THE "LOVE OF GOD" IN GHAZALI'S

*VIVIFICATION OF THEOLOGY*

By Simon van den Bergh, London

Ghazali who lived in the eleventh century is generally regarded as the greatest theologian in Islam. He had an encyclopaedic knowledge and wrote a great number of books on many subjects: dogmatics, ethics, mysticism, law and philosophy. Although many books have been written about him, he is still relatively little known, just because of the vastness of his work. His chief work *The Vivification of Theology* consists of fifteen hundred closely printed pages, not more than a quarter of which has been translated. Very little attention has been given to the sources of his ideas. Obermann for instance, in a much praised book, regards him as a great and original thinker; somehow a forerunner of Kant. He could not have done so, if he had seen how much Ghazali depended on his predecessors and how much he reflected the theological and mystical aspect of his time. To me Ghazali is the typical representative of that syncretism in Islam in which ideas from different Greek sources are used to rationalize the religious dogmas. This penetration by Greek ideas is one of the characteristics of Islam. In rationalistic theology Stoicism is preponderant, in mysticism Platonism and Neoplatonism.

I will today discuss with you some points in Ghazali's chapter on "The Love of God" in his *Vivification of Theology* and try, as far as I am able, to relate them to their Greek sources. We shall find in Ghazali as a dogmatist and a mystic both Stoic and Neoplatonic influences.

The love of God —Ghazali says—is the final aim and the highest degree of the stages of spiritual progress, anything beyond it, for instance the passionate longing after God, is but its fruit;
everything before it, for instance, patience, renunciation and asceticism, is but its preparation. Still—he says—although the belief in the Love of God is strong, there are some thinkers who have denied its possibility and asserted that its meaning can only be obedience to God; in its real sense—they say—love of God is impossible, for love can exist only between members of the same genus, between individuals having the same degree of being. God is too high above us to inspire human emotions. We have here an interesting point. Indeed the love of God is not accepted by orthodox Islam, in which there is a strong opposition to the emotional mysticism of the Sufis, to whom also Ghazali belongs, and especially against its excesses of enthusiastic ecstasy. Also some of the Mutakallimun, the more or less rationalistic theologians of Islam, deny it for the same reason. I may add here that these Mutakallimun are strongly influenced by Stoicism which condemns the passions and believes in reason, and although love when it is pure is not thought incompatible with the Stoic Sage, the Sage should be unemotional in his one desire for reason and truth. On the other hand, the Platonists and Neoplatonists praise the love of beauty and the beauty of God. That there can be no love between God and man because of the too great distance between them had been already affirmed by Aristotle in the Nicomachean Ethics. The Nicomachean Ethics had been translated into Arabic and this saying of Aristotle’s may have become a common notion.

It is generally acknowledged—Ghazali continues—that the love of God and the prophet is a religious duty. Now, how could something that does not exist be regarded as a religious duty and how could the term “love” be explained by obedience—since obedience is a consequence and a fruit of love and love precedes it? Besides, the existence of the love of God is mentioned in God’s own words (that is in the Qur’an which is supposed to be inspired by God) and Ghazali quotes then Surah ii. 160 in which there is an indication that men should love God and Surah v. 59 where the love of God towards men and man’s love towards God is mentioned. Ghazali proceeds then by giving a number of traditions ascribed to Muhammad in which he made the love of God a condition of faith. I may remark here, and it is common knowledge, that the traditions ascribed to Muhammad are of very varied origin, and that there is hardly a religious opinion held by any of the different religious schools in Islam which they do not base on a saying of the prophet. There are even traditions which are not a part of the religious speech of even traditions which are not a part of the religious speech of Ali, Muhammad’s cousin and son-in-law. These traditions are not even traditions which are not a part of the religious speech of Ali, Muhammad’s cousin and son-in-law. These traditions are not
even traditions which have a Neoplatonic tenor, for instance the famous saying “Know thyself and then thou wilt know thy God.” which is sometimes ascribed to the prophet, sometimes to Ali, Mohammed’s cousin and son-in-law. I will give here a few of these traditions which are mentioned by Ghazali in this context: When someone asked the prophet what faith is, he answered: that God and the Prophet are more beloved to you than anything else. And the prophet said in his prayer: “O God, provide me with Thy love and the love of those who love Thee and the love of all the things which bring me nearer to Thee and make Thy love more beloved to me than cool water.” There is also a tradition concerning Abraham, who in the Qur’an is called “the Friend of God.” It is said of Abraham, when the Angel of Death came to take his soul, that he cried out: “Did you ever see a friend who caused the death of his friend?” Then he heard these words of God: “Did you ever see a lover who was loth to meet his Beloved?” Whereupon Abraham called out to the Angel of Death: “Now come and take my soul!” And according to a tradition it has been said that on the Day of Resurrection the peoples will be summoned by the names of their prophets, and it will be called out: “Oh, people of Moses,” “Oh, people of Jesus,” “Oh, people of Mohammed,” except the lovers of God; for to them the call will be made: “O, saints of God, come hither, come hither to your God!” and they will be overcome with joy. And there is also a tradition where these words of God are mentioned: “The weight of one grain of love is more beloved to me than seventy years of servitude without love.”

