

Chapter II

GHAZALI'S THEOLOGICAL THOUGHT

1. *Tawhīd* as the Divine Unity

The problem of the unity of God or *tawhīd*¹ constitutes the central theme of Muslim scholastic theology or *Kalām*, to such an extent that the terms '*ilm al-tawhīd*' (literally, the knowledge of the unification) and *kalām* (or '*ilm al-kalām*') have often been used interchangeably. All of the theological questions concerning God's essence (*dhāt*), His attributes (*ṣifāt*) and His acts (*af'āl*) are involved in *tawhīd*. It is not an exaggeration to say that the history of Muslim theology has evolved around the problem of *tawhīd*, of how to interpret and conceptualize the first half of the testimony (Shahādah) of Islam: "There is no deity but God." It is therefore quite natural that our discussion of Ghazali's thought on religious practices should begin with his conception of *tawhīd*. As we shall soon see, this concept has a very practical significance in his theoretical scheme of the training (*riyāḍah*) of the soul.

According to Ghazali, there are four classes of *tawhīd*.⁴ The first is the *tawhīd* of the hypocrites (*munāfiq*) who pronounce the formula: "There is no deity but God," but in their hearts do not accept it as true. The hypocrites' life thus is not affected by the profession of the Shahādah at all. Their deceit may be of some use to protect themselves from persecution by Muslim authorities, but it will be of no use in the Hereafter (*ākhirah*). Ghazali calls this verbal expression of *tawhīd* without inner commitment "an outer shell."

The second *tawhīd* is that of the common people ('*awāmm*, pl. of '*āmm*') shared by the scholastic theologians (*mutakallim*). They

accept the Shahádah as true and understand its implications on an intellectual level, with various degrees of understanding. But the creed (*i'tiqād*) touches only the surface of their hearts. There is no full commitment to it. Their acceptance is conventional, a "blind imitation" (*taqlíd*)⁵ of the tradition, and is based on hearsay. At best, it comes from logically proven necessity. In any case, this type of *tawhíd* lacks true commitment — a deep-rooted, personal conviction which Ghazali calls *yaqín*.⁶ While it is certain that none of these people have doubts about the mortality of human beings and the coming Day of Judgement, there is no one whose heart is so completely gripped by these ideas that his sole concern in this life is to prepare for death. Therefore, these people lack total commitment to their faith. The only difference between the common people and the theologians is that the latter handle complicated theological problems by intricate, hairsplitting arguments in an attempt to defend the tradition against heretical views.⁷ Thus Kalám as such is denied any positive value.⁸ This class of *tawhíd* is again but "an inner shell."

The third *tawhíd* is that of those who not only know theoretically, but have realized experientially, by "disclosure" (*kashf*)⁹ and "vision" (*musháhadah*), that "there is no agent (*fá'il*) other than God; and that all existence — the creatures, sustenance, giving and taking, life and death, wealth and poverty, in short everything that can be named — has God as its sole creator and originator."¹⁰ They realize that all created things, human and nonhuman, are mere tools and means under the complete control (*musakhkhar*) of God's power (*qudrah*) and will (*mashí'ah*) in His execution of the eternal decree (*qadā'*).¹¹ Therefore, they have no reliance upon nor pay any attention to these "tools and means". They "see multiple phenomena, all coming from the One Compelling (*qahhár*)."¹² Ghazali calls this "the pith" of *tawhíd*.

In defining this third type of *tawhíd*, Ghazali stresses that seeing

things in their multiplicity coming from the One, from God, is more than words. It expresses a firm spiritual conviction (*yaqín*) that was revealed to the heart "from on high" and has thus gripped it unshakably. Ghazali goes on to elaborate more fully the meaning of this *yaqín*:

A hidden subtlety (*daqíq ghúmiq*) is understood only by those who have received so much grace from God as to grasp things by a divine light (*núr iláhi*), rather than by the traditional authority (*samá'*). These people, when the secrets of things are revealed (*inkashafa*) to them as they really are, look at the tradition and the transmitted words, and if these agree with what they have witnessed (*sháhada*) by the light of the spiritual conviction (*núr al-yaqín*), they accept them. But if not, they allegorically interpret (*awwala*) them.¹³

Those who experience this not only know the universal sovereignty of God, but behave according to that knowledge. This is an actual commitment supported by inner conviction.

Let us elaborate further on the conceptualized aspect of this third *tawhíd*. Suppose that we strike a match to light a fire. It seems apparent that the match, or more correctly speaking, our action of striking the match and the subsequent friction produce the fire. But this is not so in reality, according to Ghazali.¹⁴ The movement of our hand and the friction seem to produce a chemico-physical change in the match and this change seems to create the fire. But this is not correct, since there is no necessary causative relationship in this sequence. The real producer or cause is God. The movement of our hand and the friction are nothing but "causes" (*sabab*) or means through which God creates the chemico-physical change in the match, and this in turn becomes another "cause" through which God

creates the fire. Even the movement of our hand, when we strike the match, is not in a real sense our own creation. It is created by God working through our power (*qudrah*) or energy, which is also created when we want to strike a match. Again our desire (*iradah*) itself is created by God through the indication of knowledge ('*ilm*), reason ('*aql*), or judgement (*hukm*), which ultimately comes from His eternal determination through prompting (*khāṭir*).¹⁵

In this system of thought there is no room for the law of causality. Every event as well as all beings in the world are completely isolated and lack any relationship to other events or beings. All creation is directly ascribed to God.¹⁶ God has, however, an orderly way to fulfil His decree, which is called the custom of God ('*adah Allāh*) or the path of God (*sunnah Allāh*). It is therefore ridiculous to go into a desert in search of treasure or to neglect one's crops in expectation of divine help,¹⁷ despite the fact that nothing is impossible for the power of God. Such help may simply not be the custom of God. When God wills to punish someone, it happens in a certain sequence of events. The punishment may come when he is driving a car, or sleeping in bed, or performing some other activity. God's will rarely deviates from His custom.¹⁸

This is a conceptualized presentation of the third type of *tawhīd*. It is nothing other than the Ash'arite theology. However, out of this theology, we can draw two practical conclusions of great significance. One is that it is polytheism (*shirk*) to connect by causation a series of events which take place customarily in sequence, and thus to see only "causes" (*sabab*) behind them, rather than God, the Real Cause or Agent.¹⁹ This would mean that we have set up another independent agent beside God — a "hidden polytheism" (*shirk khafī*), if not an open worship of a deity (*shirk jalī*).²⁰

In like manner, take the case of our working to earn our living.

If we think that we are supporting ourselves, rather than God bestowing on us the earnings through our work, then we are guilty of *shirk*. Furthermore, if our actions, in ritual worship (*ṣalāt*), alms-giving, or teaching, are motivated by concerns other than God, e.g. love of fame (*jāh*), pleasure (*hawā*), fear (*khawf*), or ostentation (*riyā*), then we are worshipping idols (*ma'būd*), called fame, pleasure, fear and other people's regards. We are thus required to reorient our whole life and to direct ourselves to a single goal — coming close to God and meeting Him (*liqā' Allāh*)²¹ in the Hereafter.²² This is the real commitment which is lacking in the second type of *tawhīd*.

The other conclusion which we can draw from the Ash'arite teaching is that the notion of the divine causation of every single occurrence (*ḥādīth*) does not mean that our efforts are unnecessary. It is thus absurd for us to go out to the battle-field without carrying weapons, or not to drink water to quench our thirst on the assumption that God will destroy the enemy, or quench our thirst without our drinking water. This is not the *sunnah* of God. It is, on the one hand, *shirk* to pay attention to and rely only on "causes." To deny these causes totally, on the other hand, is to fail to act in accordance with the divine *sunnah* and to neglect the divine command (*shar'*).²³ We cannot, and must not, sit back and wait for the guidance of God, when we want to see His Noble Face and come close to Him. Again although there is nothing beyond God's power, we must prepare ourselves as much as we can to receive His guidance and help (*tawfiq*), in accordance with His "customary" way.²⁴ This does not contradict the determination and power of God.²⁵

Thus, the first conclusion logically necessitates a real commitment to God, and the second makes possible our efforts toward it. These two aspects — intellectual, logical persuasion ('*ilm*) and concrete practice ('*amal*) — constitute the backbone of the

Ghazalian theory of training. This is an intellectual formulation of what Ghazali considers the third type of *tawhíd*.

As far as the conceptualized form is concerned, there seems to be no significant difference between the second and the third types of *tawhíd*, except for one of emphasis. In actuality, however, there *exists* a wide gap between these two. One remains a mere conceptualized creed, while the other implies *yaqín*, or a deep inner commitment to the creed. What causes this difference? Where does this *yaqín* come from? It does not come from Kalám, although this shows the way. Ultimately it is something given by God. How can we prepare for it, then? This brings us to the fourth and last class of *tawhíd*.

