muhammad al-Ghazâlî, Freiburg i. Br., Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1971, 17. German translation ibid. 79.
sified as "not Neoplatonic"—can be identified in all three sections of the 
Maqāla. This common source is the already mentioned Riḍāša 42 of the 
Ikhwān al-Ṣafā. Ghazzālī's conclusion in Section One, about God's "hidden 
manifestness"—which, as we have seen, prepares for the theme of the "Veils"— 
was already formulated in that Riḍāša in almost exactly the same terms.43 
Similarly, Ghazzālī's substitution in Section Two (repeated in a slightly varied 
form in Section Three) to Moses' refusal to answer Pharaoh's question about 
the "quiddity" (māhiyāt) of the "Lord of the worlds" (cf. Sura 26:23) has its 
proper place in the very same context in Riḍāša 42.44 It is not very surprising, 
then, that the "Veils-except" should share more than a few points with this 
perticular source.

This is evident, first of all, in the universalistic approach to religion which 
is common to both. The Ikhwān go as far as to make it perfectly plain that "the 
Truth (al-haqq) exists in all religions (fi kull din mawjūd) and (may) occur on 
everyone's lips," just as "pseudobiblic (shahāb) is conceivable to occur in every 
human being."45 The "words of all people," according to them, are "those who 
have no ḍīn and who do not believe in the Day of Reckoning."46 Their prime 
example of such people are the "Materialists" (Dakhrīyāt),47 who are described 
as imperfect thinkers capable of understanding the causes of particular things 
but unable to grasp the efficient cause of the universe.48 This is because their 
intellect is affected by "many accidental illis" such as pride, envy, goodness, 
hate, patriotism, "tribalistic nationalistic" (al-banīyāt al-jāshīyīn) and arro 
gance, all of which are responsible for its misguided use by the "Pharaohs" 
al-farā'īn) and the "armies of Iblīs."49 If there is one concrete group the 
Ikhwān consistently blame for false "analogical reasoning" (qiyās), these 
people are quite obviously the "Dissidents" (abd al-judūd, al-sīqa al-majī 
dīda), that is to say, the Musālikullāhīn whom they openly identify as "enemies 
of the pious" and "adversaries of the Brethren of Purity."50 By contrast, the

yūfī man fikra wīdānahu min qūl Allāh shābih... wa šahārīn min shahārīn qalbīn wa 
jašīyāt nīnāq. Cf. Methfessel 68, 29 Fā’d yūfīndd un asbābī wa-yūfīndd asbābīna li 
shābihā qalbīn, wa al-qašf fi Gianthū li-ikhānīyāt dīyīn
45 Riṣālā vol. 3, 501.
46 ibid. 451.
47 ibid. 455f.; 456f.; 520.
48 ibid. 455f. See also Ian R. Notton, Muslim Neoplatonists: An Introduction to the Thought of 
49 Riṣālā vol. 3, 437ff.
50 ibid. 555ff. Cf. 406; 419; 438ff.; 444; 446; 448; 467.
“best doctrine for ‘ah” is, according to the Ikhwan, the belief that the world was originated by a wise Creator in the best possible way; that He has angels, appointed to preserve the world order (nar, niyām), and intermediaries who are selected from among the humans; that to act in accordance with His bidding and forbiddings is best for the humans and not beyond their capacity, and that they are “fitting” (muqawajihān) Him from the Day of their creation until the Day they “meet” Him, being transferred from lower stages to higher ones, less perfect to more perfect ones.51 Of course this doctrine also informs the “religiöswissenschaftliche” theory advanced by the Ikhwan. It implies the idea of Urmonotheismus combined with the basic assumption that humans are of two kinds: “most” are inclined to seek the pleasures of this world, but “many” are attracted to “religiousness” (takaṣṣuya), pietry and asceticism. The Prophet and divine Messengers were sent to the humans for no other purpose than to “strengthen” (ta‘ākid) their natural attraction to religion, and to “better” what they had already chosen to adhere to with their intellects. Thus the pre-Islamic Arabs were actually “being religious (yahyāyānī)” by worshipping idols”, and “approaching God.” Of course the idols were “bodily without speech,” whereas prophets are human “speakers” (nāqūtān) resembling the angels in their “pure souls” (n u f i s h i m al-ṣ a k i y y a), so that approaching God through them rather than through the idols is obviously “better” and “true.”52 This point appears to be a rather unmistakable reference to an Ismā‘ili theory of substitution, as found notably in the Kūfī al-Ifshāh or Abu Ya‘qūb al-Sijistānī (written around 360 A.H.),53 and it is also implied in the nālīlah accords to the “idol-worshippers” in the “Veils-SECTION” (see below). However, the Ikhwan also point out that “Idol-worship” itself is the result of a degeneration of star-worship, which in turn originated from angel-worship, which was the way of the “ancient philosophers”, and “those who know God as He ought to be known do not approach Him by means of anything but Himself.”54

All this and much more is explained by the Ikhwan at great length in one and the same Risālā “On Doctrines and Religions.” The preceding summary

51 ibid. 451f.
52 ibid. 481f.
53 Kūfī al-Ifshāh ed. Masaffa Chihrī, Beirut (?), Dīr al-Ardāsīr, 1980, 28f. For a discussion of this passage, see Faqir Muhammad Ḥasan, The Concept of Tayḥīd in the Thought of Imam al-Dīn al-Kurānī (d. after 411/1021), unpublished Ph.D. thesis, McGill University, 1986, 48 and 51f. According to Sijistānī, obdelarco the Imam is comparable to idol-worship as a way of “approaching God” although it is, of course, more “beautiful” (ṣawm wa-aqma) since the Imam is the “beavers of knowledge” (humāṣat al-‘adn wa-t ṭīb al-ḥikmah al-‘adh) whereas the idols are “dead bodies” (ifshāh 29, 5–6).
54 Risālā, vol 3, 482f.
is, of course, by no means exhaustive. Its purpose is, rather, to bring fundamental ideas which seem to constitute the very core of the religious and "scientific" outlook of the Ḥudūd into sharp focus. The same ideas are also constitutive of the "Religionswissenschaft" of the final section of the Misbaḥār, as the following sections of this article should bring to evidence: opposition to any kind of "materialism," in thought as well as in behavior, criticism of the "analogical reasoning" of the Muṣǎllaḥiyyīn; a pronounced feeling of empathy for the "religiousness" of the "idūl-worldhoppers"; and, last but not least, the idea of a "progress" of, rather, a spiritual ascent of humanity as a whole. To be sure, the latter idea is not expressed in the "Velas-section" in terms of a "transfer from lower stages to higher ones," it is rather implied in the classification system itself. Each among the three "classes" is divided into two or more "sorts" (ṣīfāt), which are, in turn, sometimes subdivided into numbered varieties called "groups" (fīrah) or "tribes" (al-fāqīh), as the case may be. I have indicated this by giving each variety the corresponding number of classification (in brackets if not explicit in the text itself); besides, wherever this seems possible and meaningful, an attempt to identify the various divisions and subdivisions will be made by way of a running commentary.

III.

1. "Those veiled by sheer darkness," i.e. the "Primitives" of this system, are obviously not those of a vulgar theory of evolution, but the "Atheists" (al-muhādiyyīn). Like the "worst of all people" of the Ḥudūd, but with a literal quote from the Qurān (55:5-6), they are defined in our text as "those who do not believe in God and the Last Day." They are of two "sorts":

1.1. "[Thinkers] who, teaching a cause [to explain the existence] of this universe, assigned to Nature [the role]."

They are "veiled by sheer darkness," we are told, because "Nature" refers to an attribute embedded and inherent in material "bodies." and bodies are "dark" since they are not aware of themselves and of "that which proceeds from them" — an anti-materialist argument one would rather expect to see in a work of Suhrawardi ṣuyūq al-isḥāq, although it is not inconsistent with Section One of the Misbaḥār itself. These "naturalist" thinkers are plainly not the ones

so called (al-sahlīyyūn) in the Manṣūhm, but correspond rather to the Dāhriyya mentioned there. 56 More precisely, they are, like the Dāhriyya of the Ikhwān, incapable of recognizing the true "cause" of the universe, which they are nevertheless "searching."

1.2. Those who do not even "search for the cause," pre-occupied by their own "selves" (nafs in Sufi terminology) as they are, belong, oddly enough, to the "second sort." Like those with "intelects affected by many ills" in the terminology of the Ikhwān, they seem to be a sort of materialists by accident. According to the standard text they are subdivided into the following "groups":

1.2.1. The Hedonists (veiled by shadwa, or the appetitive soul)
1.2.2. The Politicalists (veiled by ferocity. Examples given: non-sedentary Arabs [Arāb] and the Kurds)
1.2.3. The Greedy ("worshippers of the dirāhm")
1.2.4. The Ambitious.

The last-mentioned are said to be somewhat more "advanced" than the previous groups, believing as they do that happiness consists (not in sheer satisfaction of the nafs but) in social values such as prestige, reputation, exercise of authority (ṣulfūkh al-amm al-wadī), or spending money for attractive attire rather than for more immediate needs. However, since their real motivation is vainglory (muzāfā), they are nonetheless "veiled" by the sheer darkness of their own "selves."

[1.3.] Although the "first class" consists only of two "sorts" as indicated above, there is an additional "community" (janūrū). They are those who proclaim the monothist formula Lā ʾilla ā illū ʾilla out of fear, or in order to seek advantage from the Muslims, or out of mere "tribalist loyalty" (ṭurāṣral) to the practice of their "fathers." This "community" evidently covers both non-Muslim monothists living in a Muslim context, and ordinary Muslims conformists following "inherited beliefs," as Ghazālī puts it in the introduction to the Manṣūhm (above, p. 19). Although all of these belong to the "primitive class," they seem to occupy a borderline-status between "darkness" and "light"—not unlike the "first stage" of sawhīd and of dhikr in scale given elsewhere by Ghazālī. 57

2. The "second class," i.e. those "veiled by light joined with darkness," is of three "sorts," each covering several subdivisions. The three "sorts" are for-

57 Ḥ justify books xxxv. Ḥasāl 2 (Cairo 1933, IV, 2122) and Kīmāl 794f. (four stages of sawhīd; see below, notes 180-183): Four stages of dāhri: Kīmāl 205ff. — Six stages of sawhīd in Ghazālī's Persian letter of 503 or 504 A.H. (Mukālib Foster ed. Ḥasāl, 15-256; sawwalsky, Briefe 83-95).
mally distinguished with regard to the origin of their "veils of darkness": sense-perception (hîṣâh), imagination (khayâl), "false analogical reasoning" (maqâyâsâr taqâyû a'lâh), 23 They can easily be identified as being, respectively: Polytheists (From the "Idol-worshippers" to the "Dualists"); Monotheists ("Corporalists"); Muslim "Attributists."); 2.1. The "first son" consists of the following "tribes": 2.1.1. The "Idol-worshippers" 2.1.2. A "Community among the Remote Turks, having neither mîlλa nor sharî'a" (see below) 2.1.3. The "Fire-worshippers" 2.1.4. The "Star-worshippers" 2.1.5. The "Sun-worshippers" 2.1.6. The worshippers of "Abuluster Light comprehensive of all lights of the universe," who are - nevertheless - "Dualists" (see below) Interestingly, all these "tribes" are treated with obvious sympathy. Even though they are all supposed to be "veiled" by the "darkness of sense," none of them is "veiled by pure darkness" like the truly "primitive class." What distinguishes them altogether from the latter, is that "one of them is quite incapable of transcending self-centeredness, of religiosity (ta'alluq) and of a yearning for the knowledge of their Lord." In fact, they rather play the role of a kind of "noble savage"-figures. The point is that their "light-veils" - as opposed to their "dark veils of sense" - being altogether to the divine "Attributes" or "Lights" (ijdâh Allâh wa-umûrâh). Contrary to Gaizler's reading, 20 this is the case even with the pure "Idol-worshippers" (2.1.1.). Their "light-veils" are those of "glory" (izâra) and "beauty" (jamâl), because they believe that "their Lord" is "mighty" (or "great"). This, therefore make "the most beautiful figures" from the most precious materials and worship them as gods.

Two "tribes" appear in a particularly favorable light: the "remote Turks without mîlλa or sharî'a" (2.1.2.) and the Iranian "Dualists" (2.1.5.). The for-

28 Mâlikârî 87, 11 and 89, 17-18.
29 Mâlikârî 87, 10-13. Eichholtz, Die Nâzîche Sîtî, totally misunderstands the passage. Ghaţâlî himself defines ta'alluq in Al-Majâsid (ed. Shâhîd, 60, 4-5) as the religious attitude par excellence. whereby man's heart and mind are "submerged in God" in such a way that he "sees one side nor turns to my other." See also Mâkî, Qât al Quhâ, Cairo, 1864, lii, 142: the "friends of God" ta'allâlâ ilâhî wa-umûrâh ya'dâr yâd bâd na'amînghân ghâyâh - which may well be Ghaţâlî's source for this usage of ta'alluq. The term seems nevertheless built on a Greek model (cf. apotelesma) and is, in any case, frequently found in writings of "Neo-platonics" inspiration (cf. J.A.O.X, 167, 168, 482). See also below, note 168-170.
30 The Nâzîche 164 (probably based on an earlier text as in Mâlikârî B 42, 13-14. For the correct text see Mâlikârî 87, 19-20.}
mer are especially interesting. While they seem to be a variety of those vague
groups nominally classified by Muslim historians as *hulul* or "incarna-
tions" - perhaps, as was suggested by Hellmut Ritter,62 the pseudo-Maniche-
as of Abū Shākir al-Salimī (first half of the 5th century A.H.) since like
these "Manicheans" they are said to prostrate themselves before beautiful per-
sons, trees, horses and the like - the point to be noted is that our text actually
absolves them from the sin of *hulul*. It quite explicitly states that "they are
more deeply engaged in beholding the light than the idol-worshippers, because
they worship absolute beauty (al-jarūṭa al-mutlaq), not individual bodies (dānā
t-l-shaḥkāt al-khāyāt), and do not consider it [i.e. the light of beauty] particular to
any thing." They are also superior to the "idol-worshippers," our text insists,
because the "beauty" they worship is given by Nature, not man-made. All this
could be de-coded, I think, as a reference to the tāmilī Neoplatonists of
Khurāsān and in particular, Abū Yaḥyā al-Sakānī and Abū Ḥanīfah al-
Firāsī, both of whom, according to Persian šīrāzī texts of the 5th century
A.H., held the peculiar doctrine that "the beauty of Nature is spiritual."63 It
should be noted that about at the same time, the equally Persian but very
orthodox Sufi Ḥujwīrī (‘Allabak) condemns such doctrines as sheer heresy.64
As for the "Dualists" (2.1.6.), they share with the "remote Turks" the dis-