Having established that the love of God is generally acknowledged in Islam, Ghazali proceeds by stating the different causes or reasons for love. But first he poses as a condition of love that it must be preceded by knowledge and that therefore love cannot be imagined in the lifeless, but is proper to the living, perceiving being. This would rather seem a truism. However, in mystical Neoplatonic theology, as it is for instance found in Islam in Avicenna, love is regarded as wider than knowledge, it is extended also over the inorganic, it is, as it were, the first instinct of everything existing (the origin of this conception is already in Plato and Aristotle). This idea is found also in St. Augustine where he says: “Everything that can love, loves God, either consciously or unconsciously.” According to this conception all movement is based on attraction, both in its physical and psychological sense, and expresses an unconscious or conscious
THE "LOVE OF GOD" IN GHAZALI'S

desire for the approach to the Divine. Indeed, even when we moderns use the term in its mysterious physical sense, a faint animistic tendency seems implied. Now, Ghazali says, things perceived can be generally divided into three classes, those that are in agreement with the nature of the perceiver produce pleasure and therefore are beloved, those that are in disagreement with the perceiver produce pain and therefore are hated, and those that are indifferent, or neutral, and are neither beloved nor hated. Man, when he is sound of nature will by nature love and seek that which gives him pleasure and hate and avoid the painful. Now this whole conception is of Stoic origin. "In agreement with nature" is a typical Stoic term, ὑμολογούμενος τῇ φύσιν, and for the Stoics living in agreement with nature, ὑμολογούμενος τῇ φύσιν γίνεται, is the ethical ideal. Stoic too is the division into three classes and the term "indifferent", in Greek ἀδιάφορος, in Latin indifferent or neuter, has been coined by the Stoics who like to place a middle term between two opposites. Galen, for instance, puts between the terms "sick" and "healthy" a third term "the indifferent". "Soundness of nature" too is a Stoic concept and ὅρθος λόγος, right or sound reason, the lumen naturale in Latin, different translations of which exist in Arabic, is Stoic too. As there are five senses, Ghazali says, there are five classes of the lovable and of pleasure, those given by sight, hearing and so on. Those pleasures can be shared by the animals, and if there were no other senses possible, it might be said, since pleasure and love depend on the senses, that God cannot be loved, since he cannot be perceived by the senses nor represented by images. But there is another, a sixth sense, which is a characteristic of man and differentiates him from the animal and which may be called intellect or heart of light, or whatever you like. And this inner sight is stronger than the exterior sight, and the perceptions of the heart are more powerful than those of the eye, and the beauty of the forms perceived by the intellect is greater than the beauty of the forms of the exterior world, and the delight of the heart in perceiving the sublime divine things is greater and more perfect than the pleasures which derive from the senses, and the longing of the sound intellect or sound nature for those divine things is the most powerful. For love is nothing but the longing for the delight of things perceived. This last sentence "Love is nothing but the longing for the delight of things perceived" is a typical Platonic statement. "Love is of the beautiful", says Plato in his Symposium. Platonic is also the view that the delight of the life of this world is the joy given by pursuits of reason. The Stoics who believe that the animal consists in the senses, when through the logos, through the intellect to light, as and as the Stoics of the material sense. In him the term "he with intellectual Ash'arites, who theories of the proof and refutes the view of the Ash'arites. Another remark here between a Stoic and the synthesis between by Ghazali himself, where this synthesis fact this synthesis, an sophy and is called Posidonius.