2. *Tawhíd as Faná'*

The fourth *tawhíd* is that of those who "see Oneness in all existence."²⁶ The many they cannot see. Ghazali compares this *tawhíd* to "the juicy essence," which is extracted from the pith. It is, according to him, the acme of *tawhíd* and what the Sufis call "passing-away in the Unity" (*faná' fi'l-tawhíd*)²⁷. For "they do not see but One and also do not see themselves. When they do not see themselves as they are absorbed in *tawhíd*, they have 'passed away' from themselves in the sense that they have 'passed away' from seeing themselves and the created beings."²⁸

Now, what does Ghazali mean when he says that "they do not see in existence but One," or "they do not see themselves"? When he says that his fourth class of *tawhíd* is identical to the Sufi idea of *faná'*, what is meant by *faná'*? There is no consensus on the notion of *faná'* among the Sufis themselves. R.A. Nicholson summarizes the various meanings of the term *faná'* used by the Sufis into the following three groups:

- (1) A moral transformation of the soul through the extinction of all its passions and desires.
- (2) A mental abstraction or passing-away of the mind from all objects of perception, thoughts, actions, and feelings through its concentration upon the thought of God. Here the thought of God signifies contemplation of the divine attributes.
- (3) The cessation of all conscious thought. The highest stage of *faná'* is reached when even the consciousness of having attained *faná'* disappears. This is what the Sufis call "the passing-away of passing-away" (*faná' al-faná'*). The mystic is now rapt in contemplation of the divine essence.²⁹

Our problem is to which of these three groups does Ghazali's *faná'* belong? It is difficult to answer this question, partly because it is not possible to neatly classify the innermost, unique human experiences into artificial categories, and partly because Ghazali lacks clarity and detail in his description of that part of the religious experience which we are now examining. Ghazali seldom discloses the *faná'*-experience in *lhyá'*, except in a rather vague and conventional manner. Since it belongs to the science of revelation (*'ilm al-mukáshafah*),³⁰ it is, he thinks, very dangerous to divulge it to the public.

Nonetheless, we can grasp something about it from his scattered descriptions. Ghazali writes about the state of the Sufis in their highest stage at the *samá'*-seance:

The fourth state is the *samá'* of him who has passed beyond (spiritual) states and stations. He is far from knowing anything save God to such a degree that he is far even from himself, his states and their relations. He is like one dumbfounded

(*madhūsh*), absorbed in the sea of the direct witnessing (*'ayn al-shuhūd*), whose inner state resembles that of the ladies who cut their hands, witnessing the beauty of Joseph, when they were dumbfounded and their perceptions were gone.³¹ The Sufis express this state by saying that "he has passed away from himself" (*faniya 'an nafsi-hi*). Whenever a man has passed away from himself, he has passed away from all besides himself. *Then it is as if he passed away from everything except the Witnessed One and passed away from the act of witnessing. For the heart, whenever it turns aside to view the act of witnessing and itself as a witness, becomes heedless of the Witnessed One. And for him who is infatuated in a thing which he sees, there is no turning aside, in his state of absorption, toward his witnessing, nor toward his own self through which his vision comes, nor toward his heart in which his joy is.* A drunken man tells no word about his drunkenness, nor does he who is taking pleasure about his taking of pleasure. His word is only about that in which he takes pleasure... For the most part it is like swift lightning which is not stable, nor lasts. If it should last, human strength could not bear it. (Emphasis is mine)³²

Ghazali's *faná'* in this passage corresponds to Nicholson's third category and apparently refers to the same state. We must next clarify further this *faná'*-experience itself, delineate its psychological characteristics, and consider its impact on the Sufis' mind in comparative perspective.

First of all, as we have seen in the previous quotation, *faná'* might be interpreted as the state in which the object, "the Witnessed One," has so completely permeated and absorbed the mind of the subject that he is not conscious of himself. To be more precise, the subject relinquishes *his* conscious hold of the object, since he is no longer aware of himself. Neither is he conscious of *his* witnessing the

object. Only the Witnessed One is left in his mind; in this state of mind there is no differentiation between the witness, the witnessed, and the act of witnessing. Thus it is not a state of total unconsciousness. If this interpretation is correct, then we may assume that this state of consciousness is psychologically the same as that which the Yogis call *samādhi*, where, after a long effort of concentration and meditation, the whole consciousness of the subject is absorbed in the object of meditation and finally the barrier between subject and object disappears.³³

This *faná'*-experience is rich in content. It is sometimes accompanied by a feeling of awe (*tremendum*)³⁴ such as one has before a majestic king. Ghazali writes about the watchful meditation (*murāqabah*) of the *Ṣiddīq* (see note 36 below) as follows:

It is the meditation of Glorification and Majesty. This means that the heart is absorbed (*mustaghriq*) in meditation of that Majesty and collapses under the awe (*haybah*). There is no room left in his heart for turning aside to others.³⁵

It is a completely benumbed passivity³⁶ before the Majesty and Grandeur of God Who has created heaven and earth by just saying, "Be!"³⁷

On the other hand, there is also a strong feeling of joy (*fascinans*),³⁸ when the mysteries of the divine sovereignty (*mulk*) are disclosed:

...his heart is flooded with rapture which almost carries him away at the occurrence of the disclosure (*kashf*). He is amazed to find himself still standing and enduring the force of his joy and rapture. This is what is known by direct experience (*dhawq*).³⁹

The vision (*ru'yah*) of God is often compared to the dazzling brightness of the sun:

...discursive meditation (*fikr*) on His essence, His attributes and the meanings of His names — all this is prohibited, as it is said: "Meditate on the creation of God, but not the essence of God." This is because the intellect becomes bewildered in it. Therefore, no one can raise his sight toward Him, except the *Siddiqūn*. Even they cannot see for long. The state of the eyes of other people in relation to the Majesty of God is like that of the eyes of the bat in relation to the light of the sun.⁴⁰

Partly because of the Majesty and Grandeur of God and partly because of the ineffability of this experience, man's small intellect feels crushed under the resulting bewilderment, confusion and astonishment.

At the same time, however, the contemplative mind intuits a knowledge of a dimension completely different from that of ordinary knowledge; the veil which hitherto covered his eyes has now been lifted so that he can see things as they really are:

...the secret of the heart in which the real nature of the Truth is completely revealed so that it is enlarged in such a way as to include the whole world and know all of it, and the form of everything is revealed in it. At this moment, its light shines very brightly since all beings show themselves as they really are. This was previously hindered by a niche which is like the veil of the light.⁴¹

When the preparation on the part of man is over,

God now becomes the caretaker of the heart of His servant and

undertakes to illumine the heart with the light of Knowledge (*'ilm*). When God undertakes the care of the heart, mercy floods in on it and the light shines in, the heart is expanded (*insharaḥa*),⁴² and the secret of the divine kingdom (*malakūt*)⁴³ is revealed...⁴⁴

But this state of *faná'* usually does not last long:

Sometimes this contemplation (*mushāhadah*) in which nothing appears but the True One (*al-Wāḥid al-Ḥaqq*) lasts, and sometimes it happens instantaneously like swift lightning — this is the ordinary case. It seldom lasts long.⁴⁵

These are the characteristics of the *faná'*-experience or the fourth type of *tawḥid* which Ghazali describes. But is this mystical experience? We must next examine his *faná'*-experience more closely against the general background.

We propose to characterize "mystical experience" and the unitive state under the following five headings:⁴⁶

(1) *Sense of the Beyond* — In spite of laborious and meticulous preparation and practice, there is always in this unitive state a feeling that one is caught up by, or unified with, a superior power, the Absolute One, or God. This is because the unitive state is attained or given as a grace from God⁴⁷ only when one has reached the state of absolute stillness by removing all effort and will to do anything, self-consciousness, and even consciousness of the loss of consciousness. One is completely passive. If something comes and fills the mind, it comes from "outside," with irresistible force. This leaves so strong an impression that it drastically changes the inner life of the subject. Ghazali speaks, as we have seen, of the sense of awe and dazzling bewilderment in confrontation with the Majesty

and Grandeur of God, and also about the inability "to turn to other," because of "passing away from everything except the Witnessed One."

(2) *Sense of joy and exaltation* — This state is accompanied by a strong sense of joy and rapture. This is explained as "the breaking-up of the restriction imposed on one as an individual being, and this breaking-up is not a mere negative incident but quite a positive one fraught with significance, because it means an infinite expansion of the individual."⁴⁸ We have already seen Ghazali's description of this state as an unbearable rapture.

(3) *Ineffability* — All the mystics are unanimous in saying that the unitive state defies expression and cannot be communicated in words; it is something that is experienced in that special state of consciousness in which the disparity of subject and object is utterly obliterated. Consequently, it baffles the human intellect and eludes expression in words. It is, therefore, best characterized by symbols, and direct experience (*dhawq*) is emphasized. Ghazali speaks of the inadequacy of words to describe this mental state, and of the intellectual bewilderment that is involved. He also warns against the inherent danger that the mystic faces when he attempts to express such an experience.