61 Das meer der reine; mensch, welt und got in den geschichten der Faküllade. Amsterdam, Lei-
den, Brill, 1955, 451 ff.
62 Abū Yaḥyā al-Sakānī, Kināf al-Majāb ed. Henry Corbin, Bibliotheca Iranica vol. 1,
2nd ed. Teheran, 1336/1957, 49-51. Commentaire à la querelle cosmologique d’Abū
Ḥanīfa al-Firāsī ed. H. Corbin and Moh. Mirzā, Bibliotheca Iranica vol. 6,
63 Ali b. ‘Uthmān al-Jāzīlī al-Ḥujwīrī, Kitab al-Majāb ed. Valentin A. Zolotovski,
London, 1911, 260.
64 Al-Maḥāsin 89, 1-6. Cf. below, note 95.
Between the "Turks" and the "Iranians", there are the remaining three "tribes", i.e. the "Fire-worshippers" (2.1.3.), the "Sun-worshippers" (2.1.4.) and the "Sun-worshippers" (2.1.5.). They are probably made up to provide a logical transition from 'ords earthly to 'ords heavenly. The scale is of course reminiscent of, though not identical with, the theme of "Abraham's ascent" from "star-worship" to highest celestial "ords to pure monotheism (Silva 6:76f.), a text of central significance in Ghazâli's thought, which is found not least in Section Two of the Mishkât itself as well as in the "Veils-section" (class three, see below), but also in the Ḥiyâ and the Kamîyâ. Not surprisingly, the Hanbâl theologian Ibn-Jâwâl (d. 597/1200) recounted Ghazâli's "Bâbânîn" in this kind of Qur'anic interpretation, what seems more surprising is that he does not cite the Mishkât but the Ḥiyâ. In any case, however, he had a point. Long before Ghazâli, the arch-Bâtîn of Khurâsân (and teacher of Sîjastânî), Muhammad b. Atâmâd al-Nasâî (d. 331/642), was criticized by his more prudent fellow-Dâlî, Aṭîf b. Ḥâlim al-Râhî, for having taken the same Qur'anic theme to mean "Abraham's spiritual ascent" through the Ḥudâ. 65

2.2. With the following "sort" (i.e. those "veiled by the darkness of imagination"), we are back in the professorly monotonous world. Although this "sort" is supposed to be beyond the "veil of sense," the scale starts here with the most grossly anthropomorphic "imagination" of a Belâb (literally) "sitting (pâ'îdâm) on the Throne"; a contrast which is all the more striking as we have just been informed about the most lofty ideas of the "Dâwâṣî" and other "tribes" of the preceding "sort." Three "ranks" (râtâb) are mentioned in a very summary manner. They represent an ascending order of sophisticated, of course within the limits of their "veil of imagination";

2.2.1. The "Corporalitas" (qalâmajamah. No example given.)
2.2.2. "All sorts of Kârâmîyyâ" 66
2.2.3. Those who denied all attributes of "corporeality" except the direction "above" (probably the "moderate Kârâmîyyâ"). 67

65 Mishkât 67f.
66 Ḥiyâ III, 346f. and Kamîyâ 67f.
67 Tabâtâ fîrâd, Beirut, Dir al-Wâyî al-Athârî, n.d., 186, 27 f. By Lajadj Yafâ (Studies 332) seem to refer to the same passage.
70 Ibid. 349ff. Gajdzior (Der Islam 1914, 124f.) thinks that the reference is to Atâmâd b. Ḥanbal and the Hanbailis. This is not impossible, but the Hanbailis are more likely excluded in the following "sort" (i.e. 2.3.1.).
2.3. Whereas the above-mentioned (i.e. 2.2.3.) were still tied up with the "imagination" of spatiality, and thus unable to penetrate the world of the intelligibles (al-murādāt) even at an elementary level, the "third sort" was free from that limitation. They were, however, "veiled by the darkness of false analogical reasoning" since they "worshiped a god who is hearing, seeing, speaking, knowing, powerful, willing, living" - these famous "divine Attributes" being understood by them "in accordance with what is suitable with their own attributes." They turn out to be none other than the Muṣṭafāzālīn. Three "famous" doctrines are briefly alluded to. They are not identified as such in the text; but the referent is clearly to the Hadīthulīs, the Ashārīs and the Muṣṭafāzālīs, respectively:

[2.3.1.] Some said: "His Speech is sound and letter, like our speech." 71
[2.3.2.] Some others, more advanced, denied this but argued that His Speech is "like our mental speech (kā-hadīth nafṣānā), not sound and letter." 72
[2.3.3.] Still others, also unable to understand the true meaning of the Attributes, "fell back into spiritual anthropomorphism (taṣzhīh min hadīth al-murādāt) even though they denied them [the Attributes] in words." Thus they argued that the divine "Will" (iṣrāda) is "originating" (hādāha), like our will, and corresponds to a purpose, as is the case with us. 73

Of course the above scale must raise questions about the authenticity of our text as long as Ghazzālī's own convictions are assumed to be Ashārīs throughout. Not only are the Ashārīs, at least by implication, placed one degree below the Muṣṭafāzālīs because they continued "open" taṣzhīhin, it is only at the end of this scale, with the Philosophers who constitute the "first sort" of the following "class," that we reach "those veiled by pure light." Needless to say that Montgomery Watt explains this superiority of the Philosophers by having recourse to his presumed "Neoplatonism forgets" his argument being that "in the Murīdīs Ghazzālī speaks with approval of their criticisms of the Neoplatonists in the Tabāṣīr." 74 The case for a forgery might seem stronger still, if one adds to this a passage from Ghazzālī's "creed" (K.

71 Assuming that the "Speech" is considered to be unassessed, this is the Hanbali position. Cf. Shuhrawrī, Ḭurr 321f., note 99.


73 Mokhāl 90, 3.1 muhārīm haddīth ušūn wa ʿan dāhīkān, for this is clearly a qādī doctrine. Ghazzālī himself describes it as Muṣṭafāzālī in the Iṭrāqāt fī Iḥāṣāt (Ankara, Nafia Mubāsir, 1965, 105: the world is originated from God and can be identified with the two kāhītāt of Shuhrawrī, Ḭurr 265f., notes 2 and 3; and ibid. 380 for the taṣzhīh of the Muṣṭafāzālīs).

74 J.R.A.S. 1919, 17
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This second part of Ghazali's statement totally changes, it seems to me, any impression of “Sunni traditionalism” which its first part might seem to convey if taken out of context. In fact, it is not even in line with the “orthodox” kind of Sufism Ghazali is usually supposed to stand for. His insistence on the necessity of divinely inspired ta’wil wherever the “light of certitude” contradicts the mere words of traditional holy Writ would undoubtedly have been a particularly disturbing example of the “errors of the Sufis” for an “orthodox” Sufi author like Abu Nasr al-Sarraj (d. 378/983).78 It is, however, perfectly compatible with the fundamental tenet of Shi’ism about the necessity of divinely inspired ta’wil, and certainly consistent with Ghazali’s own concept of the “transcendent Spirit prophetic” (for which see below), the only obvious difference to Shi’ism being that Ghazali does not, of course, identify the legitimate source of ta’wil with the imam, but is being rather “subjectivist,” to use

75 “Al-Ghazali, disciple de Shâfi‘î en droit et en théologie” in Ghazali. La raison et le miracle, 49.
76 Hayy’ book ii, 2 in fine (Paris 1958, i, 92, 7-28).
77 ibid. pp. 26-31. Maqrizi (op. cit.) translates only the first part of this statement.
Oberman's term again. In any case, this one example from Ghazzâlî's "creed" should be evidence enough to make the point that authenticity and "orthodoxy" are not simply interchangeable terms in the case of the "Proof of Islam." Consequently, no case for a "forgery" of the "Veils-section" can be made on the mere basis of its "incompatibility" with Ghazzâlî's presumed "orthodoxy."

3. The "third class" (qism 3), i.e. "aloof veiled by pure lights," is again divided into three "sorts." It nevertheless includes a "fourth sort" called "the Attâníyât" (al-waṣâ'il); but these are no longer said to be "veiled" even by "pure light." They seem to occupy some sort of a borderline status at the upper end — not unlike the professed "Monotraitists" among the "Atisâris" (I.3.), or the "Dualists" among the Polytheists (2.1.6.), the moderate Karâmiyyah among the "Copracticals" (2.2.3.) and the Mu'tazilis among the "Attributists" (2.3.3.) — except that there is no further "class" beyond the third. As for the meaning of "pure light," it is not made explicit at this stage in the text. The context, as well as an important passage in Section One, on the absolute superiority of reason over sense and, on the ultimate "veil of reason" (ḥijâb al-taqrîf), leave however little doubt that we are now among those guided — or "veiled" — by pure reason, not by the "darkness" of "false analogical reaLizing."

5.1. "The first sort, ... knowing the true meaning of the attributes and realizing that a speech, "will", "power", "knowledge", and the like cannot be applied to His attributes as they are applied to man, avoided describing (nâ'îf) Him by them. (Nevertheless), they described Him in relation to the creatures, as did Moses in reply to Pharaoh's question: 'And what (is) the Lord of the worlds?' (Sura 26.29). Thus they said: 'The Lord, transcending the meaning of these attributes, is the mover (maḥârîrîk) and orderer (madabî) of the Heavens.'"

According to Montgomery Watt, such reluctance to describe (or define) God by attributes is "exactly what we should expect from a writer connected with the school of Ibn Sînâ, for he was the normal thing for various philosophically-minded groups to accuse the Ash'ârîyah of falling into ta'lîbîn. 46 It should however be kept in mind that some early Mu'tazilis were famous in the first place for refusing any kind of qiyâs with regard to the divine attributes, 47 and the most fervent among the opponents of this kind of "analogue reasoning;""

79 Methkub 44f. See also below, note 211.
80 JRAS 496, 7.
were the term/slices. 82 In any case, the anti-"angopomorphism" of these "philosophically-minded groups" would have to be located somehow between Muḥtazīlīs and Philosophers; and the "first sort" can better be explained if we assume that Al-Kindī rather than Ibn Sīrā makes the point. The extant part of Kindī's "First Philosophy," which has an allusion to God as the "mover" (muḥarrak) and unique "agent" (gīūf) of creation, the "true One ... who transmutes the attributes (attributed to Him) by the godlike (ṣifat al-mukaddam)." 83

Of course the Qur'ānic Moses does not refer Pharaoh to the "Mover of the Heavens," but to the "Lord of the Heavens and the Earth" (Sūra 26:24). This Qur'ānic "answer to Pharaoh" is however quoted in Section Two of the Mashākūlā, where Ghazālī interprets it similarly as a deliberate avoidance of the "quiddity" (māḥiyat, the answer to the question "What is...") and as an indirect description (urif) of God by reference to His creative "acts (ṣif'āt)." 84 At the same time, he hints there is two other prophetic example: "Muḥammad's answer to the Bedouin," i.e. Sūrah al-Ḥikāyah (112:1-4) and the final stage of "Abraham's ascent," i.e. his "turning the face to the who (al-ṣadiqī) originally created..." (Sūra 6:79) and this, in all became transparent in what follows, corresponds to the stage of the "Attainers."

The "second sort" of this "class" marks, as it were, the first step in "Abraham's ascent" - his realization that the stars are not "the Lord," as reventiced by the Philosophers. They understood that the conclusion of the "first sort" was premature since the planetary "heavens" (spheres) appear to be moved by a number of individual agents moving in different ways. So they concluded that there must be an all-comprehensive Sphere whose unique Mover, then, could be salso to be "the Lord":

3.2. "The second sort was more advanced than the preceding, taking into account that it was evident to them that there is plurality in the heavens, that the mover of each heaven necessarily is (therefore) another entity (maṣūmāt) to be called an angel (muḥācī) and involving plurality, and that the relation of these (subject entities) to the divine lights is the relation of the stars. So it dawned upon them that these heavens are comprised in another sphere, through whose motion the daily movement of the whole is

82. As it exists for example from the above-mentioned as "attributization" theology in the first chapter of Sifat al-Muḥtazīlīs (cf. Sīrātāt: Kindī ed. H. Cohn, notably 2. 10 12 and 6, 18-8, 15); cf. also Shahravin, Luris 355 and below, n. 98.


84. Muḥtazīlīs 88, 10 19.
The above description of the “second sort,” vacuously reminiscent of a famous passage on celestial spheres and the ultimate “unmoved Mover” in Book Lambda of Aristotle’s Metaphysics (1073a - 10740), is doubtless intended to represent the Peripatetic cosmology of the Islamic “Philosophers” in general. It is, however, an extremely simplified version, and Ghazâlî himself gives a far more accurate description in both the Maqâlîd al-Falâsîf and the Tahâfut. In particular, the “second sort” appear to ignore the specifically Neoplatonic ingredient of the philosophical tradition, which is the crucial point criticized by Ghazâlî in the Tahâfut as “darkness upon darkness.” Namely, the “emanation of the One from the One.” For Avicenna, the First Emanation or the “First Cause” (al-muwarîd al-anwal), i.e. the Prime Intellect, is the final cause of universal motion; and the proximate cause of the motion of that “outermost body” is certainly not “the Lord” but its own Soul. However, it may be suggested that the idea that this mover should be “the Lord” has something to do with the fact that the all-comprehensive Sphere was gravely identified with the “Throne” (sarâ). A later admirer of Ghazâlî’s, the Sufi ‘Alî al-Duwâr al-Sisânî (d. 736/1336), even accused Avicenna of having confused the “Throne” with the “absolute Mover” (muhammad-i muhâfiz). Interestingly enough, the discovery of the logical necessity of a proximate cause other than “the Lord” in order for the latter not to become “involved” directly in the process, now constitutes the very mark of the “progress” of the “third sort.” As will be shown in what follows, this gap is, in fact, representing just that Neoplatonic element which was missing by their “predecessors.” Having realized that “the Lord” of the “second sort,” though removed from “plurality” thanks to the all-comprehensive sphere, was still di-
rectly related to physical motion, they concluded that he could only be an angel—superior, to be sure, to the angelic movers of the previous "sort" in the same way as the "moon" is superior to the "sun," but still a "servant," not "the Lord." In other words, they re-activated what appears to be the second step of this "Athebraic ascent":

3.3. "The third sort was more advanced than the preceding. They held that direct communication of motion to the [celestial] bodies requires the existence of an act of service to the Lord of the worlds, an act of worship (bibadh) and obedience (wilā'at) to Him, on the part of one of His servants called an 'angel,' whose relations to the pure divine lights is the reflection of the moon among the physical lights. Thus they asserted that the Lord is the one obeyed by virtue of [the act of obedience performed by] the mover (bawdat) 'wilā'at min jahad khudā' (al-qawwāl), the Lord most high, thereby becoming a mover of the whole by way of the Order (al-qaws al-qawmi), not directly. As for the precise meaning [leading up] and quality of that Order, there is a mystery which is beyond the comprehension of most minds, and which is beyond the scope of this book."