But let us return to the five reasons for every living being is that by nature it exists and has existence and which is loved by the lover, and what is self? And therefore, and fear death, and for punishment might desire non-existence, but for death. Here Ghazali states that the first attraction Cicerone, de finibus after birth every

408
view that the delight given by the ideal forms is greater than the joy given by purely sensuous beauty. On the other hand, it is the Stoics who declare that the difference between man and animal consists in this, that the animal is bound to perception by the senses, whereas man acquires the idea of God in his soul through the logos. The logos is regarded by the Stoics as something like light. Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus too compare the intellect to light. That the seat of the soul is in the heart is Stoic, and as the Stoics are materialists, one has to take this in a purely material sense. But Ghazali as a mystic is a spiritualist, and for him the term “heart” has a spiritual meaning and is synonymous with intellectual intuition. I may, however, point out that Ghazali in his attack on the philosophers in his books The Incoherence of the Philosophers follows the sect of theologians, called Ash’arites, who are strongly influenced by the materialistic theories of the Stoics and that Ghazali himself tries there to refute the view of the philosophers that the soul is immaterial. Another remark I would like to make is that when I distinguish here between a Stoic and a Platonic source I do not imply that the synthesis between those two philosophies was always made by Ghazali himself. Ghazali may well have followed a source where this synthesis was already established and as a matter of fact this synthesis existed already in some way in Greek philosophy and is connected at its origin with the great name of Posidonius.

But let us return now to Ghazali. According to Ghazali there are five reasons for the love of God. And the first reason is that every living being loves first itself and the meaning of self-love is that by nature every living being has the desire to persevere in its existence and to avoid non-existence and death, since that which is loved by nature is that which is in agreement with the lover, and what is more in agreement with him than his own self? And therefore man loves the continuance of his existence and fears death, not only out of fear for the pains of death, and for punishment in the beyond; and if through afflictions he might desire non-existence, he does not love it because it is non-existence, but because it will cause the cessation of his afflictions. Here Ghazali states the important Stoic principle that the desire to preserve himself, and self-love, is the first instinct in man, and the first attraction in accordance with nature. In the words of Cicero, de finibus, iii, 16: It is the Stoic view that immediately after birth every living being feels an attachment for itself and
an impulse to preserve itself and to feel affection for its own constitution and for those things which tend to preserve that constitution; while, on the other hand, it conceives a dislike for destruction and those things which appear to cause destruction. This principle has a very great diffusion in east and west, it is found, for instance, in St Augustine, Bernard of Clairvaux, Thomas Aquinas, Telesio, Campanella, Hobbes and Spinoza, who says: *una quaeque res quantum in se est, in suo perseverare conatur*—each thing wants to remain in the condition in which it is by itself.

Now, for the Stoics nature does not only create self-love in the individual, but creates also in the parents an affection for their children, and this parental affection is the germ of that social community of the human race to which we afterwards attain, and from this parental affection is developed the sense of mutual attraction which unites human beings as such. Man is a social being, love of others is not based on self-love, although it may be posterior to it. Seneca says: "You cannot but live for others, if you want to live for yourself."

Ghazali, however, as we shall see presently, derives parental love immediately from self-love, and here he gives a somewhat Platonic turn to his Stoic principle. Plato in his *Symposium* bases love on the desire of mortal nature to be eternal and immortal, and since like all earthly things he is bound to destruction and death, he cannot attain his aim except through generation. Through his children man in a certain way can preserve his existence beyond death and fulfill somehow his longing for immortality. Ghazali proceeds: The object of his love is for man first himself, then the integrity of his members, then his property, his children, his kinsfolk and his friends. Now, the integrity of his members is beloved because the perfection and the continuance of his existence depend on it (this is still Stoic) and man loves his property because it is an instrument for the continuance of his existence, and this is also the case with the other objects of his love. And man does not love these things for themselves but because his own satisfaction with the continuance and perfection of his existence depends on them. A man loves his children even when he does not receive any benefit from them, but suffers sorrows through them, because he leaves them in an existence after his own. For the continuance of his offspring is a kind of continuance of himself, and through the strength of his longing for the continuance of himself he loves the continuance of him who stands between his offspring and himself, and he himself is never content until the continuance of his offspring is assured. Some writers, like Aristotle in his *Ethics* or *Politics*, or Seneca, himself addicted to the love of children, express in a few words the whole moral and political system, which goes far beyond the Stoics, but none of them can claim to have expressed it as well as he.