(4) *Intuitive and noetic quality* — Nonetheless, this psychological state can be described in terms of intuitive knowledge (insight, enlightenment, illumination, light, or revelation, etc.), which is totally different from ordinary knowledge. Usually special terms such as *gnósis*, *prajñā*, or *ma'rifah* are applied to this supernatural knowledge. This is also true with Ghazali, when he speaks about "knowing (*'arafa*) God," and "the knowledge (*ma'rifah*) of God," when referring to this unitive state.⁴⁹ According to him, when the human heart is freed and purified from the stains of the "I" or

ego-consciousness, it reflects, like a polished mirror, the real nature of things and the unseen world (*'alam al-malakūt*), which is symbolically expressed as "the Preserved Tablet" (*al-lawḥ al-mahfūz*).⁵⁰

(5) *Transiency* — This experience does not last long. As W. James notes, "Except in rare instances, half an hour, at most an hour or two, seems the limit beyond which they fade into the light of common day."⁵¹ We have seen above the same descriptions by Ghazali.⁵²

It is now easy to draw a conclusion from our discussion of what Ghazali calls the fourth class of *tawḥīd* or the *faná'* in *tawḥīd*. It is, in short, this unitive state of mystical experience.⁵³ Just as the unitive state imprints its mark on the mystic's heart and changes his whole spiritual outlook, so the *faná'* has the same effects on the heart of the Sufi. The Sufi, by annihilating the self, sees nothing but the Witnessed One — neither "I" nor "you"; neither tree nor house. He realizes — or rather it is disclosed to him — that there is nothing in existence but God, the Truth. This comes to him with such force that no amount of logical argument can refute it.⁵⁴ This is *yaqīn*. After the *faná'*-experience, he is left with an unshakable spiritual conviction. Now, whatever he looks at, he sees God in it. In this way, the *faná'*-experience changes the Sufi's inner life, in such a way that "from one occurrence to another it is susceptible to continuous development in what is felt as inner richness and importance."⁵⁵

It is obvious now that if the *tawḥīd* of the fourth class describes the unitive state, then the *tawḥīd* of the third class points to those who have experienced this unitive state, but reverted to the "normal" state of consciousness, since the unitive state does not last long. Thus, not only do they know that everything is from God, but actually see everything coming from Him and they act accordingly.⁵⁶

The mystic, after this unforgettable, blissful experience, has a strong yearning for this exquisite state of sublime happiness. In the theistic tradition this is expressed in terms of the yearning (*shawq*) of the lover for the beloved. St. Teresa describes this after-effect superbly as follows:

... the soul has been wounded with love for the Spouse and seeks more opportunity of being alone, trying, so far as possible to one in its state, to renounce everything which can disturb it in this its solitude. That sight of Him which it has had is so deeply impressed upon it that its whole desire is to enjoy it once more.⁵⁷

Now the fire of love (*maḥabbah*) has been kindled in the heart of the mystic. It will never go out until it burns and consumes all in him that is not for his beloved. His sole concern becomes the meeting with God. He finds utmost joy in removing every obstacle for being alone with Him and having confidential talk (*munājāt*). The mystic's thought always returns to Him. To be sure, his every thought and act are for Him.⁵⁸ This is the Absolute Single-Heartedness (*al-ikhlās al-muṭlaq*) that we have mentioned above.⁵⁹ Now we are back to the beginning of our discussion — the third *tawḥīd* means an actual commitment to the creed, and this cannot be reached by Kalām.

The only essential practice of the mystic besides the prescribed duties after his unitive experience, "is to always keep his heart in God. Then, nothing appears in his eye that does not give a lesson and a warning from Him, and a thought about Him."⁶⁰ There is no possibility of Satanic insinuation (*waswās*), if there is no room in his heart for love of the world. He becomes free from the world in every aspect (*al-zāhid al-muṭlaq* or *al-mustaghni*).⁶¹ The more he "knows" (*'arafa*) God, the more he loves Him. His love (*maḥabbah*) turns into passionate love (*'ishq*), and from this results the state of intimacy (*uns*) with God and a lasting sense of nearness to Him.

Even at this stage, however, the yearning (*shawq*) for God does not come to an end. The mystic's life in this world does not allow him to indulge in continuous contemplation (*mushāhadah*). Worldly disturbances mar the clarity of his contemplation and distract his attention. Therefore, the complete vision (*ru'yah*) of God and the meeting with Him (*liqā' Allāh*) is only possible in the Hereafter, when the mystic is freed from worldly bonds. Human's highest joy and happiness (*sa'ādah*) is realized only in the Hereafter (*ākhirah*). This is the ultimate goal (*ghāyah*) of human beings.⁶²

Life in this world (*dunyā*) is a preparation for this goal. The more one knows and loves God in the world, the freer one is to be with Him in the Hereafter. On the other hand, if one's heart is sunken in this life, it will yearn for this world even after death, and will therefore be hindered in meeting God. "Man dies in the same state as he has lived, and he is resurrected in the same state as he has died."⁶³ This world is a training ground for the human heart to be purified. The human body is the tool for it. Thus, the world has a positive meaning in relation to this goal, and the *fanā'*-experience has an eschatological significance. It is a foretelling of this Supreme Happiness in the Hereafter.

3. *Riyāḍah*, or "Training"

We have seen in the previous section that the third type of *tawḥīd* means to learn by direct experience, to see the multiplicity of phenomena of the world as coming directly from the One, God, and therefore not put any reliance on secondary causes. We have also seen that this is the logical conclusion of Ash'arite theology. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand this view of *tawḥīd* intellectually. However, to grasp this view intellectually is one thing; it is quite another to realize its truth with *yaqīn* and to make a real commitment

to it. There is a deep chasm between these two conditions. Why does this occur? How can we cross this chasm? This leads us to the problem of human nature, or the heart, and the problem of its training.

Ghazali, needless to say, does not mean by the word "heart" (*qalb*)⁶⁴ the physical organ (*al-laḥm al-ṣanawbart*) in the human body. It is something "subtle (*latīfah*), lordly (*rabbānī*), and spiritual (*rūḥānī*)"⁶⁵ in all humans, which cannot be grasped through the senses. This heart is also called "spirit" (*rūḥ*), or "the serene soul (*al-naḥs al-muṭma'innah*)",⁶⁶ or "a precious substance" (*jawhar naḥs*), or "noble pearl" (*durr 'azīz*).⁶⁷ Though not a tangible part of humans, it nonetheless is related to the physical heart in a way that only a few can know.⁶⁸ It is "that part of humans which grasps (*mudrik*), knows (*'ālim*), and intuitively (*'arīf*)",⁶⁹ of which the body is its instrument and vessel. It is a continuous entity of man, or the subject, which thinks, perceives and moves the body. It is something that cannot be the object of thinking and perception.⁷⁰ It is "the essence of man" (*ḥaqīqah al-insān*).⁷¹

This "essence of man," however, has a transcendental meaning or dimension. Thus it is called "a secret (*sirr*) of God's secrets," or "a subtlety (*latīfah*) of His subtleties,"⁷² or something divine (*amr ilāhī*), which belongs to the eternal decree (*amr*)⁷³ of God. It is "the deposit" (*amānah*), which God has entrusted to man. Such is it that the heavens, the earth, and the mountains could not bear it and flinched when it was offered to them.⁷⁴ It is the primordial purity which Adam possessed before his fall from God's grace.⁷⁵ It is the real nature of man in the sense that it is a stranger in the human body, and thus something other than "humanity" (*basharīyah*). It is something of which it is said: "He who knows the heart, knows himself. He who knows himself, knows his Lord."⁷⁶ It is something which knows God (*al-'ālim bi-Allāh*); something which comes close to God

(*al-mutaqarrīb ilā Allāh*); something which act for God (*'āmil li-Allāh*); something which strives toward God (*al-sā'ī ilā Allāh*); something in which is revealed what is beside God and with Him.⁷⁷ In short, it is something which makes possible the unique relationship between humans and God. Humans can know and love God, thus, in spite of the fact that there is an absolute difference (*tanzīh*) between them.⁷⁸ Because of this very nature, the human heart essentially yearns for its Origin.⁷⁹

Although man's essence derives from something other than this world, he lives in the physical body, or in the world of the senses (*'ālam al-mulk*). Consequently, he needs something other than the heart which is not the essence of man, as a means to maintain his bodily life in this world. The limbs, the senses, the intellectual faculty — these, and others are its vessels and tools. The two propensities of *shahwah* (desire) and *ghaḍab* (anger) are the most basic of them. The former is the human inclination toward something pleasant and the latter is the tendency to reject and turn away from something harmful and unpleasant.⁸⁰ These two inclinations constitute the drive of emotion (*bā'ith al-hawā*). Humans' essential yearning for their Origin, however, is expressed as the drive of piety (*bā'ith al-dīn*).⁸¹

When the drive of emotion is well trained and completely tamed (*al-naḥs al-muṭma'innah*),⁸² and the drive of piety becomes dominant in humans, they then become angelic and thus come close to God.⁸³ On the other hand, if this drive of emotion is left undisciplined (*al-naḥs al-ammārah bi'l-sú*), they come close to the animals. Humans occupy the intermediate and ambivalent position between the angel and the animal.⁸⁴

When one neglect the care of the desires, they easily become prey to Satanic insinuation (*waswās*). They are, in fact, the "food"

(*qút*) of Satan.⁸⁵ The most basic of these desires are gluttony (*shahwah al-baṭn*) and sexual desire (*shahwah al-farj*).⁸⁶ These are protected by "indignation" (*ghaḍab*).

When one satisfies these basic desires, one then considers the need to secure the condition of wealth. Hence a love of wealth. Then it is necessary to think of means to secure this wealth — fame (*jáh*), and its many attributes: knowledge (*'ilm*), beauty (*jamál*), genealogy (*nasab*), and position. Hence the love of these things. Thus, worldly desires expand endlessly.

