AL-GHAZĀLĪ ON DIVINE ESSENCE: A TRANSLATION FROM

THE *IQTIṢĀD FĪ AL-IʿTIQAD* WITH

NOTES AND COMMENTARY

by

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This dissertation has been read by each member of the following supervisory committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory

FINAL READING APPROVAL

To the Graduate Council of the University of Utah:

I have read the dissertation of Dennis Morgan Davis in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographic style are consistent and acceptable; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the supervisory committee and is ready for submission to The Graduate School.

ABSTRACT

A translation into English of the first sections of *Al-Iqṭisād fī al-iᶜtiqad* (Moderation in Belief), the major theological work of the Muslim thinker al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) is presented, with introduction, notes, and glossary.

To the memory of George and Betty Davis

who could not wait to see this work completed.

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I wish to thank my parents, Dennis and Anita Davis, for the love and support they have always shown me. Their courage and faith opened my eyes to how vast and wonderful the world was and is. I am also grateful for the many teachers, leaders, and mentors who have guided and helped me over the years—both academically and personally. Professor Daniel C. Peterson has given me some of the greatest opportunities of my life as it has been my privilege to work with him in developing the Islamic Translation Series at Brigham Young University. Professor Michael E. Marmura, with whom I have also been privileged to associate on that project, has been exceptionally patient with me and generous in sharing his unparalleled expertise. And professor Bernard Weiss, the chair of my committee, has gone out of his way to be helpful more times than I can tell and, I suspect, more times than I am even aware of. For his patient and careful supervision of my work I am truly grateful.

This dissertation has been a labor of love in more ways than one. Each of my

children has suffered long and been kind, and no person, including myself, has

sacrificed more to see it through to completion than my wife and their mother,

Kristina. She and they have shown me what pure love is.

NOTE ON CONVENTIONS

Works cited in the notes and commentary herein are always given in short form. Primary texts in translation are cited under the translator's name rather than that of the original author. Full information on each work is provided in the selected bibliography. Words of Arabic origin which appear in *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* are not italicized but are spelled and treated as regular English words. In quotations from the work of other scholars, however, I have retained their treatment of those terms.

There are two separate sequences of numbers set in square brackets throughout the translation text. Those marked with an "A" refer to the page numbers of the Spanish translation of Miguel Asín Palacios. Those with no letter refer to the critical Arabic text of Ghazālī's *Iqtiṣād* produced by Çubukçu and Atay, for which page and line numbers are given. In the translation, I have occasionally divided paragraphs differently than the Arabic text. In cases where I have combined paragraphs, I have retained the page and line number where the

assimilated paragraph began. Parentheses are occasionally used as punctuation,

but square brackets are used only for page references and around words or

phrases that have no direct correspondents in the Arabic but which are

understood to be indicated there, or are my interpolations so as to render what I

take to be the meaning of the text more clearly. Because Arabic is a language that

typically relies heavily on conjunctions rather than punctuation to demarcate

sentences, I have often begun sentences in the translation with conjunctions in

order to preserve, at least to some degree, the tone and internal cohesion of the

original text.

AN INTRODUCTION TO *AL-IQTIṢĀD FĪ AL-IʿTIQAD*

Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 1111 C.E.) ranks as one of the most

prominent figures in the history of Islamic thought. His works have been

published, studied, and commented upon widely by Muslims and non-Muslims

alike. In the Western tradition of orientalist scholarship, Ghazālī has received no

small amount of attention, and, as is often the case when a variety of perspectives

and talents are brought to bear upon a particular subject, the amount of

controversy has tended to increase while what can be affirmed with certainty or

without opposition has commensurately diminished. The raft of questions and

debates about Ghazālī's basic beliefs and attitudes, their origins, and their impact

on subsequent thinkers is, by now, robust. At the same time, there are large

portions of Ghazālī's oeuvre that remain inaccessible to those who might be

interested in these questions but who lack the necessary familiarity with classical

Arabic to read them. In this dissertation I will provide an English translation of a

significant portion of Ghazālī's lengthiest and most systematic work of kalam,

Al-Iqtiṣād fī al-iʿtiqād. It is hoped that the translation, together with the notes and

commentary that accompany it, will be a further contribution to the ongoing

conversation about al-Ghazālī and his thought.