Thus there seem to be two celestial "Movers" according to this most "advanced" doctrine: the "lunar" Angel and the "Lord of the worlds," who is presumably taking the part of the "sun," although his "solar" identity will be spelled out only by the "Athebrats" (below 3.4.). This "solar" Lord moves the world only by being "obeyed," i.e., indirectly, "by way of the Order" (or "Command," cf. the expression nafigah al-amr al-mašh, above 1.2.4.), whereas the one who actually moves the celestial bodies through his act of "worship" or "obedience" is the "lunar" Angel. Celestial motion as an act of rational-angelic "worship" or "obedience" is the divine arrow by itself a famous theme of philosophical Qurʾān-interpretation which can be traced to al-Kindī,98 and Avicenna also hints at "some sort of angelic or sphericall worship" (bibadwman mā matkāyra ayy falakāyra) as the cause of celestial motion, although he speaks more frequently about the Soul's "desire" or "love" (īshāq) for perfection.99 In the present context, I would suggest that the "lunar" Angel simply stands for the Neoplatonic World-Soul (nafs, ψυχή), and that the "solar" Lord is, consequently, the nous or the universal Intellige (al-ṭa'īf) or al-ṭa'īf al-kudū). This is not necessarily incompatible with Gairdner's suggestion that the mysterious "Lord obeyed," or the "Vice-gratit" as he calls him, must

99 Al-Najīb ed. Dīnīshīshidhī, 626-636, notably 632, 15 for celestial "worship." The theme of the Soul's "desire" or "love" is, of course, the subject of Avicenna's Risālati Mākūyāt al-andāf (v. 4, Abu, Istanbul, Burhan Hurur Press, 1953).
be what the Qur'an calls "the Spirit" (al-nuri), especially as Ghazâlî frequently uses nari and nuri interchangeably (see also below). However, much confusion has arisen from the fact that the difference between the doctrine under discussion and the final message of the Mishkât has not been sufficiently recognized, as Elschâzlı rightly points out, yet his own attempt to identify the "third sort" simply with "Greek philosophy" explains neither why this "philosophy" has in this text such a high place as to be made virtually the most "advanced" worldly-view, nor does it really do justice to the peculiar character of either the "third sort" or the "Attainers." It seems more appropriate, therefore, to clarify first of all the precise nature and identity of this "third sort among those veiled by pure lights." Who indeed are they meant to be?

A comparison with the structure of Ghazâlî's Mishkât provides the key. I think, to a very simple answer to that question. As is well-known, Ghazâlî confines himself in that work to an examination of the doctrines of four distinct groups of "Seekers after the Truth," which he mentions at first in the following order: 1. the Theologians (al-musulûmûn), 2. the Philosophers (al-falsâfûn), 3. the Sufis (al-âsûfûn). As the same time, however, he indicates—and indeed the structure of the whole book confirms—that he is not discussing the four groups in that order, but in accordance with the one he himself claims to have followed in studying their respective doctrines, namely: 1. Theology (al-âlîm al-kadâm), 2. Philosophy (ârîq al-falsafâ or ird al-falsafâ), 3. Sufism (târîq al-âsûfîyya or maddhab al-âsûfî), and 4. Sufism (ârîq al-âsûfîyya or târîq al-âsûfîyya) — so that in actual fact, Sufism occupies the third and not the second place, i.e. after "Philosophy" and just before "Sufism." It is important to note that the same four distinct groups of

91 The Niche 32:45. Gairdner's argument that Al-Ma'ârif refers to the "mysteries of Ka'bah," which is not the case, is disregarded by Zanzala (Mishkât, 86, 5). If, on the other hand, al-Ma'ârif is understood as referring to a "person," it is not the case, that the four groups are identified with the angel Gabriel or the prophet Muhammad, as Gairdner rightly pointed out (see R.C. Hadley, Hindu and Muslim Myths, New York, Schocken paper ed., 1968, 157). A comparison with the structure of Ghazâlî's Mishkât shows that the four groups are identified with the following: 1. Theology (al-âlîm al-kadâm), 2. Philosophy (ârîq al-falsafâ or ird al-falsafâ), 3. Sufism (târîq al-âsûfîyya or maddhab al-âsûfî), and 4. Sufism (ârîq al-âsûfîyya or târîq al-âsûfîyya). See also below, notes 108:115; 126:124; 138:141; 153:153; 171.

92 Elschâzlı, The Niche intro., xxvii.

93 Al-Muṣâlî loc. cit. F. 1b. 1367/1 loc. cit. 285. According to Josef Van Ess, "The picture remains," (1967) it seems to assume that the first enumeration of the four "groups" is identical with the order actually followed by Ghazâlî.
“Seekers” are presented in exactly the same ascending order — with the lamā‘ī, under the name lamā‘ī ‘lilm, occupying the third place — at the end of a purely philosophical treatise in Persian, which is attributed to Ghazālī’s famous companion and contemporary, the poet and mathematician ‘Umar-i Khayyām. The point which counts for our purpose, however, is neither Ghazālī’s possible indebtedness to Khayyām, which ‘Umar van Ee seems to take for granted, nor the actual sequence of events in Ghazālī’s life, but the simple fact that Ghazālī evidently regarded this “clerical” — whoever “invented” it — as significant enough to model his own life-story after it. Precisely because the mínahshī reproduces a “clerical” or, in other words, an ideal model of the “Quest,” we should not be surprised to find the same structure applied to the theonomic logic of “Religionswissenschaft” in the final Section of the Misrākhāt.

Now, since Theologians and Philosophers have already been dealt with in the “Veils-section” (above 2.3. and 3.2., with 3.1. probably representing an intermediary position), and since the Sufis are, of course, the “Attainers” still to be discussed (below 3.4.), the conclusion that the “third sort” should represent lamā‘ī ‘lilm as the “missing link,” so to speak, between Philosophy and Sufism, seems quite obvious at least from the structural point of view.

As for context, the same conclusion may be suggested. I would recall here, first of all, Nasta’s interpretation of Sūrah 67:6ff. (already referred to above, note 68), where ‘Abd al-Mun‘im’s “sun” and “moon” are interpreted to mean the “Predecessors” (shāhīd) and the “Follower” (lā‘īd), or the “Intelect” (‘iqāf) and the “Soul” (‘aṣfāf), respectively, i.e. the two supreme laqūd of the spiritual

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94 For the Persian text of the treatise attributed to Khayyām, see e.g. the facsimile-edition Qur’an-i Khayyām, Fażl ‘Abbāsī, Moscow, Akad. Nauk, 1962(1961), Arabic/Persian p 708-715. For an English translation of the relevant passages, see e.g. S.H. Nasr, An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doxography, revised edition, London, Thames and Hudson, 1976, 20. For studies of Ghazālī’s “autobiography” in the light of literary models, see H. Litau, Yohä, Studiae Med. et I. van Ee, “Quelques remarques...” 64-68.

95 I. van Ee, ibid. 66, Fritz Moyer (in W.Z.K.M. 52, 1953, 168ff.) also argues “einen literäre Zusammenhang,” but does not elaborate. I am inclined to doubt that Ghazālī got the idea from Khayyām, for two reasons: a) even if the Persian treatise is indeed Khayyām’s and was written before 440/1050 (and thus before the Mínahshī), as van Ee argues (on the basis of its being dedicated to ‘Umar ibn al-Ma‘dh, cf. Rau‘ī 108, 3-4), the relevant passage on the “four groups” might still have been added later since it comes at the very end (Rau‘ī 114ff.) and has little to do with the rest of the text; b) the anecdote of Ghazālī’s visit to Khayyām’s to discuss questions of astronomy, to which van Ee (ibid.) also refers, far from implying that Ghazālī might have been responsive to Khayyām’s teachings, rather suggests the contrary cf. Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrastānī, Nava‘t al-Anwār ed. Khāshish ‘Alam, ‘Uṣul al-Nu‘ūm, 1396/1916, II, 48ff., summarized by E.G. Browne, IJLP II, 251; cf. also below, n. 162.
hierarchy generally known in 4th/10th century Imamī Shi'ism under these Neo-
platonist names.96 Ghazālī was of course familiar with this terminology, as is
evident from his famous "Sīra'īschrift", the Fadhl al-Balā'īnya (written 487
A.H. in support of the 'Abbāsid caliph Al-Mustazhar and therefore also known
as the Mustazhīrī), where he tries to demonstrate that the "Bātrīn" doctrine of
the Intelect and the Soul amounts to a dualism of "two eternal gods" and a
creationism without Creator given that, as he puts it, "their double existence
has no first in terms of time, except that the one is the cause of the existence
of the other" and that "the Predecessor" created the world by means of the
"Follower", not by himself.97 It is not difficult to see that the same theological
critique could easily be addressed to the "third sort among those veiled by pur-
lights" of the Mishkāt. For just as the "Bātrīn" of the Mustazhīrī do not seem
to recognize any Creator beyond the "Predecessor" or the Intelect, so the
"third sort" of the Mishkāt do not seem to recognize any Lord beyond the
"Obeyed one" or the "sun"; and just as the "Predecessor" creates only by means of
the "Follower" according to the Mustazhīrī, so the "Obeyed one" of the
Mishkāt needs the "lunar" Servant-Angel to have the moving actually done.
As a matter of fact, the "third sort" of the Mishkāt would have made the
beast target of Ghazālī's anti-Imamī polemics than the real Imamī Neopla-
tonists of the Fāṭimid period he seems to have had in mind, such as Siṣṭānī
(4th/10th century), Ḥamāl al-Dīn al-Kīrmānī (d. after 411/1021) or Nāṣīr-ii
Khuraw (d. ca. 470/1077), for they consistently emphasize that the Prime
Intelect is itself "created beyond time" as the "First-Originated" (al-mutābor
al-anwāf). To be sure, the Intelect is according to them the absolutely "First"
in existence, or the First Substance; but contrary to Ghazālī (probably
deliberate) misunderstanding, they distinguish this mythico-metaphysical
"Predecessor" from its own "Originator" (al-mutābor) who, following the logic
of their radically apophatic theology, must not be qualified by any "attribute"
or simple negation thereof, including the attribute "existence" itself.98 Fur-

96. See Heinz Hahn, Kosmologie 53 no. and 128-138. Cf. also Shahrastāni, Lōve 556f. with the
notes by D. Giaour, For Nashīfī's text, see Hahn, ibid. 225f.
97. Ignaz Goldziher, Streitgeschicht des Gazzālī gegen die Bātrīnīsche Sekte, Leiden, Brill, reprinted
1956, German part 44f./Arabic 8f. (extract only). The full text with the passage referred to is
found in Fadhl al-Balā'īnya ed. 'Abd al-Rahman Badawī, Cairo: Qansūšiya, 1383/1964, 38,
9-13. See also ibid. 39-50f. (this text should be collated with the Ghazālī quotes in the
Imāmī reply by Yāṭī b. al-Walīd, Bātrīnī al-Bātrīnī al-Mustazhīrī ed. Mustafā
Gallī, Beirut, 1380/1961, 133, 154, 155f., 140, 110f.; 114, 50f.).
98. After Henry Corbin's Histoire de la philosophie islamique 2nd ed., Paris, Gallimard, 1966,
122-128), a number of studies have dealt with this fundamental aspect of Imamī theology
in particular, notably Paul E. Walker, "An Imamīī Explanation to the Problem of Worshiping
the Unknowable, Neoplatonic God" in American Journal of Arabic Studies, 2, 1974, 7-21;
Wilfried Mardting, "Aspects of Imamī Theology: The Prophetic Chain and the God Be-
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Moreover, if the 'intellect' does, then, play the role of the "Lord" in a sense, it is at
the same time also the Prime "Worshipper"; "gushing forth" from the divine
Order (wujūd) or the creative Logos (al-khimāl) with which it is, in fact, "united"
(muḥāṣad) according to Sijistānī. Thus it is also the one that performs the prime
"act of worship" (wujūd) by celebrating the ḥabūba (aḥhaba illa Allāh) at
the very center of the cosmos to be. An idea of cosmic motion nevertheless
comes into play only at the level of the "Follower" or the Soul according to
Sijistānī's (or this respect unmigrated) Neoplatonism, whereas Karmānī,
adopting the Peripatetic system of the "ten intellects," also identifies the Prime
Intellect with the "Prime Mover." Of course the proposed identification of the "third sort among those veiled
by pure light" with Ismāʿīlīism as seen by no one else than Ghaḍālī could be
questioned on the grounds that this summary of a Neoplatonic cosmology does not
seem to contain any reference to the major target of Ghaḍālī's writings
against the Ismāʿīlī of his own time, i.e., the absolute authority of the Imām
known as the doctrine of "teaching" (al-taḥdīl). Against this objection, two
points should, however, be taken into consideration. Firstly, the doctrine of
the cosmic Pai automatically implies in Ismāʿīlism the idea of the "two foun-
dations" (al-jamāliyya) of the "world of religion" (al-dīn al-di'n), i.e., prophethood
and Imamate, and secondly, there was a difference in this respect between Fātimid
Ismāʿīlism and the "new" Persian Dā'wāt centered in Almān. In Fātimid
Ismāʿīlism, the relationship between the "Predecessors" and his "Follower"
paralleled that between the Prophet and his "Legatee" (wuzūr); i.e., "All, the
"foundation of the Imamate," so that the place of the Imamate corresponded to