According to Ghazali, a love of wealth, fame, and power is deeply rooted in human nature itself. They arise from the quality of lordliness (*ṣifah rubúbíyah*); that is, a human's inborn yearning for perfection (*kamál*).⁸⁷ Essentially this should be sought for in yearning for God — the personal knowledge (*ma'rífah*) of God and freedom (*ḥurríyah*) from worldly desires.⁸⁸

However, human beings usually tend to seek for it in the opposite direction — in such worldly values as knowledge, professional skill, beauty, power, etc. Because human abilities are limited, the desire for perfection cannot be absolute. This thirst for perfection is mostly realized through competition with rivals, domination of others, and recognition by other people. When this fact is forgotten and a human being's relative perfection is mistaken to be an absolute, they are misled to claim divine authority for themselves like the Pharaoh, who said, "I am your Lord Most High."⁸⁹ The dominant qualities of such humans are thus haughtiness (*kibr*), conceit (*'ujb*),⁹⁰ envy (*ḥasad*), rancor (*ḥiqh*), hypocrisy (*riyá'*), etc. Potentially all humans have such demonic characteristics in their very nature.

The common basis for all this is attachment to the world with the

consequent neglect of the Hereafter. "The root of every sin is love of the world."⁹¹ The two worlds — this world (*dunyá*) and the Hereafter (*áakhirah*)⁹² — are mutually exclusive and cannot be compatible. If one is dominant, the other is weakened, and *vice versa*. They are like a measured amount of water divided in two glasses — the more water in one glass, the less in the other.⁹³

When the glass of this world is filled, that of the Hereafter is empty. In this condition, the chief concern for people is success in this world, either through intellectual pursuit, business, politics, or some other endeavor. This is a disease of the heart. But most people do not know that they are ill. Even if they do, they do not realize how serious it is or how urgent a remedy is needed, since a physical disease terminates with death, but that of the heart does not.⁹⁴ So they must be cured of all the diseases of the heart before their bodily death, which may come at any moment.

This is the normal state of people in the second *tawhíd* which was discussed earlier. Next must be taken the initial step to bridge the chasm between the second and the third types of *tawhíd* — that is, to use the analogy above, to refill the water glass of the Hereafter by emptying that of this world. This crucial step is repentance (*tawbah*), which, when sudden and radical, may be called conversion.

Repentance consists of a profound realization (*'ilm*) of one's sins and past sinful life, and a painful remorse (*nadam*) for these sinful acts through which people have lost their God. Alienated from Him, they make a decision (*'azm*) to give up sin once and for all,⁹⁵ and "to return from the way whose guide is desire (*shahwah*) and whose guardian is Satan to the way of God"⁹⁶ and reclaim humans' original purity. It is a decision to radically reverse their whole orientation which has been bent toward the world, and re-channel all their energy in an entirely new direction. But this cannot be done in a day,

of course. The more familiar people have been with the world, the more difficult and painful it is for them to part from it. They stand at the bottom of a long and rugged ladder of the Sufi Way (*via purgativa*) whose laborious climb leads to a complete transformation of character. Their only capital is their own effort in accordance with God's will and divine help. The serious battle against Satan starts anew at each stage of the Sufi way.

The human heart is the battle-field between two armies — Satan versus the angels.⁹⁷ The forces of Satan are “desires” and “insinuations” (*waswās*). The former is also called “foot soldiers” and the latter “air forces.”⁹⁸ Insinuation is a kind of prompting (*khāṭir*) which comes to our mind. It is called Satanic because it insinuates an evil idea into humans and is to be distinguished from the angelic prompting (*ilhām*) which comes from the angels.⁹⁹ The forces of angels fight against those of Satan with their prompting, knowledge (*‘ilm*), will (*irādah*) and other aids.¹⁰⁰

Humans sometimes yield to Satan's assaults of desire and insinuation, and sometimes they withstand them with support of the drive of piety (*bā'ith al-dīn*) and angelic inspiration. For instance, they know that the Day of Judgement is coming and set out to prepare for it. But they may later change their decision and postpone the preparation, thus yielding to the insinuation of Satan that the Day will not come tomorrow nor in the near future. They still have concerns more immediate than the matter of the Hereafter and God.

However, the higher a person goes up the ladder, the more subtle and dexterous the technique of Satanic temptation becomes. Satan takes on a disguise of piety and faith, and approaches the novice through the back door. Thus the novice may feel proud of his own inner development without being aware of the trap.

During these ascetic exercises (*mujāhadah*), the temperament sometimes deteriorates, the intellect becomes confused, and the body sick. When the training and correction of the soul do not make progress through knowledge of realities, then the heart is possessed by false fantasies, with which his soul is pleased. This lasts for a long time until he dies and his life comes to an end before he succeeds. How many Sufis there are who walked this path and then remained possessed by a single false fantasy for twenty years! If knowledge had been established beforehand, the trick of that fantasy would have been detected instantly.¹⁰¹

The path is haunted by Satanic forces and full of danger and pitfalls. A moment's heedlessness can hurl one into a bottomless abyss.

Since humans cannot directly stop the Satanic assaults, they must remove their “food” and block the routes of these assaults. They must clean their inside and remove foul residue. Next they must sever worldly ties and attachments by retreating from the world itself (*‘uzlah*) — family, society, possessions, political power, fame, etc. Thus they cut off the main source of Satanic temptation.¹⁰²

This renunciation of the world is extremely difficult. The stronger the tie to the world has been, and the greater share of the world they have had, the more painful it is to separate oneself from it. Satan makes every effort to hold humans back. However, once they have made a decision, they must fight against Satan, with the knowledge that the greatest and most lasting happiness is Meeting with God. Worldly things are of no use to this end and only the love of God can help them. Then they must train and curb their basic desires by ascetic exercises like fasting (*ṣawm*), silence (*ṣamt*), night vigil (*sahr*), and seclusion (*khalwah*). In this way, they block the routes of Satan, shut all the windows of their senses to the outer world, and minimize Satanic exploitation.¹⁰³

Renunciation of the world itself, however, does not kill one's love of the world, although it is a significant advance toward that goal. Next the Sufis have to take on the no less difficult task of reshaping their worldview into a God-oriented one. They must acquire "the qualities of God" (*akhlāq Allāh*), or "the praiseworthy qualities" (*al-akhlāq al-ḥamīdah*). Indeed, renunciation of the world and asceticism are all included in this task.

How can they perform this task? The theory is that they can acquire a certain habit first by putting this desired trait into practice, and then repeating it over and over again, until it becomes their second nature.¹⁰⁴ The beginning is the most difficult part, and Satanic assaults and temptations are also the toughest to reject at this stage.

So the Sufis must mobilize all the resources of their knowledge to persuade themselves that this must be done. At this stage, they should make full use of that powerful ideological weapon, the dogma of *tawḥīd*. Compelled by the logical argument of the *tawḥīd* and pushed forward by a strong will, they must commit themselves to practice. When they keep to the same practices in this way, the initial painfulness and difficulty gradually disappear, and there occurs a change in their character, if that is the will of God.

The important thing is perseverance (*muwāḏabah* or *mudāwamah*) even if the practices can only be performed a little at a time.¹⁰⁵ Thus, the heart acquires the praiseworthy traits with the help of both knowledge ('*ilm*) and practice ('*amal*), and replaces the love of the world with the love of God.¹⁰⁶ To improve one's character to the utmost extent of one's ability through practice — this is the meaning of training (*riyāḏah*). This is possible because of the hidden relationship between the heart and the bodily members.¹⁰⁷ But all of this occurs as always only if God wills it.

Every disease has a cause ('*illah*). The remedy for it is to diagnose the cause and then to begin a proper course of treatment that is directly opposite to this cause and persevere in it. If, for example, the main cause of the disease of the heart is miserliness (*bukhl*), the Sufis must first persuade themselves with the knowledge of *tawḥīd*, that wealth is of no use in the Hereafter, that miserliness or attachment to worldly possessions is a deadly poison for future Happiness, that wealth and poverty come from God, and so on. At the same time, they practice the virtue opposite to it, namely, generosity. They give away their possessions and persevere in this. The practice is very hard in the beginning. But doing it constantly over a long period of time, the hardship they experienced at the outset gradually disappears, and generosity finally becomes their second nature (*khuṣṣlah*).¹⁰⁸

If the disease is caused by eye-service (*riyā'*),¹⁰⁹ the novices must educate themselves to realize that, "if God is watching, that is enough. Praise and renown among the people are of no use in the eyes of God and in the Hereafter. What is the use of people's recognition of you, when you are damned by God? What matter is their blame of you, when you are blessed by God in the Hereafter?" Terrible battles are fought in this state between Satanic insinuation and the angelic forces. With the help of God (*tawfiq*), people are persuaded to put into practice the virtue opposite to it — to accustom themselves to hiding their worship until it makes no difference whether or not others watch their acts of worship.¹¹⁰ If the cause is their haughtiness (*kibr*), then they must teach themselves that there is no sense to regard themselves as superior to others, since all is the work of God. Thus they persuade themselves to a commitment against Satanic insinuation, and they succeed in humbling themselves through their behavior.¹¹¹

Still it is not easy to kill love of the world by renouncing it and curbing human desires to re-shape the character after the pattern of

God. It takes a long time. This effort must be assisted by a fight on another front. When humans love God and are concerned only about the Hereafter, they do not love the world, since the two are incompatible. When their love of God increases, then their love of the world decreases to the same extent. So they must first attempt to strengthen their love of God. For this endeavor, they need a twofold approach.