After the father's death, and the love, the friendship of the son, the son was loved by the father, that love of Ghazali is the same as that of Aristotle, and even more. For, with Ghazali, the difference is not so much in degree as in type. Aristotle saw the necessity of this love, the essential need of man for his own continuance, but he did not see the means of attaining it. He knew that health and strength were necessary to the continuance of the body, the health and strength of the body were necessary to the continuance of the soul, and therefore he based the whole of man's life on the attainment of health and strength. Ghazali, however, saw that this was only a means, and that the true means was the use of love, and that the health and the strength of the body were not enough, but that a social bond of love was necessary to the continuance of the soul.

The continuance of the soul is the continuance of the body. Book vii of the *Questions of the Law* contains a whole chapter on the subject of the continuance of the soul. It is called *A Commentary on the Continuance of the Soul*. The chapter opens with the question: "What is the continuance of the soul?" and goes on to discuss the subject at length. The answer is: "The continuance of the soul is the continuance of the body." The chapter ends with the following words: "And so we see that the continuance of the soul is the continuance of the body, and the continuance of the body is the continuance of the soul." This is the fundamental principle of the Ghazali system, and it is the basis of all his teachings.
its own con-
trary that con-
trary dislike for
destruction. and west, it is
of Clairvaux, and Spinoza.

self-love in the
vision for their
of that social
wards attain,
use of mutual
ran is a social
ough it may
ive for others,

rives parental
as a somewhat
uposition bases
moral and
ion and death,
ion. Through
his existence
or immortality.
first himself,
y, his children,
of his members
ance of his
man loves his
ance of his
bodies themselves
and perfection
children even
m, but suffers
in an existen-
ing is a kind of
of his longing
ation of him

VIVIFICATION OF THEOLOGY

who stands, as it were, in his stead. Still, if he had to choose
between being killed himself and having his child killed, while
he himself would keep his integrity, he would choose his own
continuation rather than that of his child, because the con-
tinuation of his child resembles his own continuation only in
some way, but is not really his own continuation. This last
sentence does not seem very moral and is not found in Plato's
Symposium. Plato, however, says that a man for his own glory,
which gives also a kind of immortality, will take greater risks
than he would take for the sake of his children.

After this first reason, Ghazali gives as the second reason for
love, the love for those by whom we benefit, and for this reason
we often love a stranger or a foreigner to whom no ties bind us.
Ghazali says this second type is very much like the first, the
difference consists in this: that when a man loves his members,
this love is an aim itself, for the integrity of his members implies
his own integrity of existence, but this second type concerns only
a means. The physician and the teacher are only a means to attain
health and wisdom, which are the ends on which the perfection
of man's existence depends. It is the characteristic of this second
type that once the aim is attained, the means to that aim loses its
value, the physician and the teacher are loved, are of value, only
as long as the aims they can give, health and wisdom, are not
attained. (Aristotle says in the Nicomachean Ethics that, in friend-
ship based on usefulness, the friendship is dissolved when the
usefulness ceases.) The distinction of these two classes is rather
illogical, since in his first class Ghazali included, for instance,
property, which is only, as Ghazali himself recognizes, a means
to the perfection of a man's existence.