word Being" in Ismāʿīlī Contributions to Islamic Culture ed. S. H. Nasr, Tehran, Imperial
Iranian Academy of Philosophers, 1977, 51-65; Nisār Kamārī, "The First Being: Intellect
(fiqāh/khaddāl) in the Link Between God's Command and Creation According to Abū
Yāqūb al-Sijīstānī" in The Memoirs of the Institute of Oriental Culture, The University of
Tokyo, No. 106, March, 1988, 33-41 and Richard W. Newson, Allah Transcendent, London and
99 Kitāb al-fikāh al-nāširi ed M. Ghālī, 36, 17-18 (read al-wwājil wa muṣraḥ al-mustāfā in
line, 17, as in the ms. copy belonging to the library of the late Henry Corbin). Kuloğlu
Yuvalı ed. Henry Corbin in Trilogie ismaélienne, Bibliothèque islamique vol. IX,
Tehran, Leiden 1340/1961, Arabic text 16, 11-13/ French 34.
100 Kuloğlu Yuvalı ed. H. Corbin, Arabic Mīt-Parch 748. According to Nisār Kamārī, the
āl-fikāh is re-masted at every level of the intellectual and religious hierarchy (the
hadīth), as keeping with their respective capacity. See Six Chapters or Such Facts... ed. W. B. Ernst, Leiden, Brill, 1949, Turkish text 28/ Epigraph 46-66.
101 Kuloğlu Yuvalı ed. H. Corbin, Ar. 27, 8-14/ Fr. 48 and Ar. 47, 1-63, Y. M. Sec also
Nisār Kamārī, Khawāza al-khaddāl ed. A. Qowaini, Tehran, Biruni, 1338/1959, 67-74, 70,
6-7, 185.
that of the Prophet, whereas in the "new" Darwa this place was given to the Imam as the present manifestation of the Logos (the kalam).104 Interestingly, the theme of Abraham’s spiritual ascent from the "stars" to the "moon" to the "sun" (Sūra 67:26ff.) was again taken up in this ritual. But now, as we know from a passage in Tūsī’s Taʾṣawwūrāt, the "stars" signified Abraham’s encounter with a Dārūf, the "moon" his meeting the higher rank of the Ḥujjat, and the "sun" his turning towards the Imam, the "greatest Lord"; and Tūsī emphasized that only the "stars" and the "moon" are to be counted among "those that set" (al-ajībū).105 Although the Taʾṣawwūrāt of course represents a development of the "new" doctrine which Ghāzālī could not possibly have witnessed, he may nevertheless have known about this or a similar interpretation of "Abraham’s spiritual ascent"; and he certainly would not have accepted this kind of "Imām-worship" as a valid way of worshipping "the One who originally created." Indeed this may be one of the reasons why the "Attainers" of the Mishkār precisely "turn away" from the "Obeyed one" as well (see below).

At the same time, however, there is no escaping the conclusion that if the "Veils-section" is authentic, then Ghāzālī must have been far more impressed by the λειψάζω synthesis of Neoplatonic philosophy and Islam, or "reason and revelation," than he cares to let us know in either the Maṭnāhāri or the Munqudāt.

As any case, the "Veils-section" is by no means the only piece of evidence to suggest that Ghāzālī in fact adapted the Ḥājīmī speculation to suit his own Sufi world-view. Particularly interesting in this regard is a long passage on cosmology in his late Persian Sunna, the Kūmiyy-ya Sarādar. The passage is also remarkable in so far as it shows that the "Proof of Islam" was prepared to go further in allowing "influence of the stars" in the Persian Sunna than in the corresponding passage of the Ḥujjat;106 and it certainly helps explaining exactly what he could have meant by "the Obeyed one" in the Mishkār. He says:

"The stars and the (four) Natures and the twelve Houses of the Sphere of the fixed stars and the Three which is beyond all, are in one respect like a long having a grave chamber (kubrā‘ al-ḥabīb), whereas its vault resides. Around that chamber there is a porch with twelve doors, with a deputy (ṣūleka) of the vault sitting at each. Seven mounted luminaries (qubh) surround around these twelve doors, taking the Order (jāmā‘) of the depuration, which has reached them from the vault, and placing four lions into the hands of them four feet-soldiers who throw them out, (quarrel) sending one group — by vertex of the Order (al-ṣūleka) — to the (beloved) presence, moving another group far from it, honoring one group and punishing another. Now the

104 Cf. the comparative chart given by Henry Corbin in Triangles talmudiques, French part II, 601.
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 Throne is the private chamber and the residence of the west of the kingdom, for he is the closest Angel (Liyyu fi rassekahu yuurrastulahin wadhi). The Sphere of the land's stars is that portion, and the twelve (woodland) Houses are these twelve-doors. The deputies of the west are other angels whose rank is one degree below that of the closest Angel, and so each one, a different task is entrusted. The seven Flights are the seven assigned (sentinels) who turn up in the dooms, where they receive various kinds of orders. As for the fourth Element, i.e. fire, water, air and earth, they are like these four servants foot-soldiers; they do not travel out of their home-land. Finally, the four Natures, i.e. warm, cold, wet and dry, are like the foot lions in their inside.107

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this "kingdom" is the other patient absence of the "King" himself. Not unlike the unknowable "Originator" (al-muhabir) of the Ismidge, this "King" is not even in his proper place! His "private chamber," which is the "Throne" (warah), i.e. the ultimate Sphere beyond the sphere of the fixed stars, is in fact occupied by the "Vizier." and it is the "Vizier," not the "King," who moves the world by way of the divine "Order" (farman = amr). This "Vizier," or the "closest Angel," is clearly the same figure as the "Obeyed one" of the Mishkār, and plays the same role as the Intellect (or the "First-Originated") of the Islamic Neoplatonists. As for the Twelve and the Seven, they seem to be substituting in this version for the World-Soul, i.e. the "lunar" Angel of the Mishkār.108

All this leaves little doubt indeed that Montgomery Watt's "Neoplatonist forget" of the "Veil-section" was in reality no one else than the "Proof of Islam" himself. As was already pointed out by Guéroult, Ghażālī has no objection even in the Tahājjud identifying the Primal Intellect with an Angel.109 In the undisputed part of the Mishkār itself, he speaks of "intellectual lights" of the higher World, of "luminous substances" of the Malakūl, as "angels" and even as "lords" (arbāh) and they are symbolized in the physical world by the sun, the moon and the stars.110 He also points out there that this angelic hierarchy has "countless ranks," from the "closest" (al-agrah), i.e. "the one whose rank is close to the divine Presence which is the source of all lights," to the "lowest" (al-adh-dh), and that it is quite likely that the rank of Isfāl is above the rank of Isfāl (Gabriel).111 This again shows that Ghażālī is hardly following conventional "orthodoxy" even in this undisputed part of the Mishkār.

106 Iṣṭakī, xxiiii, 2, 2, ḳarāna 2, 8. 1, [32]1091, IV, 1015.)
107 Kūnati et. A. Arūm, 51.
108 The moonlight and the number twenty are hardly less important in Isfālism than the num-
109 Iṣṭakī, 1914, 136.
110 Mishkār 59 and 61.
111 Mishkār 53 Iṣlāh (Die Vezier) to think that al-awāl does not go in "the low-
et" but refers to an angel still "closest" (or God) than the "closest."
It is according to classical Shi‘ite Hadith not the “Spirit” (al-rūḥ) of prophetic revelation (Sūra 42:52), or the rūḥ min allāh yuḥūb (Sūra 17:82), is “a creature mightier than Jibril and Mīkāl.” It was with the Prophet, and it is with the Imāms, guiding them.”112 This tradition may well have inspired Ghazalī’s notion of the “transcendent Spirit Prophethetical” (al-rūḥ al-qudūs al-nabawī) which is also special to “some ṣaḥīḥīh.”113 On the other hand, the context of our Kīnayy-passage would seem to allow a straightforward identification of the “Vizier on the Throne,” i.e. the “closest Angel,” with İsra’īlī (the Angel of Resurrection). For this Angel is clearly the macrocosmic equivalent of the microcosmic “vital spirit” (rūḥ-i hayātīn) located in the “heart” of man, and Ghazalī explicitly identifies that “spirit” as “your İsra’īlī.”114 The elevation of İsra’īlī to the top of the cosmic hierarchy is rather in line with a specific Sufi tradition of uncertain origin: the one known as the “Hadīth of ‘Abdallāh b. Maqrīz,” which defines the Ṣufi universal hierarchy of ṣaḥīḥīh in such a way that the “Pole” (qub) is the one “whose heart is after the heart of İsra’īl.”115

It also should be noted that the purpose of the whole “astronomy” in the Kīnayy is not to explain the cosmos as such. Ghazalī mentions it as an example to illustrate the theme of Abraham’s ascent through the “veils of light,” referring to the Mīshkār for a fuller explanation of this topic, and just after the parable of the “Elephant and the Community of the Blind.”116 The message is quite obviously that doctrines, however sophisticated they may be, are still

112. Hadīth from Jāfīr al-Ṣa’dīq, reported by Kābūlī, Al-Ḥāḍir min al-Kullī ed. Sād Abū al- Ḥadīfī, Tehran, Dir al-kutub al-islāmīyya, 3rd ed., 1388H, p. 273. Also reported by Ṣa’dīq al-Qummi (d. 290/903) and quoted as such by Ṣa’dīq al-dīn al-Shīrāzī (Masūd Ṣa’dīq Shīrāzī, Rāwh al-Mashhūr ed. Henry Corbin, Bibliothèque Iranienne vol. 10, Tehran/Paris 1342/1946, Arabic 59/French 204). In another variants (ibid. 641/207), the “Spirit” is said to be a creature mightier than Jibrīl, Mīkāl and İsra’īlī. In fārsīfīsm, the same three angels (known also under other names) form a paradigm together with the two supreme hadīfī (i.e. the Soul and the Essential), but it remains unclear whether İsra’īlī or Jibrīl occupies the higher place among the five (cf. Henry Corbin, Étude préliminaire pour le “Livre résumant les deux sagesses” [Henry’s Knoutor’s İhāf al-Hikmatan], Bibliothèque Iranienne vol. IIIa, Tehran/Paris 1332/1953, p. 112 and Hertzig Halin, Kosmologie 67.

113. Mīshkār 77, 13 and 81. 4. Note that this “spirit” is the fifth among the five perceptive powers (above, n. 34), and that the “spirit” which according to 522/4 Hadīth (cf. preceding note) is exclusively with the Prophet and the Imāms, is also additional to four other kinds of “spirit” (Kalām, see below, 271). Cf. also ʿAbd al-Muḥīyar ed. H. Corbin, A. 621Fr. 2075 and Čadrgī’s note 115.


115. Cf. my arg. “Wāliyāt” in The Encyclopedia of Religion XI, 320. To my knowledge, the oldest name for this hadīth is AND Ni‘ayy al-Iṣlāḥī. Ḥūṣayn al-Aʿlamī was tabaqaṭ al-Arqūl vol. I, Cairo, 1351/1932, 8f.

116. Kīnayy 49-51. Like Abraham (before reaching the final stage of his “ascend”), the managion (cf. Lamb’s?) says ʿAbdallāh rūḥī is the “veils of light”...
"veils of light." For Ghazālī goes on to point out what happens when a person suddenly feels so sad that he wishes to leave this world: the physician would call it "melancholy (mzākhāš) and prescribe a concoction of antimon as remedy; the physicist would attribute it to excessive dryness of the brain of the patient, caused by wintry air, so that no reading will occur before spring comes; the astrologer (magiš) would say that this is a case of "black bile" (zaydūd = melancholy) which originates from Mercury being in undesirable conjunction with Mars, and this state will not better as long as Mercury does not join the "two Auspicious ones" (Venus and Jupiter) or reach them at a distance of three zodiacal Houses.137 "All of them are right," says Ghazālī, "but this is the limit of their knowledge." What they do not know, he continues, is that the person was judged in the divine Presence to be in "invisibility" (jārid), and now the two expert lieutenants called Mercury and Mars were sent out in order for the foot-soldier "air" to cast the image "dryness" into his brain, thereby causing aversion for the pleasures of this world and calling him to the divine Presence.138 This radical change of values is also the critical point which distinguishes the "Attainers" of the Misbaḥā from all those "veiled by pure lights": they are simply no longer interested in explaining the "Order" of the cosmos. "Turning their face" from all celestial "movers." they re-erect the third and final step of "Abraham's ascent":

3.4. "The Attainers are only a fourth sort. To them, it was manifest in addition that this "Obeyed one" is (solely) qualified as an amidūlā which confounds plane matters and total perfection on account of a mystery which it is not in the scope of this book to reveal and that the relation of this Obeyed one to the true Being (al-ʾaʾrādī al-aḥqāf) of the essence of the sun, among the (physical) lights, (is Pure Light (al-ʾaʾrūd al-ahdūf))."

Even without the words omitted in Alī'ī's edition (in brackets above),139 the irony contained in this highly controversial statement can hardly be over looked. It shockingly implies that the "Attainers" are superior to their "class" mates for the very same reason which accounts for the superiority of the Iranian "Dualists" of our text (above, 2.1.6.) over the other "tribes" of their "sort." For just as these "Dualists" were distinguished from the "sun-worship-

137 Kīmiyāʾ 52.
138 Idem.
139 Misbaḥā 91, 13-16. Alī'ī never mentions in his editor's introduction (23, 12-18, 29, 13-14), apparently on the basis of the traditional Egyptian edition of 1905, which is also the one translated by Gardiner (The Nafe, 732). See P.M. Bougras 5.1, "Mazzawia l' au Mihane de l'Université Saint-Joseph l. 1922, 482-485.
The text in Misbaḥā 456 appears to reproduce the traditional Egyptian version but with some errors and other omissions.
penn" (2.1.5) on account of their realization that the sun is not, after all, identical with "absolute Light," so the "Attainers" are now distinguished from those who are presumably worshippers of the "Obeyed one" because they alone realize that the latter is not identical with the "absolute One" (ibid., cf. below). Clearly the "mysterious attribute" which, according to the standard text, "contradicts pure oneness and total perfection," refers to nothing else than the mere fact that this "Lord" is still being "obeyed," in addition to being "One," or to the "Order" (al-amr) as his "attribute," which amounts to the same thing. To interpret this passage as a somewhat "extended form" (imādaq) of Ashūrīrian attribution, as Affifi, doubtless in order to "save" Ghazālī's "orthodoxy," has proposed to do, is rather to stretch Ashūrism beyond recognition; for it was part and parcel of that "orthodoxy" to regard al-amr as an attribute eternally inherent in the divine Essence itself.211 In order to make the statement under discussion Ashūrī, one would have to do exactly what some copies of the text apparently felt compelled to do, namely, to read il tānīfī instead of tānīfī, so that the mysterious attribute would not "contradict pure oneness"—a reading which Affifi himself, rightly of course, rejects.212 Affifi's additional remark to the effect that Ghazālī went beyond "simple" Ashūrism by putting it into the form of "a new logos-theory held among the Muslim sects (al-islāmīyat)"213 seems therefore more to the point. Indeed, one could say that the distinction between the "pure One" and the "Obeyed one" brings the "Attainers" one step closer to the real Ismāʿīlī Neoplatonists (as opposed to the fictional ones of the "third sort"), since it was characteristic of their doctrine to totally isolate the "unknowable" One from anything else (or the "First-Originated") called also, for that very reason, al-walid al-musūkaththir.214 Yet the "Attainers" are clearly not "orthodox" Ismāʿīlīs either. From the point of view of that "orthodoxy," they would in effect be violating the hierarchical principle of the intermediaries (the hadīd) by "attaining," precisely, the "unattainable" One beyond the "Obeyed one." The point is, rather, that they are mystics in the Neoplatonic sense of the term, and in the sense in which Avicenna may be said to have been a mystic.