The *Iqtiṣād fī al-itiqād*

The *Iqtiṣād* is the fulfillment of an intention Ghazālī stated in *Tahāfut al-falāsifah* to write a constructive work of theology. Michael E. Marmura has

argued, on the basis of George Hourani's revised chronology,[1] that although the

descriptor Ghazālī uses to forecast the work he will write is *Qawāʿīd al-ʿaqāʾid,*

which became the title of a later treatise he incorporated into the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn,* the *Iqtiṣād,* coming as soon after the *Tahāfut* as it does, actually fulfils the

commitment better.[2] In fact, Ghazālī even uses a phrase that recalls the titles of

both works on the first page of the *Iqtiṣād.* He writes, "Indeed, the norm that

must needs be followed in principles of belief *(qawāʾīd al-iʿtiqād)* is moderation

(iqtiṣād) and restraint upon the straight path" (1.14–15).

The *Iqtiṣād* has been called Ghazālī's "chief work of dogmatics." W.

Montgomery Watt, following Maurice Bouges, indicates that it was "probably

composed shortly before or shortly after his departure from Baghdad [c. CE

1095]."[3] In his revised chronology of Ghazālī's works, George F. Hourani argued

that the *Itiqṣād* along with *Mīzān al-ʿamāl* was completed before or during

Ghazālī's crisis of faith which led him to abandon his prestigious post at the

Niẓāmiyya school in Baghdad and enter upon the Sufi path in a personal quest

for authentic religious certitude. Hourani plausibly reasons that it was unlikely

Ghazālī composed the *Iqtiṣād* after he began his journey, "for it is hard to believe

that this prosaic piece of *kalām* was one of the first products of his new life as a

Ṣūfī."[4] In fact, he argues, the likelihood was that *Mīzān* was composed even after

Iqtiṣād and still in the final year before Ghazālī left Baghdad. The seeming lack of

coherence in *Mīzān* might even be an indication of Ghazālī's troubled state of

mind at that time.[5] To this evidence we would add that the pedagogical nature of

the *Iqtiṣād*—it is addressed to students—also argues for its completion while

Ghazālī was still in his profession at the Niẓāmiyya.

In any event, Hourani argued,

> now that both *Itiqṣād* and *Mīzān* have been placed with some confidence in
> the period when Ghazālī was approaching or actually immersed in the
> intense spiritual crisis of his life, the importance of these two works for
> understanding the evolution of his thought will readily be understood.
> Both of them therefore deserve more serious studies than they have
> hitherto received, and they should be read in the context of the author's

revealing account of this state of mind at the time, narrated in *Munqīdh [mīn al-ḍalāl]*, 122–30.[6]

The study of Ghazālī's *Iqtiṣād* presented here is intended to be a first small step in that direction. Though a full treatment of what the *Iqtiṣād* reveals about its author's state of mind at the time he wrote it must be deferred to later studies, a few preliminary observations are included in the comments that follow. Before that and many other questions can be properly addressed, however, the *Iqtiṣād*—"prosaic" though it may be—deserves to be studied and understood as a work in its own right.

Toward the end of his career, long after he had crossed what may be called the ascetic meridian of his life and had become an advocate for Sufi modes of "knowing" about things divine, Ghazālī still held a positive regard for his *Iqtiṣād*. Ghazālī claims the *Iqtiṣād* has a greater potential benefit for the prepared reader than the usual works of kalam.