Knowledge precedes love. If humans know about God, they love Him. So, novices begin by teaching themselves, based on the dogma of *tawhīd*, the mercy (*rahmah*) and favors (*ni'am*) which God has bestowed. They must remind themselves that they owe their existence to God, for He is the Controller of those who do good to them. He is the Creator of the good, the good deed and the good-doer; God is perfect (*kāmil*) and beautiful (*jamil*). All beings love themselves and their own life's duration. All respond to favors bestowed on them. Hence they love the one who gives favors to them. All love the good, the good deed, and thus all love the good-doer. All love beauty for its own sake. God is all this and He does all this. How could humans not love Him?¹¹² If they do not, then they educate themselves in all this constantly, over and over again, day after day, until God rewards their endeavor with His grace of love.

Furthermore, when humans love someone, they want to be close to him or her, to mention and praise him or her, and to think about him or her all the time. Thus, they first practise the virtues of the real lover of God. They keep their heart always with God (*ḥuḍūr al-qalb*), on intimate terms with Him (*uns*), ardently remembering (*dhikr*), mentioning and praising Him. They make an effort to turn all their concerns toward God, the Beloved, and keep their thought on Him constantly.¹¹³

When they are occupied with the thought of God, there is little

chance for Satan to interfere. This in turn helps them in the battle against the love of the world, the first front. But, it is very difficult to keep their heart occupied with God. Satan soon finds a way into the memory and imagination, distracting one's attention. This is so even when supported by good character, and when the desires of the outer world are blocked in seclusion. At this higher stage a special method is usually required to remove the last residue of Satan's "food" and to take the final leap toward absolute stillness. We shall discuss in the following chapters the problem of *dhikr* and *du'ā'* in relation to this training of the heart.

Notes to Chapter Two

- (1) Grammatically, *tawhīd* is a verbal noun of the second causative form (*fa'ala*) of *waḥada* ("to be alone, one"). When this derivative form is applied to God, it comes to mean "to make God one," "to profess and declare that God is one." Hence, theologically, this has come to signify upholding the absolute oneness of God and His definitive difference (*mukhdālafah*) from all other beings, while maintaining the "personal" relationship between humans and God which is vividly depicted in the Qur'ān.
- (2) Literally "speech." For its technical usage, see L. Gardet, "Kalām" and "Ilm al-Kalām," *EP*, IV, 468-71 and *EP*, III, 1141-50 respectively. The term *uṣūl al-dīn* ("the roots of religion") is also used as a synonym of *kalām*. However, traditionalists and conservative theologians tend to use the term *uṣūl al-dīn* to avoid the innovative connotation of the *kalām*.
- (3) *Lā ilāha illā Allāh*. Needless to say, the latter half of it is: "Muḥammad is the Messenger of God" (*Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*).
- (4) See *Ihyā'*, IV, 240 (K. Tawhīd, Bayān ḥaqīqah al-tawhīd); I, 34 (K. 'Ilm, Bayān mā-badala...). See also Ghazālī, *Imlā'*, 99-149. Cf. Junayd's classification of *tawhīd*, which apparently influenced Ghazali's conception (A. H. Abdel-Kader, *The Life, Personality, and Writings of al-Junayd*, 68-75).
- (5) Cf. *Munqidh*, 16 (Watt, 28). This is originally a legal term for the juridical process of solving a problem by choosing a ready-made answer of the ancient authorities, rather than by going all the way through the complicated processes directly based on the Four Roots of Law (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) — Qur'ān, Sunnah, Ijmā' (consensus) and Qiyās (analogy).
- (6) To give a brief account of this important term, Ghazali uses it in two different senses — that of the logicians (*nazzār*) and theologians, and that of the Sufis. In the former sense, it means that one accepts a certain statement because it has been logically proven and is therefore free from any possibility of doubt (*shakk*). In the latter sense, it means that one accepts a statement not only because there is no doubt, whether logically proven or based on the generally accepted authority, but because it grips the heart to such an extent that it dominates one's entire concern (See *Ihyā'*, I, 73) [K. 'Ilm, bāb 6]. See also F. Jabre, *La notion de certitude selon Ghazali* (Paris, 1958).
- W. C. Smith makes a distinction between faith and belief, and says that faith is "deeper, richer, more personal"; "a quality of the person, not of the system"; "an *engagement*" (Emphasis is author's); "involvement"; "an orientation of the personality, to oneself, to one's neighbor, to the universe; a total response; a way of seeing whatever one sees and of handling whatever one handles; a capacity to live at a more than mundane level; to see, to feel, to act in terms of, a transcendent dimension," while belief is "the holding of certain ideas"; "the intellect's translation... of transcendence into ostensible terms" ("Faith and Belief, As Seen by a Comparative Religionist," Public Lecture at University of Toronto, 1968 [mimeographed], esp. 6-13). We might assume that Ghazali's two types of *yaqīn* nearly correspond to this distinction between faith and belief. However, when Ghazali says that this latter *yaqīn* or faith comes only from the *fanā'*-experience as we shall see later, he apparently takes a stand — that

of Sufism.

- (7) *Ihyā'*, I, 23 (K. 'Ilm, bāb 2, Bayān al-'ilm... farḍ kifāyah). Ghazali compares the role of the theologian to the watch-dog on the way of the Pilgrimage (*Ibid.*).
- (8) Ghazali, of course, does not deny the usefulness of knowledge ('ilm), especially when it is conducive to the Happiness (*sa'ādah*) in the Hereafter, namely, knowledge about God, the nature of the human heart and others. Even this sort of knowledge, however, can be harmful when it is used for worldly gains. The usefulness of knowledge largely depends upon humans and their intentions ('ulamā' al-ākhirah or 'ulamā' al-dunyā) (Cf. J. Obermann, *Der philosophische und religiöse Subjektivismus Ghazalis* (Wien u. Leipzig, 1921)).
- (9) This occurs at the time of "enlargement" (*inshirāḥ*) of the breast and its "expansion" (*infisāḥ*) and "illumination of the light of the Truth" in it (*Ihyā'*, IV, 241 [K. Tawhīd, Bayān ḥaqīqah al-tawhīd]). These terms will be discussed more fully later in this book.
- (10) *Ihyā'*, IV, 242 (*Ibid.*).
- (11) Cf. *Ihyā'*, IV, 80 (K. Ṣabr, shaṭr 2, rukn 1, Bayān ḥadd al-shukr).
- (12) *Ihyā'*, IV, 240 (K. Tawhīd, Bayān ḥaqīqah al-tawhīd). This is the *tawhīd* of those who are called the Muqarrabūn.
- (13) *Ihyā'*, I, 104 (K. Qawā'id al-'aḳā'id, rukn 1).
- (14) Cf. *Ihyā'*, IV, 243-44 (*Ibid.*).
- (15) *Ihyā'*, III, 25 (K. Qalb, Bayān tasalluṭ al-shayṭān). Ghazali also gives another sequence: the first prompting (*al-khatrah al-ūlā*) → desire (*raghbah*) → deliberation (*hamm*) → aiming (*qaṣd*) → action (*fi'l*) (*Ihyā'*, IV, 388 [K. Murāqabah, Bayān ḥaqīqah al-murāqabah]).
- (16) This seems to be a sheer determinism and poses the serious problem of humans' moral responsibility or free will in the case of human conduct. However, according to Ghazali, determinism (*jabr*), in the strict sense, is only applied to inanimate objects. Humans are in the intermediate position between the sheer determinism of inanimate beings and the perfect free will (*ikhtiyār*) of God, namely, humans have a predetermined free will (*majbūr 'alā al-ikhtiyār*). This means that he is a locus of a will (*irādah*) which occurs as predetermined (*jabran*) after the judgement of reason determines that a certain act is better, and this judgement occurs also as predetermined. This fits well into the actual situation in the sense that we do not know the predetermined will of God until we have actually acted. Thus humans are responsible for their act of murder as an agent (*fā'il*) in the sense that he has been a locus where God has created knowledge, will, power, etc. (*Ihyā'*, IV, 249-50 [K. Tawhīd, Bayān ḥaqīqah al-tawhīd]). See also our later discussion on the *sunnah Allāh*. As for the recent discussions on Ghazali's conception of causality, see: Kwame Gyekye, "Al-Ghazālī on Causality," *An African Journal of Philosophy*, II (1973), 31-39; L.E. Goodman, "Did Al-Ghazālī Deny Causality?" *Studia Islamica*, XLVII (1978), 83-120; I. Alon, "Al-Ghazālī on Causality," *JAOS*, 100 (1980), 397-405; B. Abrahamov, "Al-Ghazālī's Theory of Causality," *Studia Islamica*, 67 (1988), 75-98; M.E. Marmura, "Causation in Islamic Thought," *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, I (1968), 286-289; *idem*, "Al-Ghazālī's Second Causal Theory in the 17th Discussion of His *Tahāfuf*," *Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism* (ed. by P. Morewedge, 1981), 85-112; *idem*, "Ghazālī's Chapter on

Divine Power in the *Iqtisād*," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, IV (1994), 279-315; *idem*, "Ghazalian Causes and Intermediaries," *JAOS*, 115 (1995), 89-100; R. Frank, *Creation and the Cosmic System: al-Ghazālī & Avicenna* (Heidelberg, 1992); *idem*, *Al-Ghazālī and the Ash'arite School* (Durham & London, 1994); *idem*, "Currents and Counter-currents," *Islam: Essays on Scripture, Thought and Society* (ed. by P.G. Riddell & T.S. Street. Leiden, 1997), 113-34.