120 Mubāhid introd. 25.
121 Cf. Shihabiz; Leoni 320 (with Giuseppe's note 29), and my remarks in Bulletin Critique des Études Islamiques 5, 1988, 65.
122 Mubāhid 91, 74 (with Affifi's note 7 and introd. 25, note 2). More variants in Bayaqnān, "Alqāḍīyatā" 403f.
123 Mubāhid introd. 25.
Being the only ones, among all the groups surveyed in the “Veil-scion,” to distinguish between the cause of universal motion and the cause of existence itself, they are, in fact, in line with the truly Neoplatonic tradition which is the one followed by Avicenna in his “noblest” proof of the existence of God, “from existence” itself, and it should be noted that Avicenna himself in the Ishârât points out that this “noblest” proof is the one which distinguishes the “saint” (al-vâdîqânak). Only this explains why the “Attuners” “turned their face from” all the celestial “Movers,” including “the one who ordered celestial motion” (wa-mîn al-nâsîhî sanaa’u bi-nibrîkâla), to “He who originally created” (al-lâhî al-nâsîhî) the Heavens and why, as a result of this Abrahamic via negativa, they “attained an Existent one (mustâfîd) who transcends everything reached by human sight or insight.”

This is an unmistakable reference. It seems to me, to two major points made by Ghazâlî in the undisputed part of the Mubâkâr: the doctrine of the “face of God” in Section One (see below) and, of course, the interpretation of Abraham’s “turning his face” (sîra al-lâhî) in Section Two.227 As was noted earlier, Abraham, unlike Moses in Ghazâlî’s interpretation of Sîra 26:24, does not even “describe the Loaf” by referring to his creative “acts,” but points to “He who” (al-lâhî). That means, Ghazâlî explains, that the mystic (âlîkâl) at the final stage of his “ascent” reaches a point where he “turns his face” from the “sun,” because the sun, being “greater” and “higher” (than the moon), is evâgîn “related” to something “less perfect,” whereas the act of “turning his face” to “He who originally created” is by itself “undetermined” (âlîkâl mâlîhaman), given that “the concept of He who” (mustâfîd al-lâhî) is, as such, 215. For this Neoplatonic tradition (i.e., Fânîc, Philosopher) and Avicenna’s contribution, see Herbert A. Davidson, Proofs for Eternity, Creation and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy, Oxford University Press, 1987, 261 and 261-264. The reference, a to Khalîlî (ed., Fawqî, 1861 or 1866, Directives 313), As Davidson (ibid., 287) rightly notes, Avicenna adds “a suff caveat”, but one wonders why he refers to the 13th-century Egyptian Sufi Ibn ‘Alî al-isfâkani to make this point. Avicenna in fact is adhering to a central point in classical Sufism, namely, John’s distinction between two kinds of muhâja which as reported by Abû Bâzî al-Kukâbî in the Kukâb al-‘uqârîsî and Mubâkâr Ayr al-Eshqâwîs (ed., Abû al-fâlîs al-Mâhîdî, Cairo, 1850/1960, iv, 3-78rd.) A.J. Arberry, The Encomium of the Sages, Cambridge University Press, 1966, p. 168. Later, Sh. Muhammed Ashraf, 1756, 307). See al-Kukâbî cited in 385/993 in Bukhârî (cf. Arberry, ibid., 168, note 14), the city where Avicenna lived at that time as a youth of fifteen years, he might well have heard about this Sufi (may from Kukâbî directly). Nasîq (the word saddâfī used by Avicenna corresponds to the “elect” (al-klâmûn) in Kukâbî’s report). For Ghazâlî’s saddâfī see below, p. 179.

226. Mubâkâr 91, 16-92. 5 I have omitted details which may or may not have been part of the original text. Cf. Mubâkâr 85, 21-33 and Götzler, The Name 172. 227. Mubâkâr 671.
beyond any conceivable referent, and "what is beyond any relation is the True First (al-anwaf al-ḥaqq)."% It is surely not without significance that Ghazālī should see a reference to the vague "unrelated" One (ahuḍā) in "Muhammad's answer to the Bedouin", i.e. Sūra 112:1-4 whose meaning, he points out, is precisely that "His relation is to transcend any relation."% Consequently, it is not surprising that Abraham and Muḥammad should be the only two prophetic prototypes of the true "Attainers" at the end of the "Veils-section" (cf. n. 33). As for Gaedtke's disappointment with the "bankrupt conclusion" (sic) of this text, it reveals doubtless more about his own theological predisposition than about Ghazālī's.

IV.

But what exactly is, then, the relation between the "Obedient one" and the "unrelated" One — or between the "sun" and "absolute Light" — according to the "Attainers"? One famous answer to that question was given some seventy years after Ghazālī's death by his great critic among the philosophers, Avemaroës. As is well-known, Averroës in several places of his Tadhākht al-Tahāfūt expresses his dismay — probably not without a touch of malice on his part — at Ghazālī's "acceptance of the metaphysics of the Philosophers" in the Mukhtār. A somewhat more specific criticism of this sort is found in one of Averroës' earlier works, the Khiṣf 'an Manākhi 'al-Adila (completed in 575/1179-80). The relevant passage was discussed at length by Gaedtke in the first place, but it was also subjected by Watt as a major witness in the case against the "Neo-platonic heresy." It may be translated as follows:

"Then he [Ghazālī] comes up with his book known as Mukhtār al- Awsūr, speaks in it about the degrees of those knowing God (darquṭ al-ḥaḏrat bi-ḥaḏ), and says that all of them are subject to a veil (muḥjlasting) except those who believe that God is other than the Mover of the First Heaven — He being (thus) the One from whom this Mover emanates (muḥjhīb muḥjarraţ 'anab muḥjarraţ), and this is an open pro-

128 ibid. 47, p. 68, 7.
129 ibid. 68, 7-9.
130 The Niche introd. 51.
The debate generated by Averroës' remarks on Ghazālī's theological incoherence consists of itself a rather illuminating example of that European appropriation of Ghazālī which was noted by van Ess, though the categories used in this particular instance were hardly those of "bourgeois liberalism." Both GauDef and Watt in effect wished to defend their "opposites" Ghazālī — i.e., the one who supposedly gave the final blow to "philosophy" — against Averroës, who therefore had to be wrong one way or another. GauDef, emphasizing the difference between philosophical epistemology and theological creationism, pointed out that no explicit "profession" of the doctrine of emanation is, in fact, found anywhere in the Muhakkār. Up to this point, GauDef was undoubtedly right, particularly as far as the "Veil-section" is concerned, where such terms as sūdūr or fāyd do not even occur. However, it should be remembered that Avicenna himself also uses "creationist" language — notably ibdār for the "immediate origination" of the Prime Intellect, and the Imārī Neoplatonists were even explicitly "creationists" by insisting that the Intellect (connaturant to the Soul) does not itself "emanate" from anything prior to it in existence, but is "originated beyond time" ex nihilō. In any case, it certainly does not follow from GauDef's negative linguistic evidence that "the metaphysics of Gh. the Sufi was still that of kalām, not falsafa, just as much as in his pre-Sufi days." Such a conclusion seems indeed blatantly incompatible with the "philosophy" of the "Veil-section," particularly in view of the low status assigned there, precisely, to the dialectics of kalām (see above, 2.3.). Montgomery Watt, on the other hand, finds himself in total agreement with Averroës — if only to make him, in effect, the first victim of the presumed "NeoplatonistHerger of the "Veil-section." To that end, he himself rephrases Averroës' even sharper, theological language by asserting that the "Veil-section" is based on "the principle that, since God is absolutely One, He cannot stand in direct relation to more than one entity," and then simply affirms this as a self-evident assertion. In God's knowledge, but radically ill made stupour (= na as-sāli). Cf. e.g. Sijistâni, K., al-Yambîbī ed. H. Gobie, Az 25 and 76-79. Nūrî's ahsâs, Jihâd al-Humayyis ed. 19. Corbin and Mah, M6 in, 211-226. Cf. F. Huzzi, Ihsan Concepts, 84f.; 156ff.; 160ff.; 173ff.

132 The Arabic text of this passage is given by GauDef, together with an English translation, in Der Islam 1914, 133. Cf. Imam Râdî, Manâhîj al-Mîrûsî fi 'Agwîd al-Millas, ed. Mahmûd Qâlidî, Cairo, 1953,183.
133 Der Islam 1914, 137ff.
136 Der Islam 1914, 140.
firms that "an explicit profession of this sort" is found in the text under discussion. Thus, however, is manifestly not the case, either. The "Veils-section" has neither an explicit "profession" of the doctrine of "emanation," nor can it be pressed into the classic Neoplatonic formula En unio non fit nullum as required by Watt, since there is clearly no question of a "direct relation" between the absolutely un-related "He who originally created" (al-sababi fasara) and any one among the "originally created" celestial entities in particular, including the "Obeyed one." However, if the idea of a "direct relation" between God and "one other entity" Watt attributes to the "Veils-section" can be found anywhere in the Mivakkii' it is, in fact, in the undisguised Section One - the "other entity" in question being, as we shall see in a moment, the "Face of God" (wa już Allâh).

Averroës was nevertheless right in one crucial point. He correctly observed that Ghazâlî at least implies in this work that the only ones not "subject to a veil" are those who do not identify God with the "Mover of the First Heaven" (i.e. the "Obeyed one"). As was noted earlier, this by itself is sufficient evidence for Ghazâlî's acceptance, not rejection, of Avicenna's distinction between the cause of universal motion and the cause of existence itself. Moreover, as was recently shown by B.S. Kogan, it was this distinction between the two "First" ones rather than the "emanation" of the one from the other which constituted the real problem of Avicennism for Averroës himself, having himself made it in his own "Neoplatonic period" (i.e. in the Epitome), he later rejected it with the purely Aristotelian argument that the first real Substance cannot possibly be prior to the Mover of the universe. Thus, while Averroës may have overstated his case against Ghazâlî somewhat polemically by imputing to him a doctrine of "emanation," his criticism of the distinction between the two ultimate entities was not only legitimate, but is perfectly understandable from the point of view of his own, Aristotelian, orthodoxy. For, has the same relevance to recognize a real distinction between God and the "Obeyed one" rather than a "superficial naming" of Ghazâlî, as GArdiner thought, explains the admittedly ambiguous statement of a "recent writer" (bard al-mutâ'âththuirin) quoted with disapproval by Ibn Tufayl or, to be more

138 "Averroes and the Theory of Emanation" in Medieval Studies 43, 1981, 384-406, notably 396f. One passage from the Kash'f would appear to constitute another early evidence for Kogan's "developmental hypothesis." It would be interesting to compare Averroës' postural development with a similar modification of Neoplatonism that occurred earlier within Islam (from Siyâsî's Neoplatonism to Kirmâni's Pantheism).
139 Der Islam 1914, 146.
precise, in the introduction to Ibn Tufayl’s *Hayy b. Yaqin*. According to this version, the anonymous critic argued that the denial of the absolute oneness of “that being” (*‘idāh tawwābīyāt*) by the “Attainers” implied the absurd belief that the “True First” has in essence some sort of plurality. Ibn Tufayl himself, speaking through the voice of “Hayy b. Yaqin” in the text of the narrative itself, seems to have taken an intermediate position: the immanent “essence” (*‘idāh*) of the highest cosmic Sphere is neither identical with the essence of the “Truly One” (*al-wāhid al-haqiq*) nor is it the Sphere itself (*nafsi al-jalak*); nor is it really distinct from either — just as the image of the sun reflected in a pure mirror is neither identical with the sun itself, nor with the mirror as such, nor is it really distinct from either.141

Some fifty years before this Andalusi controversy was even raised, the same problem was evidently discussed in Ghazālī’s immediate neighbourhood. I am referring to *‘Ayn al-Qudāt al-Hamadānī (executed in 525/1131)*, a disciple of Ghazālī’s brother Ahmad and himself a controversial figure whose significance as a “Ghazālī” SuFI openly embracing Avicenna still remains largely unexplored.142 In his Arabic *Zabād al-Haqiqāt*, *‘Ayn al-Qudāt opens the discussion by making, first of all, a clear distinction between two kinds of rational proof of the existence of God as the One prior to everything else (*‘a‘qudātu, the “Immanent one”); the proof from “motion” (*al-haykal*), and the proof from “existence” (*al-wujūd*) itself. While the former is clear and sufficient, he says, it is cumbersome and can actually be dispensed with by those following the straight path.” In this context, *‘Ayn al-Qudāt ironically “excuses”* Ghazālī


141 *Ibn a‘l-bayhaqī* ed., Liom Garçot, Arabic 17, Paris 1979. Note that Ibn Tufayl appears to be adopting the Peripatetic system of the *Teh Intellekti* here. The highest cosmic “essence” is therefore not identical with the one he identifies with the “Angel of seventy thousand faces” (cf. above, note 23).

for having spent "nearly ten folios on establishing the Eternal one" in his famous work on Kalûm, Al-qâdîd fî 'l-Hujjât,143

The "proof from existence," on the other hand, is also based on rational speculation; but it is "absolutely certain" (al-hayy al-yâqûn) according to our thinker. It rests on the axiom that "existence" as such is "the most general of all things" and may be divided into "this which has a beginning" (= al-bâdîd) and "that which has no beginning" (= al-qâdîm). Now the former presupposes the latter, "given that it is not in the nature of that which has a beginning to exist by itself; for that which exists by itself must exist by necessity, and it is inescapable just that which is necessary by itself has a beginning." The "proof from existence" may then, be put into the simple form of a demonstrative syllogism known as the "consecutive conditional" (al-sharîf al-irnasâ'î): "If (it can be assumed that) there is (at least) one existent in existence, then it necessarily follows that there is one without beginning (qâdîm) in existence. ... But existence is known as a matter of fact. ... Therefore, the existence of an existent without beginning is necessary."144

Even this rational "certitude," however, turns out to be unsatisfactory when it comes to the discussion of God in his essential oneness. Immediately after these preliminaries, ʻAyn al-Qâdî leads right into the heart of the matter by stating the following:

"There is no doubt, for those having insight penetrating the veil of the Unseen and the curtain of the Hidden, that there exists an entity (muqaddas) from which existence emanates (mudār âsâb al-mudâdâs in the most complete mode. This entity is the one referred to in the side of the Vest, in the language of the Arab, as 'God most High' (Allahâ al-‘âlâm). I mean by 'those having insight' those who perceive the existence of the entity without scholastic premises such as are used by the rationalists. That entity is above and beyond having to adjust its essential Reality (Îhâqiqa) to the stipulations of any viewer other than itself. It transcends the ambition of anyone wishing to make such a thing possible. Thus it is exalted by its own essence, not by something other than itself.145 In its expanse and stillness exceeds what existance above any other, just as the sun request by its own essence, through the perfection of the power of its manifestation (Îhâqiqa lâ dârâs wa l-Îhâqiqa al-qâdîm), to be exalted beyond the reach of the view of the brah. ... But the sun, in the limited just used, does not adequately represent the perfection model, since its existence is derived (muqaddas) from another, together with all its attributes; and there is no existence in existence that would have an essence truly de

143 'Abd al-Halîm, ed. ʻAlî, "Uṣûlîn (in Mânîyâfîh), 112. The "existential" attributes of existence are to a criterion of Iḥṣâ in the context.