The third reason of love (and this indeed is Aristotle's de-
inition of true love or friendship in the Nicomachean Ethics,
Book VIII) is that a man loves a thing for its own sake, not for any
benefit he may receive from it; indeed, it forms by itself his
happiness and this is, in fact, the true, perfect love, a love which
is not bound up with man's existence. Beauty, for instance, is
loved in this way, for all beauty is beloved by him who per-
ceives it, and the perception of beauty is the essence of delight,
and delight is beloved for its own sake, for one should not
believe that the love of beautiful forms serves only the satis-
faction of physical desire: verdant plants and running water are
beloved, not because one can eat the plants and drink the water,
or receive from them any benefit, but solely for the beauty seen
in them. We are following here, of course, a train of Platonic thought. But one question may be asked: can one truly say that one loves a beautiful thing for its own sake, when one seeks it for the delight one derives from it, and is not the search for delight a selfish motive? The question has been asked and is answered in the positive by the hedonists, modern and ancient, and is a point of dispute between the hedonistic Epicureans and the Stoics. Whereas the Epicureans hold the theory that pleasure is the chief good, and that all morals are based on it, the Stoics emphatically reject the view that we adopt or approve either justice or friendship for the sake of their utility. Indeed, the very existence of both justice and friendship will be impossible—they say—if they are not desired for their own sake. It is a significant fact that Ghazali refers to this dispute, although, so far as I know, nobody held the hedonistic view in Islam, significant, because it shows that he depends on Stoic sources. Men of little understanding, he says, have asserted that it is impossible to love another thing for its own sake without any profit to oneself, but as a matter of fact—he affirms—this happens. Ghazali proceeds then by explaining the meaning of beauty and he says that those who are imprisoned in the bonds of sensations and representations think that beauty refers only to well-proportioned shapes (that measure and symmetry are the basis of a Greek idea, already found in Plato) and agreeable colours. Indeed, men use the term mostly for the beauty seen by the eye and the beauty of men (beauty, I may remind you Plato says, is the most palpable to sight) and so it has been thought that beauty cannot be imagined to exist except in what is perceived or imagined by sight. But beauty is not limited to visual perceptions. All things perceived are liable to be judged beautiful or ugly, and the meaning of beauty in which they all share is that there exists in them the possible perfection that is belittling them, and when in a thing all its possible perfection is present, it has attained its extreme perfection. A beautiful horse is a horse that combines all the qualities of form, colour, gait, behaviour that are belittling a horse, and each thing has its own specific beauty that is belittling it, so that a man is judged beautiful for other qualities than a horse. Now, this definition is closely related to the Stoic definition of the beautiful and the good, namely that the beautiful or the good is that which by nature has the specific use which is belittling it. The idea of perfection we find in Plato who regards it as one of the conditions of beauty that it should have per-
VIVIFICATION OF THEOLOGY

...n of Platonic truly say that one seeks in the search for asked and is u and ancient, picturcas and y that pleasure in it, the Stoic approve either ideal, the very possible they is a significant b, so far as i m significant, Men of little possible to love to oneself, but hazali proceeds says that those and representation heurism shapes any is a Greek's. Indeed, men: and the beauty the most palpable any cannot be or imagined by ions. All things ugly, and the there exists m and, when in a has attained us that combines that are belonging beauty that is be other qualities add to the Stoic that the beautiful ethic use which is late who regards should have perf...
their country, cannot have any share in his good works, and this shows that you do not love a man only because he does good to you, but that you love a man because he does good absolutely, without any reference to yourself. And how great is the difference between him who loves a picture painted on the wall because of the beauty of its exterior form, and him who loves the prophet because of the beauty of his inner form!

The fifth reason for love is this mysterious relationship which can exist between two persons, not because of beauty, or of any material advantage, but solely because of a spiritual affinity. To resume, there are five reasons or types of love:

(a) Self-love. That is the natural desire of every living being to persevere in its existence.
(b) Love for a selfish motive.
(c) Unselfish love.
(d) Love for the beautiful.
(e) Love based on affinity.

If I may make a little critical remark here: this division into five classes is rather illogical. The five classes, since they overlap, should be reduced to two: self-love and altruistic love. Besides, there is a great difference between loving a thing for its own sake, for instance, a beautiful thing for the delight it gives, that is for its intrinsic value, and loving another person for his sake, unselfishly, altruistically.

The distinction is important for ethics. If there is an intrinsic value in the pursuit of beauty and truth, the contemplative life, the contemplation of beauty and truth and of God will have a value of its own, different from the social virtues related to one's fellow-men.

But there is already some confusion in Plato, who founds love on the wish for generation, on the wish of mortal being for immortality, but at the same time bases all love on the delight of beauty perceived.

Now, Ghazali says it is clear that when all these reasons are united in one person, the love for him must be doubled, just as when one has a child of beautiful shape, beautiful character, perfect in wisdom, beautiful in his behaviour, doing good to his father and doing good absolutely, his father will love him exceedingly. And when all these qualities are themselves of an extreme degree and of an extreme beauty, they will be loved in an extreme degree. And it is clear, now, that these five reasons for love in their totality, and in their extreme degree, can only refer to God, and that it is sense is due. For, although the totality of the reason in others is a reason that you cannot truly or you any self-knowledge he who does not exist through his continuance and power and that God is the existence, on the contrary, nothingness. Nothing can exist through God. If man does not love God and of his love of him, love for a benefactor, for God. For if man has is his only benefactor, his servants cannot be.