(17) *Ihyā'*, I, 333 (See Ghazali, *Invocations and Supplications*, 90).

(18) Ghazali makes a distinction between preordination (*qadā'*) and decree (*qadar*). The former is a general, overall determination by God and the latter is His determination for the particular way of fulfilment of the former (See above, and Ghazali, *Invocations*, 90-91).

(19) *Ihyā'*, IV, 242 (K. Tawhīd, Bayān ḥaqīqah al-tawhīd).

(20) *Ihyā'*, III, 230 (K. Dhamm al-bukhl, Bayān tafsīl āfāt al-māl).

(21) Cf. Sūrah 6: 154, 13: 2, 69: 5 and others. Ghazali's own interpretation will be discussed later in this book.

(22) This is called "the Absolute Single-Heartedness" (*al-ikhhlās al-muṭlaq*) (See *Ihyā'*, IV, 368-69 [K. Niyah, bāb 2, Bayān ḥaqīqah al-ikhhlās]).

(23) *Ihyā'*, IV, 238 (K. Tawhīd, [Khuṭbah]).

(24) The Prophet said, "A man has been doing good deeds of the people of Paradise for seventy years so that they suppose that he is one of their group members and there is left only a span of the hand between him and Paradise. Then his fortune turns against him and he commits an evil deed of the people of Hell and goes directly to Hell." Humans really do not know their final destiny until the end of their life (*khātimah*) has come. This fear always makes the Sufis cautious of conceit (*'ujb*), even at their higher stages (*Ihyā'*, IV, 45 [K. Tawbah, rukn 3, Bayān aqṣām al-'ibād]; see also Ghazali, *Invocations*, 27).

(25) This "pragmatic" attitude of Ghazali, to my mind, helps him to utilize anything conducive to the mystical goal, such as *samā'* (musical séance) (See *Ihyā'*, II, 266-302 [K. Samā']).

(26) *Ihyā'*, IV, 240 (K. Tawhīd, Bayān ḥaqīqah al-tawhīd).

(27) *Ibid*.

(28) *Ihyā'*, IV, 240. This is the *tawhīd* of the Ṣiddīq (see note 36 below).

(29) R. A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, 60-61. Hujwīrī means this third *fanā'* when he says the following: "...that annihilation [*fanā'*] comes to a man through vision of the majesty of God and through the revelation of Divine omnipotence to his heart, so that in the overwhelming sense of His majesty this world and the next one are obliterated from his mind, and 'states' and 'stations' appear contemptible in the sight of his aspiring thought, and what is shown to him of miraculous grace vanishes into nothing: he becomes dead to reason and passion alike, dead even to annihilation itself; and in that annihilation of annihilation his tongue proclaims God, and his mind and body are humble and abased, as in the beginning when Adam's posterity were drawn forth from his loins without admixture of evil and took the pledge of servanthship to God (Kor. vii, 171)" (*Kashf al-Mahjūb* [Nicholson], 246; see also Qushayrī's quotation of Junayd's opinion on the *tawhīd* of the adept in *Risālah*, II, 584).

(30) See Ghazali, *Invocations*, 21-22.

(31) Cf. Sūrah 12:31.

(32) *Ihyā'*, II, 288 (K. Samā', bāb 2, maqām 1).

(33) H. Kishimoto, *Shūkyō-shinnpishugi*, 185-86. T. Izutsu explains in terms of linguistic philosophy as follows: As one passes into the state of *samādhi*, the verbal boundaries (*essentia*), which characterize one's view of the world, dissolve and all become a unified and seamless one (T. Izutsu, *Isuramu-tetsugaku no Genzō*, 110-12).

After the passage which I have quoted before (above, PP. 33-34), Ghazali cites the following poem in order to explain the real nature of this *fanā'*-experience: "Fine is the glass and fine the wine, so they mingle together and the things become hard to distinguish/It is as though there were wine and no glass, and as though there were a glass and no wine." In like manner, humans and God are essentially different. There cannot be "union" (*ittiḥād*), nor "incarnation" (*ḥulūl*), nor "fusion" (*wiṣḍ*) between them. It may look as if there were such things, but this is not reality. Therefore, Ghazali says, "I am the Truth!" as did Hallāj (See also Chapter I, note 49 and *Ihyā'*, III, 395 [K. Dhamm al-ghurūr, ṣinf 4]). On the other hand, this psychological explanation by Ghazali tells us that the *fanā'* is psychologically the same as the state in which dichotomy of subject and object, in this case humans and God, is obliterated. Therefore, L. Gardet is correct when, in discussing the development of the *dhikr*, he says that "al-Ghazzālī's analysis in the *Ihyā'* halts at this stage" (i.e. the *dhikr* of the heart and the step of "absorption" [*dhyāna*] of Yoga), falling short of the stage of the *dhikr* of the "inmost being" (*sirr*) and of *samādhi* of Yoga ("Dhikr," *EP*, II, 225), in so far as Ghazali's *dhikr* is concerned. However, it must be borne in mind that this does not represent the whole picture of his mystical experience.

(34) Cf. R. Otto (tr. by J. W. Harvey), *The Idea of the Holy* (A Galaxy Book, 1958), 12-24.

(35) *Ihyā'*, IV, 386 (K. Murāqabah, Bayān ḥaqīqah al-murāqabah).

(36) Ghazali describes this sense of complete passivity as the highest state of the Ṣiddīq as follows: "A man whose heart is fettered to a thing is a slave of it. So the real slave of God is only the one who is first emancipated from anything else but God and has become absolutely free. When this freedom (*hurriyah*) has shown itself, the heart becomes empty; and in it appears the creatureliness (*'ubūdiyyah*) toward God; and his concern centers on God and love for Him; and his inner and outer person becomes fettered to His obedience; and he has no goal but God. Then this passes into another state higher than this, called "absolute freedom." This also means emancipation from his desire for God as a Being distinct from himself (*min ḥayth huwa*). Rather he is content with whatever God wishes for him, whether it be His bringing [him] near Himself or His alienation from him. The creature's will disappears in the will of God. The slave is emancipated from everything other than God and therefore has become free. Then he returns [to his self] and is emancipated from his self and becomes free and lost to himself. He exists only for his Lord and his Master. If He lets him move, he moves. If He stops him, he stops. If He tries him, he is satisfied and there is no room left for asking, request, or opposition. Indeed, he is before God just as a corpse is before the corpse-washer. This is the utmost degree of *ṣidq* in creatureliness to God. The real slave is one whose existence

is for Master, not for himself, and this is the stage of the *Ṣiddiq* (*Ihyā'*, IV, 376-77 [K. Niyah, bāb 3, Bayān ḥaqīqah al-ṣidq]).

(37) Cf. *Sūrah* 2: 117, 3: 47 and others.

(38) Cf. R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 31-40.

(39) *Ihyā'*, IV, 301 (K. Maḥabbah, Bayān al-ajalla...).

(40) *Ihyā'*, IV, 419 (K. Tafakkur, Bayān majārf al-fikr).

(41) *Ihyā'*, III, 395 (K. Dhamm al-ghurūr, ṣinf 3).

(42) Cf. above, p. 28, note 9.

(43) See Ghazali, *Invocations*, 26, note C.

(44) *Ihyā'*, III, 18 (K. Qalb, Bayān al-farq...).

(45) *Ihyā'*, IV, 241 (K. Tawhīd, Bayān ḥaqīqah al-tawhīd) and others.

(46) W. James gives as the classical "four marks" of it: (i) Ineffability, (ii) Noetic quality, (iii) Transcendency, and (iv) Passivity (*The Varieties*, 380-82).

H. Kishimoto characterizes it by its (i) Unique intuitiveness, (ii) Sense of Entity, (iii) Sense of joyful exaltedness, and (iv) Ineffability (*Shūkyō-shinpishugi*, 46-49).

D. T. Suzuki's characterization of the Zen Buddhist experience of Enlightenment (*satori*) by (i) Irrationality, (ii) Intuitive insight, (iii) Authoritativeness, (iv) Affirmation, (v) Sense of the Beyond, (vi) Impersonal tone, (vii) Feeling of exaltation, and (viii) Momentariness (*Essays in Zen Buddhism*, 2nd ser. [Kyoto, 1933], 15-22) is similar.

On the other hand, E. Underhill, criticizing W. James' notion, proposes "four other notes": (i) True mysticism is active and practical, not passive and theoretical. It is an organic life-process, something which the whole life does; not something which intellect holds as opinion. (ii) Its aims are wholly transcendental and spiritual... Though the mystic does not, as his enemies declare, neglect his duty to the many, his heart is always set on the changeless One. (iii) This One is for the mystic not merely the Object of Love, never an object of exploration. (iv) Living union with this One — which is the term of his adventure — is a definite state or form of enhanced life (*Mysticism*, 81-94).

It is certainly to Underhill's credit that she proposed to view mysticism as a matter of whole life. In this sense, she is right when she stresses the "active," "practical," and dynamic character of the mystic life. Certainly what is usually called mystical experience does not represent the whole picture of the mystic's experiences, that is, what the mystic experiences during his whole spiritual life as a mystic. This "mystical experience" is only one stage which all mystics pass through on their way to the ultimate goal. It is, however, still true that the above-mentioned characteristic of "mystical experience" as a necessary stage of every mystic can be applied as an important criterion. She pointedly proposes the term "the unitive state" for this experience, and I am using it in this particular sense. On the other hand, when she stresses the "living and personal Object of Love" as an essential character of mysticism, it does not take into account the "impersonal tone" of the Zen experience (See above).