The sun, inadequate though it is as a metaphor for the one "entity beyond the Veil" or the "essence truly deserving reality of existence," is nevertheless 'Ayn al-Qudat's privileged image for this unique ultimate Reality. But it is neither the Aristotelian Prime Mover, nor nor the Tufayl's cosmic "essences." It is, rather, "existence" itself, which emanates as such, "in the most complete form," from God—a point which clearly anticipates the "existentialist revolution" brought about much later, against Schopenhauer's "essentialism," by Mulla Szâlî (cf. below, p. 158). What makes the sun inadequate is a metaphor is the fact that its existence is itself "derived from another." But this simply means that the sun, unlike the "One," is not "one" by its own essence. 'Ayn al-Qudat explains this in another passage of the Zahda where, evidently drawing on Avicenna's distinction between essence and existence, he introduces a purely conceptual distinction between two kinds of "oneness" into the technical language of Sufism: 'ahadyya and walîda. I shall translate these here as "oneness of essence" and "oneness of existence," respectively:

"The essence of the Necessary Being (al-dhâliyya al-qadî) has as its constituent, 'oneness of existence' (wa'dhla). How would it be otherwise, when 'oneness of existence' (wa'dhla), which is more peculiar than 'oneness of existence,' is not constituent! For it is impossible that its particularity, which exists as its property, exists as the property of any other among the essences. (If anything), 'oneness of existence' is (also) a constituent of the sun, since it is not to be as its existence, whereas 'oneness of essence' is not its constituent, since the existence of a second to it is possible (i.e., conceivable). Now if you consider the relation which the Essence itself necessarily has to itself, you will find it to be absolutely one (munâkhala), with no plurality at all; and if the terms of the 'spiritual pilgrimage' (al-dâkhîla, i.e., the mystic) contemplate this Essence with the heart's eyes, they find it to be exactly such, without a difference. However, given the plurality of the relations of that Essence in the other essences—the latter sightfully having existence from that necessary Essence (jâdi), not from themselves—, the 'spiritual pilgrimage' inevitably has to use metaphorical language (literally it is "change the expression") when referring to it, so that the true meanings of these relations may be conveyed through to the weak-minded. Thus, if the Essence is (regarded as being) related to the emanation (nânsâ) of the essences from it, it is understood that they are possibles (i.e., contingent) and that the 'possible' is heed of a 'sufficing' which exists from it—the, consequently, the relation between it and the essences is called 'power' (waqiyâ), and it may be called 'will' (al-wâliya) under (consideration of) another relation. And the heart (al-maâghi), because of its weakness, fancy that there is a (real) difference between the 'Powerful,' and

146 e.g. Nûra 40:16.2
117 Zahda 13, 12-14.7
158 Ibid. 39, 15: I read munâkhala instead of munâkhala 'awwala.
As will be noticed, ‘Ayn al-Quḍāṭ qualifies theological attribution as a metaphorical way of speaking about the relationship between the One and the Many, which is more properly expressed in terms of a philosophy of emanation. However, even “emanation” is still an improper way of speaking about the One Reality according to our Sufi thinker. It explains only the existence of that which does not deserve to be called “existent” in its own right, which right belongs exclusively to the One “related to Himself” only. While conceding to the “rationalists” that the existence of the world can best be explained through emanation of existence from this One, ‘Ayn al-Quḍāṭ insists at the same time that the “point of view of the intellect” is itself superseded by “the stage beyond reason” (al-tażawwūl, ward al-taqīṭ), i.e. the “view of the mystics” (nāṣir al-nur, faraḥ) and on this point, he is, of course, in total agreement with Ghazālī. In support of the “rationalist” view, he nevertheless points out that “the truth in this matter, according to what dawns upon our intellects, is to say that existence emanates (fāḍa) first from God upon the First Existent (al-muṣáfā al-aqwān̲ū),” suggesting that this “First Existent” is the “closest Angel,” i.e. the “closest to God,” in the view of the intellect, among all existents. This remark is by itself highly interesting in our context, since it comes from a Sufi thinker closely associated with Ghazālī’s own milieu. Now ‘Ayn al-Quḍāṭ never mentions the “Obeyed one” of the “Veils-section,” nor does he imply that the “First Existent” or “Closest Angel” is originated. He does however identify h with “the Spirit” of Sūra 78:38. “The existence of this Spirit,” he says, “is a condition for (any) other thing to be prepared completely to receive the light of eternal Power (i.e. existence), and the preparedness of that thing is conditioned by the existence of the Spirit just as the preparedness of the Spirit (itself) is unconditioned.” But while the existence of this “First Existent” is a necessary condition for the man of reason to explain the order (tārib) following which things proceed to existence, this “order” itself becomes totally irrelevant in the higher view of the mystics, for the simple reason that in their view, strictly nothing is in reality “closest” to God than any other. “They see his Beingness (hayya) along with (māsādiq) all existents, exactly as the ‘scholastics’ (al-alamad) see it along with the First Existent... or rather, they do not in fact see Him with the existents as the scholastics see Him.

149 Ibid. 39, 6-18.
150 Ibid. 83, 92-100.
152 Zuhd 63, 16-18.
153 Ibid. 64, 1-3.
with the Prime Intellect (al-wujūd al-arwâd), but they do see the place from which the essences proceed (masâdir al-mawjudât) as multiple, and the totality of the existents as a (mere) atom, in relation to its magnitude." Therefore, if "God comprehends everything in knowledge" (Sûra 65:12), this can only mean that "He is the many and the whole, and that everything other than Him is not even a part of one, except by virtue of the face [of that thing] which is turned towards His totality and plurality (allâh al-wujûd allâh yâl yâl kulliyatuhu wa-kablabana)." To elucidate this paradoxical conclusion, 'Ayn al-Qâdî turns again to the image of the sun: "though it is one, and the rays emanating from it are many, the truth is to say that the sun is the many and the rays are the one." 156

Ostensibly, this "supra-rational" doctrine contradicts, as 'Ayn al-Qâdî himself does not fail to point out, the doctrine of "those who claim that God does not know the particulars." 157 — in other words, one of the famous "heresies" attributed to the "philosophers" by Ghazâlî in the Tahâfut. But to conclude from this that 'Ayn al-Qâdî joined the ranks of the "tribesmen" against the "heretics" would be just as misleading as is any attempt to interpret Ghazâlî's Muhâkât — with or without the "Veil-section" — as a work propagating "the metaphysics of kalâm" against fatâwa. The Muhâkât is, on the contrary, one of the reasons why "philosophy" not only survived in the Muslim East, despite its enemies, but was actually able to reach a second apogee in the work of Mulla Sadre al-Shirazi (d. 1050/1640), and 'Ayn al-Qâdî seems to have played a very role in this "Eastern" development of kalâm, philosophy and mysticism combined. 158

154 ibid. 56, 6-13. Cf. 76-78.
155 ibid. 21, 12-15. For the "Faâw" see also ibid. 38. 3/7 and 51. 7-18. For a more "elusive" version of this concept, see Carl W. Ernst, Words of Esoteric in Safavid, Alhbay, SUNY, 1985, 73f.
156 ibid. 21, 15-17.
157 ibid. 22.
158 Despite the unquestionable influence of Sukarawandî (ibid.) and especially Ibn 'Arabi on Mulla Sadre, it would be absurd to think that his own understanding of "God's knowledge of everything" is actually more in line with Ghazâlî's and 'Ayn al-Qâdî's "immanent" atom view with them. Like 'Ayn al-Qâdî, Mulla Sadre identifies his "knowledge" with actual "existence" in its totality. Cf. Khâb al-Muâširî on H. Corbin. Arabic 30-56/French 177-192, and Sadre's criticism of the views of Sukarawandî and Ibn 'Arabi on the subject of "God's knowledge" in The Philosophy of Mullâ Sadre, Alhbay, SUNY, 1975, 145f. In his Ta'alif 'Ayn al-War (ed. M. Khâyâtî, Tétrab. Mariâd, 1362h., 142), 'Ayn al-Qâdî suggests that Ghazâlî's definition of "light" in the Muhâkât as "that through which things appear" is in agreement with the doctrine of the "immanence of philosophy" (al-tawârîkh al-bânî). The same definition was adopted, with theistic approval, by 'Ayn al-Qâdî (Famîlât al-Shawârîb, 255), ib. also above, n. 22. A similar definition of "light" is given by Ghazâlî in Magâfâ (ed. Shiahân, 157).
Interestingly, one of the points used by the 'aladâmî al-şarîr to build up their case against 'Ayn al-Qudât was, as he himself points out in his Shakhêl- al-Gharib, his "supra-rational" doctrine of Being. 159 His defense to the effect that the same ideas, such as

our doctrine concerning the Maker (ţâlîf) of the universe, that He is the source of existence and the point whence existence proceeds (mu'tadî al-şayîrī), that He is the whole, that He is the real existence, and that everything else is in its own essence real and valid, persisting and passing away - in short: a non-existent "existing" only so far as the Eternal Power contains its existence (gawwâmin wa'l-şadâha) could be found all over the works of the "Proof of Islam," notably the Ḥiyâ, the Mishkât and the Mustâsîf, 160 was apparently too new an argument. His originality was nevertheless a strong one, especially as regards his reference to the Mishkât. In fact, the theologically shocking doctrine of the divine "face" (warâyah) of all things is explained at length by Ghazâlî himself in Section One of the Mishkât, and what is more is the fact that it is found in a sub-section titled haqîqat al- warâyah, the only one in the entire treatise to be so distinguished. Speaking of the "peek" of the spiritual ascent of the mystics (al-širîf) from the "lawland of the metaphysical," Ghazâlî explains:

"They witnessed directly (ša l-makâna wa'l-shirîf) that there is nothing in existence but God. 161 and that Everything is perishable except His Face" (Širîq 28:88). Not that it (i.e. the "Face") 162 persists as a certain point at time: No, it is entirely perish- ing. It would be inconceivable otherwise; for whatever is other than it is pure non- being (šâdâb ma'na) if considered in its own essence. In view of the Face (warâyah) to which existence flows from the True First (al-awwâl al-šarîr), it is seen as existent, [but not in its own essence, only in view of the fact turned to ur "close ur" to existent (mu' al-şâ'irî allâhî 'ašâr ma'îstâh). What exists, therefore, is only the Face of God. Everything has two faces: one [turnet] in itself, and one [turnet] in its


160 Ibid.

161 Famous dictum summarizing ontological takâtûl, attributed by 'Ayn al-Qudât to Mâdiî al-Karshî (Tundâzûh 290). Others, like Naqî 1 Kitzî and Samîî, attribute it to jamâ'ûl (cf. Dar Islam 50, 179, 56.

162 Read ūl'ânâmî with Affîl (Mishkât 55, 16), not lî-ânâmî as e.g. Mishkât B 17, 17 has it. Affîl's reading is confirmed by Ghazâlî himself in his Persian version of exactly the same point (Mishkât i Fârsî ed. Ispâhâni, 24, 10. Elsewhere (Dar Naqî 22) has the pronoun refer to "God" rather than to "everything" and therefore translates hâlikam, contrary to grammar and sense, as "derjenige, der vergänglich macht."
Note that the image of the "Face of God" plays here exactly the role of the one entity to which existence emanates from the One; and it is for this reason that – contrary to ordinary Qur'an interpretation – it is clearly not taken to mean the divine "Essence" itself. But neither is it a separate reality such as the "Obeyed one" of the "Veils-section." The "Face of God" is surely not "originated" nor has it anything to do with the physical notion of the universe. Rather, it is nothing else than the "flow" of existence itself;164 and nothing except the One "exists" in "reality" by virtue of its own essence. All things are, therefore, "not-not-being" by virtue of themselves – exactly as all "veils of light and darkness" are ultimately just that: "Veils."

A similar idea is conveyed a little later in the text on the basis of another famous Qur'anic verse involving the image of the "Face of God": (2:115):

"All lights rose to the Lights of lights, which is their origin and prime mover, that is, God most high by Himself, without associate. All other lights are borrowed, and the real is only His light. All are His light – or rather: He is the whole, or rather: there is no Bringer (He never leaves) in any other, except anthropomorphically speaking. There is no light except His; and the other lights are lights of view of the "Face" turned toward Him,165 not by themselves. Then the face of everything having a face is facing Him and turned in His direction.166 Whithersoever you turn, there is the Face of God (Tafsir 2:115). No divinity, therefore, except He, for "divinity" (al-dhāli) means (precisely) that to which the faces167 are turned in worship and ni'alūla."

Ghazālī evidently considers this idea to be the most important of the whole Mirzābī, and "if you do not understand it, it is because you are unaware of the haqīqat al-ḥaqīqāt just mentioned."168 It is also the point which connects the

163 Mirzābī 53, 13-56, 5. The idea of the "two faces" of everything may be seen as a generalization of Avicenna's famous doctrine of the "two faces" of the soul. As H. M. Ghishān (Quranica 490) notes, Ghazālī was of course familiar with this idea.