A man can really bestow his money into the sense of the gift are as soon as the gift is reached, namely, the knowledge of the benefactor. And to one who sells a passage has as its ultimate end for the end, the pleasure of utility. To the end of the Timaeus and Nietzsche.

The third reason for your receiving any from the green, as we saw, altruistic love, love to man as self-love). The love to God, requires, indeed, its relation to God. The creation and all the works by perfecting them
...
e.g. the head, the heart and the liver; thirdly, by favouring them with members that are useful for them, e.g. the eye, the hand, the foot, although they are not absolutely necessary to them; fourthly, by beautifying them, e.g. the curve of the lips, the almond shape of the eyes. This passage is certainly based on a Stoic division. In Cicero's *De natura deorum*, II, 121 it is said that none of the bodily organs, at least those contained in the body, is superfluous or not necessary, and there a long list of examples is given. Whereas, in Cicero's *De finibus*, III, 18 it is asserted that certain parts of the body appear to be intended solely for ornament. Now these three qualities, i.e. necessity, usefulness, beauty, Ghazali says, are found in all animals, nay, in all plants, nay in every species of the created from the top of the world to the bottom. How could there, therefore, be another benefactor than God?

As to the fourth reason, for love, that is the love for the beautiful for beauty's sake, he who loves the prophet or one of the holy men does not love him for the beauty which appears to him; although the visible beauty of their actions indicates the qualities which are the source of them just as the beauty of a poem indicates the beauty of the poet. Now, we love the hidden beauty of men for three qualities: for their knowledge, their power and their self-restraint. (It is interesting to note that these qualities are three of the four cardinal virtues of the Stoics, the fourth, justice, is omitted.) But, in fact, these qualities belong to God alone. For how can God's knowledge, which comprises everything with an infinite knowledge, so that no one particle in Heaven or on Earth escapes Him, be compared to the knowledge of man? If all God's creatures in Heaven or Earth came together to understand God's wisdom in the details of his creation of a single ant or fly, they would not succeed for a hundredth part. Indeed, man does not understand anything but the little that God himself has taught him, and the knowledge of the learned is but ignorance in comparison to His knowledge. And if the beauty and the majesty of knowledge are to be loved and God himself is the beauty and the perfection in those who are called beautiful and perfect, then, for that reason, God alone should be loved. Now, as to power, power is a perfection, and weakness a deficiency, and all perfection and majesty and courage and glory is beloved and its perception is pleasant. So that when a man hears of the battles of the famous generals in Islam there arises in his heart, although he has not witnessed them necessarily, a
great joy, for, as Allah has said, 'who has shown them the path of joy for, although he has restrained the passion, he has overcome certain desires and not certain things; for he has restrained and not the intestines and the intestines are a part of the king. The thing of power is not the same as there is no true joy in
Abstaining. The condition of the perfect is not that of the perfect in the One, as the One may be free from perfection, and it is another thing that one God's is perfect. The perfect in the one is in all.

The fifth reason, like seeking the species and the term, is to the fact that where Aristotle is a kind of divine religion, the saying is: 'the horse is the horse's so on.' This is quickly, to say nothing of the persons wish of the God and the wish of the man and the wish of this and that; he who be written, in this and that, be expected.
FURTIVATION OF THEOLOGY

The fifth reason of love, as we have seen, is that of affinity, for like seeks like, youth seeks youth, and birds seek their own species and flee from others. I may perhaps draw your attention to the fact that this sentence is found in the Nicomachean Ethics, where Aristotle, speaking of friendship, says "Some define it as a kind of likeness and say 'like people are friends', whence come the sayings 'like to like', 'birds of a feather flock together', and so on." Aristotle too says that young men become friends quickly. Sometimes, Ghazali says, this affinity is based on something visible and sometimes it is hidden, as the unity of two persons without there being any consideration of beauty or a wish of material possession. Now, this affinity exists between man and God (this idea is Platonic, Stoic, Neoplatonic). Some of this affinity can be expressed in books, but some of it cannot be written down but must be jealously guarded, and can only be experienced by those who follow the mystic way, having

great joy, and this causes necessarily a love in his heart for him who has shown these qualities. But all power in man is limited, for, although he may have power to restrain his passions, or restrain the passion in other men, he will have only the power over certain qualities of his soul and over certain people and certain things. And man's power does not derive from himself and not through himself, but God created man and his power and the instruments of his power, and the possibility of his power.