(47) Therefore, it is sometimes called "supernatural" (D.C. Butler, *Western Mysticism* [Harper Torchbooks, 1966], p. xxi).

(48) D.T. Suzuki, *Essays*, 2nd ser., 20.

(49) It is puzzling, however, that we often come across in the *Ihyā'* an obvious, almost intentional violation of this customary rule of distinction between '*ilm* and *ma'rifah*' (e.g. above, p. 37 and *Ihyā'*, I, 285 [K. Tilāwah, bāb 3]; IV, 79 and others). Is this due to his view that there is no essential difference between '*ilm* and the conceptualized contents of *ma'rifah*? This question remains unresolved.

(50) Cf. *Sūrah* 85: 22.

(51) W. James, *The Varieties*, 381.

(52) It may be necessary, at this juncture, to make a distinction between union, or the unitive state, and trance. Physically speaking, the unitive state is a trance. E. Underhill writes: "The subject may slide into a trance gradually from a period of absorption in, or contemplation of, some idea which has filled the field of consciousness... During the trance, breathing and circulation are depressed. The body is more or less cold and rigid, remaining in the exact position which it occupied at the oncoming of the ecstasy..." (*Mysticism*, 359). Sometimes entrancement and unconsciousness are so deep and complete that there is a total anaesthesia or there results a state of death like catalepsy, lasting for hours, and even for days. This state is very dangerous (See e.g. the death of Nūrf [Sarrāj, *Luma'*, 290]). Such physical symptoms, however, are not the essential part of the unitive state. They occur sometimes due to certain abnormal and pathological psychophysical conditions. The most peculiar characteristic of trance, according to H. Kishimoto (*Shūkyō-shinpishugi*, 206), is that it does not leave any effect of the experience on the inner life of the subject. Even if he tries to recall his experience, he cannot remember it. On the other hand, the unitive state leaves a deep impression of the experience in the mind. It makes a distinctive mark on the subsequent psychological state and spiritual life of the subject. We should regard trance as an abnormal by-product. When these two are mixed up and only the physical aspect of trance is emphasized, the result may be disastrous.

(53) However, Ghazali is careful in his expression of this as we have mentioned before. He says: "There is no *agent* (*fā'il*) other than God" (above, p. 28); "to see in existence but One" (*Ihyā'*, IV, 240); "He does not see but One Agent" (*ibid.*); "In his vision, there appears nothing but the One" (*Ibid.*); "He who knows the Truth sees Him in everything, as everything is from Him, to Him, by Him and for Him. He is everything actually ('*alā al-tahqīq*') (*Ihyā'*, I, 284 [K. Tilāwah, bāb 3]) (All emphases are mine). But he never says unconditionally: "There is nothing in existence except God" or "God is everything" or "God is in everything." Only once he says, "Verily He does not love but Himself in the sense that He is everything and that there is nothing in existence but He" (*Ihyā'*, IV, 319 [K. Maḥabbah, Bayān maḥabbah Allāh]). (Emphasis is mine). This, however, reminds me of the example which Ghazali has given in order to show how we can see one in multiplicity: Man is one in his entirety, but is many at the same time since he is composed of many bodily members (*Ihyā'*, IV, 241). Therefore, this statement of his should not be taken in the absolute sense. His *tawhīd* is always expressed in terms of process, not ontology. He must be aware of the danger in this *tawhīd*, which easily slips into the pantheism of, say, Ibn 'Arabi's *waḥdah al-wujūd* (See A. E. Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyid Din Ibnul Arabi*, 55-57).

(54) D.T. Suzuki mentions this "authoritativeness" as one of the characteristics of *satori* (See above).

(55) W. James, *The Varieties*, 381.

(56) Actually, however, the third *tawhíd* not only comes after the *fand'*, but also comes before the next *fand'*-experience. By repeating this process, the spiritual life of the mystic may become more and more sublime. And finally, after passing the stage of the unitive state, he attains to the last stage of "the unitive life" (E. Underhill, *Mysticism*, 413-43), where every single moment of his ordinary life is, so to speak, the state of *fand'*, all the while retaining his personality intact.

(57) St. Teresa, *Interior Castle* (Image Books, 1961), 126.

(58) For the mystic, this approach to God and love of Him on the part of humans are nothing but a sign of God's love toward them. Since God is the Creator of all and there is nothing in existence but His work, there can be only God's Self-love, through humans and His other creatures (See *Ihyá'*, IV, 319 [K. Maḥabbah, Bayán maḥabbah Allāh]).

(59) See above, pp. 30-31.

(60) *Ihyá'*, I, 355 (K. Tartīb al-awrád, bāb 1, Bayán ikhtilāf al-awrád).

(61) See *Ihyá'*, IV, 212 (K. Faqr, shaṭr 2, Bayán ḥaqīqah al-zuhd) and IV, 186 (*Ibid.*, shaṭr 1, Bayán ḥaqīqah al-faqr).

(62) *Ihyá'*, IV, 314 (K. Maḥabbah, Bayán ma'ná al-shawq). According to Ghazali, however, humans cannot have a complete Vision of God even in the Hereafter, as there is no limit to God's essence and attributes (*al-umūr al-ildhiyah*). Therefore, humans' yearning for God will continue endlessly (*Ibid.*) (Cf. Qushayrī, *Risālah*, I, 195).

(63) *Ihyá'*, I, 305 (Ghazali, *Invocations*, 28-29).

(64) As we shall discuss below, the connotation of the Arabic word *qalb* is not exactly the same as that of the English word "heart" (See Ghazali, *Invocations*, 22, note B). However, this word will suffice in this book.

(65) *Ihyá'*, III, 3 (K. Qalb, Bayán ma'ná al-nafs).

(66) Cf. Sūrah 89: 27.

(67) *Ihyá'*, I, 54 (K. 'Ilm, bāb 5).

(68) *Ihyá'*, III, 3.

(69) *Ibid.*

(70) When Muhammad Iqbal writes about Ghazali's notion of ego, he is speaking of the hear, in this sense: "...the ego is a simple, indivisible, and immutable soul-substance entirely different from the groups of our mental states and unaffected by the passage of time. Our conscious experience is a unity because our mental states are related as so many qualities to this simple substance which persists unchanged during the flux of its qualities. My recognition of you is possible only if I persist unchanged between the original perception and the present act of memory" (*The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* [Lahore, repr., 1960], 100).

(71) *Ihyá'*, III, 3.

(72) *Ihyá'*, I, 54.

(73) Cf. Sūrah 17: 85. This *amr*, according to Ghazali, does not mean "command," as used in opposition to prohibition (*nahy*), nor "a matter" (*sha'n*), which is a mere creation of God. Ghazali classifies the worlds into two, both of which belong to God (*li-Allāh*): the world of creation (*'alam al-khalq*) and the world of *amr* (*Ihyá'*, III, 370-71 [K. Dhamm al-ghurūr, Bayán dhamm al-ghurūr]). This scheme corresponds exactly to his other cosmological classification of the worlds: the world of phenomena (*'alam al-mulk wa-al-shahādah*) and the unseen world (*'alam al-malakūt*) (To be more precise, there is another intermediate world [*'alam al-jabarūt*] between these two. See Ghazali, *Invocations*, 26, note c; K. Nakamura, "Imām Ghazālī's Cosmology Reconsidered, with Special Reference to the Concept of *Jabarūt*," *Studia Islamica*, 80 [1994], 29-46). Judging from this comparison, we might safely assume that Ghazali means by *amr* what he means by *malakūt*, the eternal divine decree, the world which can be reached when our "humanity" (*basharīyah*) is completely annihilated so that there is left no discrepancy between the divine will and ours. The heart is something which makes this relationship possible.

(74) Cf. Sūrah 33: 72.

(75) When Ghazali says that "God created Adam in His image," he is speaking of Adam's inner qualities rather than his outer form (See below).

(76) *Ihyá'*, III, 2 (K. Qalb, [Khutbah]).

(77) *Ibid.*

(78) In fact, Ghazali mentions "the (inner) relationship" (*munsabah*) between humans and God as the fifth reason for humans' love of God: "Mutual knowledge (*ta'āruf*) is mutual relationship (*taḥsub*). Mutual denial is mutual alienation. For this reason love of God is necessary, since [there is] an inner relationship [between humans and God] which is not ascribable to the resemblance of forms and shapes, but to inner qualities (*ma'ānin bāṭinah*)" (*Ihyá'*, IV, 298 [K. Maḥabbah, Bayán anna-ajalla...]). He also tells us, "Acquire the qualities of God" (*istakhalluqū bi-akhlaq Allāh*) (*Ibid.*) Ghazali, therefore, accepts the Biblical tradition: "Verily God has created Adam in His image" (Emphasis is mine), against the major trend of its interpretation in Islam which takes the pronoun "*hu*" (his) as Adam's (present) image, rather than God's (*Ihyá'*, IV, 25 [K. Tawbah, rukn 2, Bayán kayfiyah...]; *Imlā'*, 187-93. See also W.M. Watt, "Created in His Image: A Study in Islamic Theology," *Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society*, XVIII [1959-60], 38-49; F. Jabre, *La notion de la ma'rifa chez Ghazali* [Beirut, 1958], 86-108). Ghazali is well aware that he is theologically in a difficult position. But he is also convinced, from the fact of human love of God and possibly from his own experience, that there must be some special relationship between humans and God (for further treatment of this metaphysical problem, see F. Shehadi, *Ghazali's Unique Unknowable God* [Leiden, 1964]).