164 Parly based, it seems, on this Ghazālīan understanding of the "Face of God." "Aṣāli: Nastāfi distinguishes between the "source" (al-kāf, the "well") and the "face" (al-tūb) of God. See Fritz Meier, "Das Problem der Nāṣīf," 220-221; Ghazālī's and Sharp's "motion" could be classified, as terms of Aṣāli: Nastāfi's distinction between nūqūd, "well" and nūqūd, "face," it is "face-motion." See also below, note 171.

165 Translation according to Mirzābī B 21, 4-5 (but reading jārihā instead of jālihā)! Cf. Mirzābī aq. 9.

166 Ibid. 60, 10, and mawjūdūna aq. dīl dhālih. Cf. Mirzābī B' 71, 5

167 Read al-ṣa'īlahi maqāmsulamān wa-mākān, with Mirzābī B 21, 6, 6. Cf. Mirzābī 60, 11.

168 The whole passage, Mirzābī 60, 6-11. Mirzābī B 21, 7 has to be instead of ni'alūla. On ṣuṣālih see above, note 59.

169 Mirzābī 60, 14-15.
"Veils-section: "most obviously with the major part of the book; indeed the whole "Religionwissenschaft" of that disputed Section is hardly more than an application of this principle of al-Allah to mankind at large. One is reminded of Nathan Söderblom’s alleged dictum: "There is a living God, I can prove it by the history of religion."

But the "history of religion" does not come to an end even with the purport of all "veils of light" according to our text. The "Veils-section" rather terminates the divine "show" by dropping the "Veil" altogether. The ultimate reality of "Light" turns out to be the "Fire" that not only "kindles the Lamp" but also "burns" everything other than itself out of whatever "existence" it may wish to claim of its own. The final message is that the true "Attainers" are not only unable to "see" anything but the divine "Essence" in its "Beauty" (janāīl), they are, as the "Veils-section" itself suggests, literally "burnt" by the "Splendours of His Face." The "Power of the Majesty" (ṣalāḥ al-jalāy) overwhelms them in their own essence, in such a way that only the "True One" (al-wāhid al-haqiq) "remains" and "everything but His Face" is, indeed, "perishing" in their "taste" (dhabūq).

Professor Watt, unwilling to see any connection despite an explicit cross-reference to "Section One" in the text of the "Veils-section" itself, dismisses this return to the "Face of God" as "merely a quotation from the Tradition which is being interpreted" by the "presumed forger." According to Watt, the "taste" of the "Attainers" in order to be Gharziali, ought to be based on the theological virtues of "Faith" (imān) and "knowledge" (i‘lām), which are mentioned once in Section Two, rather than on "a subtle metaphysical theory, about the distinction between God and the Obeyed-One." In order to back up his own "forgery"-theory, Watt also finds a contrast between the final message of the "Veils-section" and Gharziali’s idea of awlād as outlined by the latter in his book xxxviii (K. al-tawḥīd wa-tawḥīdiyyāt) of the Ḥiyā‘. A closer examination of the relevant passage on the "four stages of


171 As was mentioned earlier (above, n. 23), Gharziali repeats from explaining the "fire" of the "Light-verse" directly contrary to Avicenna. Yet in Section One of the Mushkālī, he speaks about the "fire" which "kindles the prophetic armor," comparing it with the divine "Spirit" and the "Angel of seventy thousand faces" (Mushkālī 52), and in Section Two, he points out that only those who "read" (evidently not at the same "fire" can be "burnt," but those who "hear" should be (Mushkālī 70). Now in Section Three, i.e. the "Veils-section," it becomes clear that only those "burns" are the true "Attainers" (Mushkālī 92).

172 Mushkālī 92, 12.

173 J.P.A.S. 1949, 89.

174 Mushkālī 78.

175 J.P.A.S. 1949, 11.

176 ibid. 152.
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tawhîd\textsuperscript{177} shows, however, that the message is rather the same. Here is, in brief, a summary:

Stages one and two are compared to the "husk" and the "shell" of the nut, while stages three and four are like the "kernel" and the "oil," respectively. The first stage refers to the "Hypocrites" (al-munasibīn, cf. clas 1.3. of the "Veils-section"), while the second stage means "ordinary (Muslim) believers (fuqūd al-tawābîn)" and includes, explicitly, the profession of tawhîd by the Mu'takallimûn (cf. 2.2. and 2.3. of the "Veils-section\textsuperscript{178}.

"The third stage consists in witnessing it (i.e. tawhîd) by way of un-veiling (ka'bîh) thanks to the light of the truth (nûr al-haqq). This is the stage of those brought near (al-mushâbâhât): At this stage, one (tawâbîn) sees many things, yet he sees them, despite their plurality, as emanating from (shadda) one the "Unique Prevailing One" (al-tawâbîd al-qâhîrâ)\textsuperscript{179}.

At the fourth stage, however, he sees nothing in existence (fr 'iṣâbîh) but One (al-ahdâd). This is the witnessing of the "Veil" (al-muddâqîn). The "Veil" call is "unveiling in tawhîd" (al-hâdâd fi 'l-tawâbîh) because (such a) monothelitism, not seeing anything but One, does not see himself other... which means that he is un-analyzed from both the viewpoint of himself and of (all other) creatures (al-khâyûm).\textsuperscript{179}

Watt's interpretation of these passages is, again, based on his assumption that the triadic scheme ʿilm-ʿalâr-ḍhawq is the predominant pattern in Ghaẓâlî's later thought. One might go along with his equation of stage three with ʿilm and ʿalâr, but there is nothing to suggest that the "unveiling" (ka'bîh) at stage three must be rendered as "direct mystical experience."\textsuperscript{180} ka'bîh is a neutral term, and if Watt were right, it would be difficult to see why there is a fourth stage at all, and why only the experience of the "Sanîs," at stage four, is compared with that of mystic ʿalâr. The "light of the truth," which "brought near" to see "many things emanating from the Unique Prevailing One," or from the unique "Agent" (al-fâhûd), as Ghaẓâlî clarifies a little later,\textsuperscript{181} may well be a veil of pure Bacon (as opposed to the "analogical reasoning" of the Mu'takallimûn). At any rate, there is hardly much of a difference between this "un-veiling" and that which leads "those veiled by pure ligons of the "Veils-section" up to the "Cheyved one," whereas the difference between stages three and four in the Ḥyâ passages is exactly what distinguishes the

\textsuperscript{177} Ḥyâ IV, 212, 2-34. Cf. Knew 7999f.
\textsuperscript{178} Ḥyâ IV, 212, 10-16. For Ghaẓâlî's "metatron" as reflected in his attitude towards the Mu'takallimûn, cf. IV, Pervân-Yezîd. Studies 389-413, especially 365 and 368-369.
\textsuperscript{179} Ḥyâ IV, 212, 6-10.
\textsuperscript{180} J.F.A.S. 1949. 16.
\textsuperscript{181} Ḥyâ IV, 212. 14. The "three-stage" is therefore also called ṣawfîd al-fâhûd (ibid., line 33).
\textsuperscript{182} H. Lascouz-Yezîd, Studies 256 and 490.
“Attainers” from the rest of the “third class.” The muwahhid at stage four no longer “turns to plurality” (al-ilāhāt ilā lā ilāhāt) at all, but to the “true One” (al-walid al-haqq). Consequently, Watt’s argument that the idea of pure oneness suggested by the “Veils-section” forms a contrast with the unity of the kawākh passages because that unity, according to Watt, “is quite compatible with, and normally seems to presuppose, a plurality of relations in God,” must be rejected for this reason alone.

V.

Besides “philosophical doctrine,” what seems to have caused offense in Ghazâlî’s Mshkhâr from an early date is its marked “Iranism,” and the first to blame such “un-Islamic views” (kalûmût l-kâfir) on a forger was, apparently, no one else than Ghazâlî himself. Unlike Watt, however, Ghazâlî did not suggest that the “forger” wished to sell his own goods by such unlawful means. He rather accused a jealous colleague for having tried to denigrate his good name by making an attempt, though unsuccessfully, to circulate “altered” copies of the Mshkhâr and the Manqûš. Whatever the truth of this rather odd story may be, the fact is that the “Veils-section,” but not the rest of the Mshkhâr, is indeed distinctly “Iranian” in its outlook (cf. especially 2.1.6.); and it does seem strange that Ghazâlî himself should have wished to even imply that the “dualism” of the pre-Islamic Iranians was for all intents and purposes identical with his own doctrine of “Light.” Such expression of sympathy for the Majâjâ would be less surprising if someone other than Ghazâlî, but close to him, gave the Mshkhâr its final touch; and a possible candidate for such editorial work might – just might – have been ‘Ayn al-Qâdî. On the other hand, there appears to be no good reason to suspect someone like ‘Ayn al-Qâdî, who was quite open about his own sympathies, of a real “forgery”; and “Iranism” alone, just like “Neo-platonism,” is in any event hardly a sufficiently clear criterion to determine the issue.

182 ibid., line 34.
186 Given that “Iranism” is one of the major reasons why the second part of Nâṣîr al-Mulâk is now considered highly suspect (Charles-Heinrich de Fouchécourt, Moralia 39283) we simply
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The already mentioned manuscript Sehīt Ali Paşa 1712, which is dated only four years after Ghazālī's death, undoubtedly provides a strong argument, but not an absolute guarantee of authenticity. It remains unclear to what extent this manuscript should be considered virtually identical with the autograph.\textsuperscript{188} As described by Alīfī, this manuscript "contains many mistakes, textual corruptions and grammatical errors."\textsuperscript{189}

Moreover, none among the more than 35 other known manuscripts of the Mīkhālī seems to be dated earlier than 739 A.H.,\textsuperscript{190} so that there seems to be a gap of more than 200 years without manuscript evidence. Under these circumstances, the external evidence from sources such as Ayvānī and Ibn Tūfayl (or his compiler) is still of prime importance. Yet Ibn Tūfayl, according to H. Lazarus-Yafeh, quotes authentic works of Ghazālī along with spurious ones.\textsuperscript{191}

Lazaru-Yafeh bases her own assurance that "the end of the Mīkhālī must be considered as authentic as the whole book" on two kinds of evidence: first, her own linguistic analysis, which "showed no important differences," and second, on the little-known fact that Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) discussed GhaZālī's Mīkhālī at length in his Qur'an Commentary (Majālis al-Ghayb = Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr; ad Surā 24:55). Lazaru-Yafeh does not, however, elaborate on that second point. She merely notes that "the great Qur'an commentator ... already knew that Al-GhaZālī's Mīkhālī included the last section, considered as spurious by Watt."\textsuperscript{192}

Unfortunately, however, the matter is a little more complicated than that. For one thing, even a brief glance at Rāzī's Tafsīr shows that, far from confirming "the last section" or "the end" of the Mīkhālī as we know it, it in fact contradicts the standard version in both form and matter. On the other hand, a recently discovered Persian discussion of the Mīkhālī, which is attributed to the same Rāzī, contradicts the Tafsīr-version in several respects. I shall first discuss the Arabic Tafsīr-version.

\textsuperscript{188} Patricia Cruz, "Did al-Ghazālī Write a Manus for Piren? On the authorship of Nafḥat al-makālāt in Jerusalem Studies of Arabic and Islam 10, 1987, p. 167-191, one could be tempted to jump to a similar conclusion as far as the "Veil-section" is concerned. However, that kind of evidence would be no better than any other, and the two cases are, in fact, quite different. The most important difference is that the "Beiruti" of the "Veil-section" has nothing to do with the "royal ideology" of the Nafḥat.

\textsuperscript{189} For the survey of Ibn Tūfayl, see the work of Bouchut, "Al-Ghazālī's I. 484, and Rāzī, Muḥammad, 19-21. Also note that the ms. Berlin 1307 omits the "Veil-section."

\textsuperscript{190} H. Lazaru-Yafeh, Studier 256 and 488.

\textsuperscript{191} Ibd. 42, cf. 289ff. and 338.
To begin with, the discussion of the “Veils-tradition” does not, there, constitute the “last section,” but the second (al-fasi al-āthār), and it is followed by a “third section” (al-fasi al-ḥālāth) on the “symbolism” (tasnīf) of the “Niche.” In this “third section” Rāzī discusses ten different traditional interpretations of the second part of the Qur’ānic “Light-verse.” Interpretation nr. 5 is explicitly identified as that of “al-shaykh al-Ghazālī”; and it is simply a summary of the doctrine of the five perceptive powers as we know it from Section Two of the Mishkāt. Interpretation nr. 6 is a summary of Aviccīna’s version of the same. All this comes after a long “first section” (al-fasi al-anwail) in which Rāzī, after a brief survey of traditional interpretations of the first part of the “Light-verse,” mentions the fact that “al-shaykh al-Ghazālī” wrote the book known as Mishkāt al-Anwār as a commentary on the Qur’ānic verse under discussion, and that he ventured in it the opinion (ta‘wam) that God is “light” in reality, and that the only “Light” is He. At this point, Rāzī also states his own purpose, which is to summarize Ghazālī’s argument and even to add further points in support of it before going to decide on whether or not it is sound. In fact this is quite literally what he does, so far as Section One of the Mishkāt is concerned, over six big pages of his Ta’fīr. The only additional point, identified as such by Rāzī, is that he proudly offers thirteen more proofs of the superiority of the “light of reason” over the “light of the physical eye,” i.e. twenty all in all, instead of only seven like Ghazālī.193 Note, however, that he says nothing about Ghazālī’s controversial interpretation of the divine “Face” (waḥj Allāh), although he does explain its philosophical basis, namely, the emanation (iḥšās) of the “light of existence” upon the contingents which are, by themselves, pure “not-being.”194 At the end of this long section, he takes four lines to suggest that the reported Ghazālīan doctrine amounts to identifying God as “light” with God as “creator (khāliq) of the universe” and “creator of the perceptive powers,” thus being in agreement with his own as well as with the traditional interpretations of the “Light-verse,” although “God knows best.”195

As for Rāzī’s Section Two, i.e. the discussion of the “Veils-tradition,” Ghazālī’s name is not mentioned again. It is however clear that Rāzī is quoting the first few lines of the standard “Veils-section” almost literally, with

192 Al-Taḥfīr al-Kabīr, Cairo, 1354-1357h., vol. XXIII, 233, 6-234, 16 (beginning of the “third section” on p. 231).
193 Ibid. 224-230 (beginning of the “first section” on p. 223).
194 Ibid. 229, 11-24.
195 Ibid. 230, 24-28. Perhaps the words kaʾlām mustaṣūf, followed by wa-lāddu, should be read as kaʾlām ghayr mustaṣūf? But even so, I cannot understand on what grounds Franz Rosen- that, Knowledge Triumphant 166, concludes that Rāzī in this discussion “felt strongly com- pelled to argue against such views.”
"severely veils of light and darkness" plus the variants of the Tradition as given in the standard texts, as well as the first theoretical explanation of "veiledness" as not being applicable to God himself, and the division of those "veiled" into three "classes" (qism). But then he goes on identifying the three classes in a way which is completely at variance with the whole "philosophy of religion" under dispute. The "first class" according to the Tafṣīr-version, i.e. those veiled by sheer darkness, are those who are so pre-occupied with material attachments that they do not even ask the question whether the existence of a Necessary Being can be inferred from the fact that objects of sense-perception do exist (in other words, they correspond to class 1.2. of the standard version). By contrast, those who do ask that question belong, according to the Tafṣīr-version, to the "second class," i.e., "those veiled by a mixture of light and darkness." They are "veiled by light," Rāzī explains, in so far as they are capable of forming the concept of self-sufficiency (nākawwār al-māhiyyāt al-istighfā’ī al-ghayb), which is indeed an attribute of the divine Majesty, but they are "veiled by darkness" to so far as they wrongly attribute that quality to something that does not rightly possess it, such as material bodies. "Some indeed believe that the contingent is not in need of a determining agent (muu-sathār) at all; others, who do not accept this, take the agent in the contingent things to be their 'natures' (shāhīd), or their movements, conjunctions and separations, or their relations to the movements of the Spheres or to the entities moving the Spheres. All these belong to this class." After this, Rāzī presents the "third class," i.e., "those veiled by pure light," by stating briefly that there is no way the knowledge of God except through recognition of both the negative and the relational Attributes, and that, since the diviner Attributes are infinite, there always remains a will no matter how far man's ascent through them may reach.