A mosquito, if God enables it to do so, may kill the mightiest king. Therefore, it is impossible to love the power and the beauty of power of one of God's servants without loving God. For there is no power but through God. Now, as to self-restraint. Abstaining from the imperfections, faults and vices is one of the conditions of love and of beauty of the inner forms. And, although the prophets were free from imperfections and faults, the perfection of holiness and restraint cannot be imagined but in the One, the Truth, the King of Holiness. For no creature can be free from imperfection, since being created implies imperfection, and it is impossible that a full perfection could exist in another than God, since the lowest degree of perfection implies that one should not be subjected to another. All perfection but God's is relative, related to what has more imperfection, so a horse is perfect in comparison with a donkey, and a man is perfect in comparison with a horse. But the root of imperfection is in all. (This relativity of perfection is Stoic; cf. Cicero, de finibus, v. 19.)
accomplished its conditions. That which can be mentioned causes the servants of God to draw nearer to their maker through the divine qualities they acquire of wisdom, generosity and pity, which he ordered them to imitate and assimilate, so that they are said to have assimilated themselves to the divine qualities. (This assimilation to God, in so far as it is possible, ὅπως ἔχουσι τὰ ἁγιά καὶ τὰ ἄκατα, is Plato’s ethical ideal.) As to that special relation between man and God, which should not be written down in books, there is an allusion to it, Ghazali says, in one of the religious traditions which has: “God says: ‘My servant does not cease to approach himself to me till I love him and when I love him, I become the hearing through which he hears, the seeing through which he sees, the tongue by which he speaks.’”

I may remark here that it is a mystical tradition that the secret of the mystic should not be revealed to the non-initiated. The reason of this, Plotinus says, is that the divine is ineffable, and it is forbidden to allude to it to those who have not had the bliss to perceive it. The love based on understanding—Ghazali affirms—can truly only be given to God. For true love—Aristotle had said this already—is exclusive, can be given only to one, but every human being can share lovable qualities with others. After this, Ghazali distinguishes two ways to the knowledge of God, the way of the strong and the way of the weak. The way of the strong is the way of those whose first knowledge is God and who will know through him all other things. This is the way of the Neoplatonic mystic, whose knowledge is not a scientific or logical knowledge, but who knows him through a προσώπον (through a “presence”).

The way of the weak is the way of those whose first knowledge is of God’s works and who will gradually lift themselves up from them to their Creator. The former way, to understand through God all other things, is obscure, and there is no use in writing it down in books. The second way—and this is the way of the Stoic who sees in the world the realization of God’s design—although not outside human understanding, is not much understood, because it needs withdrawing from the passions and occupations of the world, but especially because of the infinitude of the objects of knowledge, for there is no particle from the top of heaven till the bottom of the earth which does not testify to the perfection and to the power of God. Ghazali goes on to mention in the true Stoic fashion (one should consult Cicero’s de natura deorum, ii) some of the signs of divine rational design in the world, which mention here, the mosquito and the day—he says—God has given the mosquito the shape of a fly in the shape of a tiger. God has given it wings in miniature, adding wings in literature, adding wings in his mouth, in trunk. Now, because the creature, man who reads the book whereas the ideas are not the content of the book, for author has won the wonders of the creator more, he stands, the great ocean of God.

God is the knowledge of him whom we ought to love. Still, we see that God men knowledge of God men there is nothing, in other things, human mind knows God’s infinite, our daylight, not the body of the bar’s strength of mingled with our weaker—our essence, and its Splendor found at the end. Strange, Ghazali has his being his opposites, and is other things for the difference. In this way we would not
design in the created. Amongst his different examples I may mention here the curious comparison he makes between the mosquito and the elephant. Even to the smallest of his creatures— he says—God has extended his providence. See the power of the mosquito—compared to its size—see how God has created it in the shape of an elephant, the biggest of the animals, since God has given it a proboscis like the elephant's and has given it in miniature all the members he created for the elephant, still adding wings to it. This example I have not found in classical literature, although Cicero mentions in the de natura deorum that divinity has provided the elephant, because of the great distance of his mouth from the earth, with a kind of hand, namely its trunk. Now the love of men for God, Ghazali says, is different because the understanding in men is different. The intelligent man who reads a book of value admires and loves the author, whereas the ignorant man may know the author, but not knowing the content of the book can only have a vague appreciation both for author and book, just as the man who understands the wonders of the mosquito's creation will admire and love its creator more than the vulgar can do, and the more man understands, the greater his love will be, and there is no shore to the ocean of God's wonders.