(79) Now we have two concepts of the heart — one is the heart as the subject of human consciousness and the other as the primordial, divine purity. Both are, strictly speaking, not the same. Sometimes they overlap, and sometimes not. For example, when the heart (conscience?) is completely veiled and subjected to Satanic forces, the heart as the subject of human consciousness is still there. On the other hand, in the state in which the heart is perfectly

purified, both become one. Apparently Ghazali is speaking from the standpoint of this ideal state where there is no disparity between them.

(80) *Ihyá'*, IV, 65 (K. Šabr, šaṭr 1, Bayán kawn al-šabr). Therefore, human desires are not essentially bad.

(81) *Ihyá'*, IV, 64 (*Ibid.*). Or *al-bá'ith al-naṣf* and *al-bá'ith al-dīnī* (IV, 372).

(82) *Ihyá'*, III, 4 (K. Qalb, Bayán ma'ná al-naṣf); IV, 43-45 (K. Tawbah, rukn 3, Bayán aqsám al-'ibád).

(83) Ghazali defines humans' character (*khulq*) as "an established form of the soul which produces acts with ease and smoothness, without any recourse to thinking and deliberation." This character is composed of the four powers: the power of knowledge (*quwwah al-'ilm*), the power of repulsion (*quwwah al-ghaḍab*), the power of inclination (*quwwah al-shahwah*), and the power of equality (*quwwah al-'adl*) (between the previous two powers). When each of these powers is moderate, neither too much nor too little, they are called respectively "wisdom" (*ḥikmah*), "bravery" (*shajá'ah*), "chastity" (*'iffah*), and "justice" (*'adl*). When all these four traits (*khushlah*) are moderate and well-balanced in humans, they are said to have "good character" (*ḥusn al-khulq*) in the absolute sense (*Ihyá'*, III, 52-53 [K. Riyāḍah al-naṣf, Bayán ḥaqīqah ḥusn al-khulq]. See also M.A. Sherif, *Ghazali's Theory of Virtue* [SUNY, 1975]).

(84) Speaking about fasting (*ṣawm*) as a way to come closer to God, Ghazali says: "The purpose of fasting is to acquire one the qualities of God (*al-takhalluq bi-khulq min akhlāq Allāh*), Who is Eternity, and to emulate the angels in restraining desires as much as possible, for angels are free from desires. Man is on a stage above that of the animal because of his ability, with the light of reason (*'aql*), to annihilate desires, while his stage is below that of the angels because of the dominion of the desires over him and his being tested by his exercises (*mujāhadah*). Therefore, everytime he curbs desires, he advances to the level of the highest creature and attains to the range of the angels, who are brought near to God. He who emulates them and imitates their traits is brought as near to God as they are" (*Ihyá'*, I, 237 [K. Ṣawm, faṣl 2]).

(85) *Ihyá'*, IV, 73 (K. Šabr, Bayán aqsám al-šabr); III, 26 (K. Qalb, Bayán tasallut-shayṭān).

(86) Besides the above-mentioned four powers (*quwwah*) of humans (see note 83), Ghazali also mentions another four tendencies (*mayl*) or qualities (*ṣifah*) of the human heart: the lordly qualities (*ṣifāt rubūbiyah*) — haughtiness, vainglory, love of praise, love of long life, etc.; the Satanic qualities (*ṣifāt shayṭāniyah*) — rancor, craftiness, deception, inclination to evil, etc.; the animal qualities (*ṣifāt bahīmīyah*) — gluttonousness, greediness, sexual desire, etc.; and the bestial qualities (*ṣifāt sab'iyah*) — anger, hatred, violet or homicidal tendencies, etc. (*Ihyá'*, III, 274 [K. Dhamm al-jāh, šaṭr 1, Bayán sabab kawn...]; IV, 15-16 [K. Tawbah, rukn 2, Bayán aqsám al-dhunūb]). The relationship between these "four qualities" and the previous "four powers" is not clear, although it is evident that the power of repulsion and that of inclination correspond to the bestial qualities and the animal qualities respectively (Cf. *Ihyá'*, III, 10 [K. Qalb, Bayán majāmi' awṣāf al-qalb]).

(87) See above, note 86 and also *Ihyá'*, III, 274 (K. Dhamm al-jāh, Bayán ma'ná al-jāh).

(88) *Ihyá'*, III, 277 (K. Dhamm al-jāh, Bayán al-kamāl al-ḥaqīqī).

(89) *Ihyá'*, III, 274 (K. Dhamm al-jāh, Bayán ma'ná al-jāh).

(90) *Kibr* means to regard oneself superior to others, and therefore there can be no *kibr* if there is only one person in the world (*Ihyá'*, III, 354-55 [K. Dhamm al-kibr, šaṭr 1, Bayán al-ṭarīq...]). On the other hand, *'ujb* means to regard oneself as great without regard to others. Hence, when used in relation to God, it means to regard oneself as so great that he or she deserves the divine favors or he or she is safe from the designs (*makr*) of God (*Ihyá'*, III, 360 [K. Dhamm al-kibr, šaṭr 2, Bayán ḥaqīqah al-'ujb]).

(91) *Ihyá'*, III, 198 (K. Dhamm al-dunyá, Bayán dhamm al-dunyá).

(92) It is, however, too much to say that "this concept [of the world] is a pure subjective one" and therefore the concepts of the world and the Hereafter "mean merely two different ideas of our interior," as J. Obermann says (*Der philosophische und religiöse Subjektivismus Ghazālís*, 137). To support his thesis, Obermann quotes the following passage: *fa-naqūlu dunyá-ka wa-ākhirah-ka 'ibārah 'an ḥālatayn min-aḥwāl qalb-ka...* (*Ihyá'*, III, 214 [K. Dhamm al-dunyá, Bayán ḥaqīqah al-dunyá]). This should be interpreted as meaning "your relationship to the world" rather than the world itself. A man's relation to the world terminates when he dies and departs from the world. But the world itself remains until "its appointed time in the Book" (See *Ihyá'*, I, 304 [Ghazali, *Invocations*, 24-25]). As for the Hereafter, too, Ghazali is not "subjectivistic" as to reduce all the eschatological events to "Verfassung unseres innern," as we have seen when we discussed his notion of *faná'* (above, p. 41).

(93) *Ihyá'*, I, 60 (K. 'Ilm, bāb 6) and others.

(94) *Ihyá'*, III, 59 (K. Riyāḍah al-naṣf, Bayán tafṣīl al-ṭarīq).

(95) *Ihyá'*, IV, 4 (K. Tawbah, rukn 1, Bayán wujūd al-tawbah). On this subject, see the following monograph, S. Wilzer, "Untersuchungen zu Ġazzālís Kitāb at-Tawba," *Der Islam*, XXXII (1957), 51-120, 237-309.

(96) *Ihyá'*, IV, 9 (K. Tawbah, rukn 1, Bayán anna-wujūd al-tawbah...).

(97) *Ihyá'*, IV, 62 (K. Šabr, šaṭr 1, Bayán ḥaqīqah al-šabr).

(98) *Ihyá'*, IV, 73 (K. Šabr, šaṭr 1, Bayán mazann al-ḥajāh).

(99) *Ihyá'*, IV, 25 (K. Qalb, Bayán tasallut al-shayṭān).

(100) *Ihyá'*, III, 5-6 (K. Qalb, Bayán junūd al-qalb).

(101) *Ihyá'*, III, 19 (K. Qalb, Bayán al-farq bayna al-ilhām...).

(102) *Ihyá'*, III, 18 (*Ibid.*); IV, 75 (K. Šabr, šaṭr 1, Bayán dawá' al-šabr).

(103) *Ihyá'*, III, 73-74 (K. Riyāḍah al-naṣf, Bayán shurūṭ al-irādah).

(104) *Ihyá'*, III, 58 (K. Riyāḍah al-naṣf, Bayán al-sabab allatīf...).

(105) *Ibid.*

(106) *Ibid.*

(107) *Ihyá'*, III, 351 (K. Dhamm al-kibr, šaṭr 1, Bayán al-ṭarīq...).

(108) *Ihyá'*, III, 255-57 (K. Dhamm al-bukhl, Bayán 'ilāj al-bukhl).

(109) Eye-service, according to Ghazali, means to seek to gain admiration by means of

devotional acts, while fame (*jáh*) does so by means of other than devotional acts (*Ihyá'*, III, 390 [K. Dhamm al-ghurúr, şinf 2]). See also M. Smith, *An Early Mystic of Baghdad* (London, 1935), 129-49.

(110) *Ihyá'*, III, 303 (K. Dhamm al-jáh, şaṭr 2, Bayán dawá' al-riyá').

(111) *Ihyá'*, III, 357-58 (K. Dhamm al-kibr, şaṭr 1, Bayán al-ṭaríq fí mu'álajah al-kibr...).

(112) *Ihyá'*, IV, 295 (K. Maḥabbah, Bayán anna al-mustaḥiqq...).

(113) This might be called a reversed *ikhlaş* — the *ikhlaş* still accompanied by efforts (*takalluf*). After lengthy practice, however, it will turn into the real *ikhlaş*.