The contrast to the standard version is striking, particularly with regard to the relative positions of philosophy and theology. While the standard version places the "naturalist" philosophers at the very bottom of the scale (1.1) but these who look to the movers of the spheres almost at the top (3.1 – 3.3), Rāzī in his Tafṣīr-version places them altogether into the "second class" and reserves the highest or "third class," despite his philosophical language, for just the kind of theological attribution which Wat's Ghazālī ought to have placed there had he written the "Veils-section" himself! Now assuming that Rāzī did in fact summarize the "Veils-section" as he "knew" it, and that he did it as

196 Tafṣīr vol. XVIII, 231, 4-10 (beginning of the "second section") on p. 230.
197 ibid. tr. 17: 1 read it jasāmi instead of jasāfīma
198 ibid. tr. 17: 19.
199 ibid. tr. 20: 26.
faithfully as he reproduced the other two. Sections of the Miskhā‘, this world of course be evidence in favour of Waafs “forgery” theory, not against it. However, it seems at least equally conceivable that the one who “cheated” in effect was Rā‘ū — in other words, that he was trying to do nothing else than what so many others, before and after him, tried to achieve with other means: to “save” the image of Ghazālī’s “orthodox” theologian. Indeed it seems rather unlikely that the great Qur’an Commentator should not have “known” the standard version when it was known already in 575 A.H. even in Andalusia; and there is some evidence that he did. This leads us to the above-mentioned Persian treatise, which was recently edited by Nanzallah Pourjavady on the basis of an apparently unique majm‘a dated 539 A.H., under the title Rūz-i Ta‘wīl-i Miskhā‘i al-Af‘ālih al-Mashkūla (sic).295 Although this very short text (three pages in print) does not explicitly refer to either Rā‘ū or the Miskhā‘, there are a number of indications which leave no reasonable doubt that we have to do with another Rā‘ūan discussion of the same Ghazālīan text-book, perhaps lecture notes taken by a student. It is composed of three sections (called aqā which follow the same general order (1:3:2) as the three fārā in the Ta‘wīl-discussion. Starting from the Tradition according to which “God created the creatures in darkness, then sprinkled (some) of His Light upon them” (which is quoted in Section One of the Miskhā‘),296 the first aqā summarizes and justifies “the doctrine of the Proof of Islam” in essentially the same way as the Ta‘wīl does, by explaining how God can be said to be “Light” and why the intellect is more deserving of that attribute than the powers of sense-perception. Only seven proofs for the superiority of the Intellect are offered into time, and they are substantially those given by Ghazālī himself in Section One.297 The exception is proof nr. 5 of the Persian text, which is not among Ghazālī’s seven, but is proof nr. 5 in the Ta‘wīl-discussion (i.e. the originally Avicennan argument that sense is weak-


296 Miskhā‘ 51, 1-2. The Persian text (ed. Pourjavady 226) has ra‘īkūh instead of ‘‘āqā, which is in conformity to the “canonical” version of this Tradition (cf. A.J. Wensinck et al., Concordances IV, 84 and VII, 19).

297 Miskhā‘ 44-47. The following table may clarify the point (N.B.: G. = standard text of the Miskhā‘; PP = Persian text ed. Pourjavady; RT = Ta‘wīl):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PP 1</th>
<th>PP 2</th>
<th>PP 3</th>
<th>PP 4</th>
<th>RT 1</th>
<th>RT 2</th>
<th>RT 3</th>
<th>RT 4</th>
<th>RT 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GM 1</td>
<td>GM 2</td>
<td>GM 3</td>
<td>GM 4</td>
<td>GM 5</td>
<td>GM 6</td>
<td>GM 7</td>
<td>GM 8</td>
<td>GM X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ended through strong perceptions, contrary to the intellection;②⑨ and proof nr. 5 of the Persian text, while in Ghazālī’s seventh, is given in the form in which it is found only in Ṣūr’s Ṭafṣīr, where it is proof nr. 20 (i.e. that sense makes mistakes because it may perceive as being in movement what is at rest, and vice versa, as in the case of the man in a boat who perceived the shore as moving, or when the shadow is perceived as being at rest).②⑩ The second ašr is on the “Veils-Tradition” (see below), and the third ašr attributed to Ghazālī a philosophical interpretation of the Tradition according to which “God created Adam after His image,” which interpretation probably reflects in Ṣūr’s view what Ghazālī has to say about it in Sections One and Two of the Ṣuḥkūr, although it is not quite the same thing.②⑪ Since this theme is not discussed by Ṣūr in Section Three of the Ṭafṣīr-version, this shows in addition that our Persian text does not derive from it, but goes independently back to Ṣūr or his school.

For our purpose, the most interesting ašr is of course the second, i.e. the discussion of the “Veils-Tradition.” As in the Ṭafṣīr, there is no explicit reference to Ghazālī in this instance. After the quotation of the Tradition itself (with “seventy veils of light and darkness” but without the variants) and a brief reference to Ṣūr 42:50, the discussion begins with an explanation of the “difficulty” (taṣkīd, namely, that the “veiledness” applies only to man, not to God (as in the Ṭafṣīr and the Ṣuḥkūr itself, but without the division of the “veiled” into three classes). This is followed by a brief “apportionment” (taṣbīḥa) to the effect that any mystical “station” (maqām) turns into a “veil” if the mystic fails to move on before having reached “attainment” (waqṣḥ).②⑫ There is, however, no end to stages, “stations” and “veils”; and that only the “light of prophethood” (ṣīr-i aṣīr-i nabiyy), can comprehend them as being seven in number. This would seem to take up the “infinite” of the “veils” emphasized at the end of the Section in the Ṭafṣīr, but the “veils” are interpreted here as mystical “stations,” not as theological Attributes, and there is no reference to the “light of prophethood” in the Ṭafṣīr-version, whereas a similar reference to the “prophetic power” (al-qawām al-nabawī) is found on the first page of the standard “Veils-section.” Furthermore, there is no question of “attainment” in the Ṭafṣīr-version, whereas this notion, embodied in the archetypal


②⑩ Ṭafṣīr vol. XXIII, 238, 5-12.

②⑪ Persian text ed. Pournava, 228, alt. - 229, 3. According to this version, the argument of the Ṣuḥkūr al-Nāṣir was that the identity of the human individual remains the same from birth, whereas his bodily existence is subject to change. Therefore, the “essence of man” (maqāṣid al-fiṣn) is not identical with his body. Cf. above, n. 25.

②⑫ Persian text 228, 2, I would read be instead of et, and place the comma after waqṣḥ.
figures of Abraham and Muhammad, is the crucial one at the very end of the standard text.

After this "ascertainment," the second stage ends with a statement of the "truth" (ḥaqiqat), which is a brief presentation of the main theme, the classification of the various categories of mankind in terms of degrees of "veiledness." In order to be fully intelligible, the Persian text is however badly in need of some corrections, notably the restitution of a missing sentence (which I have taken the liberty to conjecture and to add here in brackets):

"The truth (ḥaqiqat) is that humans are of two kinds (di qiwam): One, those whose aim is none other than to satisfy their appetitive and irascible (sunnah). They worship only their nudity and passion. The second kind (qiwam-i damam) concerns those who aim after something else. They are also of two kinds: One, those who do not eliminate qualities belonging to the corporeal domain from their object of worship [207] such as the idol-worshippers (ṣabīr-i ṣubū), the star-worshippers (ṣabīr-i ṣabū), as well as the 'nthropomorphists' (nu mušahhaba nā dar in bāb dākāl and). Two (damam), those who eliminate qualities belonging to the corporeal domain from their object of worship. They are also of two kinds (di qiwam): One, those who regard gnostic and ascendance in that object (of worship) as acceptable, such as the believers in the heavenly Sphere (ṣabīr-i ṣabīr), and the ascendants, etc., probably to be read in the Damam). i.e. the 'Doulos.' Two, those who do not accept this. They, i.e. the latter consider all lights and all ontologically possible entities (makanāt) to be traces of His mercy and results of His wisdom. Then, (these are) the 'Moon' (par visālān). (They are) those people who do not know their object of worship through (rational) proof (barkhā). They, then, (par) are so overwhelmed by the way of His perfection that they are annihilitated from everything but Him. Whoever does not have this state of mind, is veiled from the highest elevation possible to mankind; and the stages of those veiled are in accordance with their respective distance from that rank." [208]

The above classification is obviously quite different in form from the tripartite division of "the veiled" as given in both the standard version of the Mishkât and Rūzí's Tafsîr-version. It proceeds from the general to the particular, following the logic of subsequent elimination of alternatives, and may therefore be represented schematically in the following way:

Ma'ās worship is:

1. A. either self-centered (worshiping one's own "passions")
   or B. not-self-centered.

207 The Persian text would probably run as follows: va inšan ham bar di qiwam and qiwam bar tashīn ī mafṣūd i šabīr i mušahhab x 'nthropomorphists' (text 228, 7 between bākāl and chudānā).  
208 Persian text 228, 5-13.
GHAZĀLĪ AND “RELIGIONSWISSENSCHAFT”

If B., then the object of worship is:

II. A. either belonging to the physical world (including man-made bodies, celestial bodies and the "megas- ponomorphic" god of or- dinary monotheism, i.e. shāhīd) or B. not belonging to the physical world (i.e. amīrān).  

If B., then the object of worship is:

II. A. either perceivable in plurality and alteration (in the metaphysical realm, probably meaning philosophical doctrines of celestial Intellences, and “Dualism”) or B. not perceivable in plurality and alteration.

If it, then the (implied) object of worship is:

IV. A. either conceived as the source of existence of all things (which are “trace (āhār) of His Mercy) and existence of His Wisdom (aḥliyyāt)”) or B. not conceived at all, but “attained” through Love.

Despite this systemic form, which sets the Persian version apart, it is nevertheless quite clear that its view of the various "classes" of mankind is much closer in spirit to the standard version of the “Veils-section” than it is to Rāzī’s own Tafṣīr-version. It actually has only one point in common with the latter: those worshipping their own “passions,” not materialist thinkers, constitute the most “wildcat” of all “classes,” but the theological attribution of the Tafṣīr is ignored, and the “Religionswissenschaft” of the standard version, which is ignored in the Tafṣīr, is unmistakable there. Again like the standard version, the Persian version clearly puts anthropomorphizing monotheism into the same general category as ordinary “god-worship” and, moreover, places beliefs in the heavenly Spheres, plus philosophical and mystical notions, above such "anthropomorphism."

Perhaps, then, we should indeed conclude that Rāzī knew the same "Veils-section" as we do, but felt it appropriate to modify its contents depending on his audience. Yet even if we grant him such flexibility, there remains the possibility that the Persian version was, in fact, written by a disciple rather than by Rāzī himself. We know that one among these, probably Abū ’l-Ḥasan Māvjud
h. Mahmud al-Shirazi (d. 655/1257-58), became a follower of the great Sufi Najm al-Din al-Kubra after a famous encounter of the two masters. If this Shirazi was the real author of the Persian version, then its obvious Sufi overtones would surely be less surprising.

Be that as it may, it remains in any case to be explained why in both the Taifir and the Persian version the discussion of the "Veils-tradition" constitutes the second and not the last section among the three. It seems difficult to accept that Razi should have wished to break up the discussion of the Qur'anic "Light-verse" in the middle, especially in a Taifir-work, unless its own source already proceeded in the same way; and the Persian version confirms independently that the Miskar-era used in Razi's school had a "Veils-section" in the middle, not at the end. But this means that we will have to assume in any case that there existed (at least) two different textual traditions or recensions of Ghazali's Miskar during the sixth century A.H. One is obviously the standard version, which is represented for that period of time only by the manuscript dated 509 A.H. plus Ibn Tufayl - if indeed Ibn Tufayl himself wrote the introduction to his Hayy b. Yaqzan (cf. above). This source, at any rate, is the only external evidence to confirm that "those veiled by pure light" and the "Attainers" are discussed by Ghazali "at the end of the Miskar" (if Ikhbar khidr al-miskar). The other recension would be the one to be supposed as the origin of the two Raziyan versions, which differ very considerably among themselves but have in common that the discussion of the "Veils-tradition" follows immediately after Section One. I can see no internal reason why this order should not have been the one chosen by Ghazali himself in the original text. But only a careful examination of the whole manuscript tradition, plus external evidence additional to the one discussed in this article, might eventually cast light on these divergences and show to what extent, if any, they do have an authenticity question.


210 See above, note 140.

211 The reference in Section One (Miskar 45, 2) to an explanation of the "veil of reason" to follow in "Section Three," which Watt (J.R.A.S. 1949, 12) finds "distinctly mystifying," would then presumably refer to the passage on the "Stage beyond Reason" in what we now know as "Section Two" (i.e. Miskar 77f.).