God is the most evident of all things, therefore, the knowledge of him ought to be the first in time and the easiest to obtain. Still, we see that things happen just the other way. The knowledge of God comes late in man's development. For, although there is nothing in the world that does not testify God's existence, human intelligence is stupefied in perceiving it, and this by God's infinite evidence itself. Just as the bat does not see the daylight, not because the daylight is itself obscure, but because of the bat's weakness of sight which cannot cope with the strength of daylight and can only see when the day's light is mingled with obscurity—and in this way its evidence becomes weaker—our intellects are weak in front of the Divine Majesty and its Splendour which illuminates everything (this metaphor is found at the beginning of Aristotle's Metaphysics). It seems strange, Ghazali continues, that God's evidence is the cause of his being hidden, but generally things are understood by their opposites, and if some things indicated God's existence, while other things denied it, we would much easier perceive the difference. If the sun would never set and it were light for ever, we would never learn to know the existence of light which we
learn only through its negation, darkness. That we know things only through their opposites is already found in Aristotle. Omnis \textit{determination est negatio}, Spinoza will say later. The Stoics use this idea to explain the existence of evil, since without the existence of evil the idea of good could never be understood.

Now that God loves his servants, Ghazali says, is shown by different testimonies in the Qur'an, and Ghazali mentions three passages. But the word “love” as applied to God’s love cannot have the same meaning as when applied to man, since all the words we use have a sense different from their human sense when applied to God. Everything under God is a “being” only in so far as it proceeds from God, and, therefore, the word “being” must have another sense when applied to God than when applied to the creature. It is very evident that there is a difference in meaning for concepts like knowledge, will and power when applied to humans, or when applied to God. But the man who originated language fixed the meaning of words in the first place in relation to the created whose nature can be easier understood than God’s nature; to God they can be applied only metaphorically. Love in the creature implies a need and a deficiency, and this is impossible for God, since God possesses all perfection, all beauty and all majesty which he possesses eternally and necessarily, to which nothing can be added, from which nothing can be taken, for he is the only true reality. Therefore, God does not love any but himself, and what has been said about his loving his servants must be taken in an allegorical sense, and its meaning is that God lifts the veil from their hearts till they see him and are enabled to draw nearer to him, and that he wills this from eternity. God’s love for the man who loves him is eternal in so far as it refers to his eternal will to enable his servants to approach to him. But when it refers to his act by which he lifts the veil from the heart of his servant, then this love is transitory and occurs when transitory causes produce it. A king can call to himself a servant because he needs a service from him, but he can call him also, because his servant has laudable qualities which make him worthy of approaching his king, and when in this latter case the king draws the curtain which separates his servant from him, it may be said that he loves him, and when the servant, through his qualities, causes the curtain to be drawn, it may be said that he makes himself beloved to the king. Now this former case, based on a need, cannot be applied to God’s love, but through the latter case we
VIVIFICATION OF THEOLOGY

may represent by an image how a man can be loved by God. This whole conception is Neoplatonic. In God's eternal stillness no changes can occur, and when we speak of God's causation—Plotinus says—it is not to attribute something to Him, but to us. This is also affirmed in Christian dogma. When it is said of God that he changes his will—St Augustine says—we must admit that it is rather we who change than he. And one may perhaps compare Spinoza's words: "The intellectual love (amor intellectualis) of the mind for God is God's love itself through which he loves his own self, not in so far as it is infinite, but in so far as it can be understood by the essence of the human mind sub specie aeternitatis, that is: the intellectual love of the mind for God is part of that infinite love through which God loves his own self."

I will end my summary here, although I have only been able to give a very brief and necessarily imperfect account of Ghazali's ideas on this subject. I have tried to show that there is nothing specifically Mohammedan in them, but that they are taken from Greek sources. That man starts by self-love but gradually extends his love till it comprises first his family, then his kinsmen, and his country, then humanity in its totality, and finally reaches God; and again that through his love for God man loves man, because every man carries in his soul a spark of that divinity through which man becomes sacred to man, this is an idea first consciously expressed by the Stoics, and you will find it in many medieval and renaissance authors. But, although it has been first consciously expressed by the Greeks, perhaps this idea is neither Greek, nor Christian, nor Jewish, nor Mohammedan, but expresses a universal truth, an eternal truth, a divine truth.