> It is an independent, self-contained, work that contains the essentials of the science of the *mutakallimūn.* But it is more adequate in its proofs and more apt to knock at the doors of knowledge *(wa aqrab ilā qarᶜ abwāb al-maᶜrifa)* than the scholastic jargon *(al-kalām al-rasmiyy)* encountered in the books of the *mutakallimiūn.*[7]

Both Watt and Marmura are correct, I believe, in seeing this statement as

significant because it is a late endorsement by Ghazālī of his much earlier work

on kalam, expressed "long after he had become a Sufi and after he had written

such works as the *Iḥyāʾ*…."[8] It is therefore evidence that he "never ceased to be

an Ashʿari in dogmatics, even though he came to hold that intellectual

discussions in religion should range far beyond the limited field of dogmatics."[9]

Thus, too much should not be made of the fact that Ghazālī in some places

discusses the limitations of kalam; for though it does have its limitations—and,

as he says in the *Iqtiṣād* itself, it is not incumbent upon all believers—still, it has

its place as an antidote to erroneous beliefs or doubts arising within the Islamic

community.

The *Iqtiṣād* in Translation

There has never been a full English translation of *Al-Iqtiṣād fī al-itiqad*, but

most of its second part has been translated into English by ʿAbdu-r-Raḥmān Abū

Zayd and published under the title, *Al-Ghazālī on Divine Predicates and their

Properties*; Michael E. Marmura has published a translation of the first chapter of

part two in his article "Al-Ghazālī's Chapter on Divine Power in the *Iqtiṣād*"; and

there is a full Spanish translation of the *Iqtiṣād*, published in 1929 by Miguel Asín

Palacios as *El justo medio en la creencia*. I have been unable to find evidence of

published translations of the *Iqtiṣād* (whether in whole or major sections) in any

other language.

Abū Zayd's translation covers most but not all of the second of four major

parts into which the *Iqtiṣād* is divided. This section, as Abū Zayd's title indicates,

contains Ghazālī's explication of the divine attributes and of the properties

common to them all. In his second introduction to *Divine Predicates*, Abū Zayd

also has an important analysis of Ghazālī's adaptation of the syllogistic method

to the kalam genre. He also translates Ghazālī's later stated opinions about the

importance of the *Iqtiṣād* as given in both the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* and *Jawāhir al-*

Qurʾān. For some reason that he does not explain, he does not translate the

discussion on God's power (the first of the divine attributes), nor does he

translate Ghazālī's discussion of the first property of the attributes. Marmura's

translation provides much of what is missing here, together with an insightful

commentary on Ghazālī's discussion of divine will.

Though dated and rather free as translations go, Asín's Spanish rendition of

the *Iqtiṣād* nevertheless follows the gist of Ghazālī's treatise quite well in most

cases. Asín's extensive translations of and (admittedly Christian-biased)

expertise on Ghazālī's works (among many others) remain underappreciated and

even unknown among many Western scholars today.[10]

The translation from the *Iqtiṣād* offered herein covers all of Ghazālī's

introductory material and the first of the four main parts into which he divided

his treatise. In terms of volume, it covers just under half of the total content of the

book but none of the sections that have previously been translated into English

by the other scholars noted above.

The Arabic text of the *Iqtiṣād* I have used is the critical edition prepared by

Çubuçu and Atay (Ankara, 1962). Although it is by far the best edition of the text,

and entirely adequate for our purposes here, Marmura has shown that it is not

yet definitive.[11]

Organization and Content of the *Iqtiṣād*

The *Iqtiṣād* is written with students in mind. Its organization and tone reflect

both a pedagogical and a polemical concern. It is composed as a primer on how

to conduct a debate with one's ideological rivals. It is intended not so much for

the actual convincing of real opponents but for study by the qualified believer

who will one day, ostensibly, present similar arguments in actual debates or contests of ideology. For an audience Ghazālī presumably had in mind his students at the Niẓāmiyya where he was head lecturer in legal theory. In the course of his exposition, Ghazālī takes positions, mostly along Ashʿarite lines, on a number of basic theological issues, dialectically presenting and then answering challenges to each of his claims—challenges such as had been or might have been raised by an incredulous "opponent." In most cases Ghazālī is specifically envisioning an opponent either from among the extreme literalists (whom he identifies with the Hashwiyya), the *falāsifah,* or the Muʿtazilites. He offers his arguments and rebuttals, taking care to show at key moments that the soundness and superiority of his position derive from striking a successful balance between reason and revelation. This is the "moderation in belief" for which the work as a whole is named.

The Title and Exordium

"Moderation in Belief" is the most widely accepted and accurate translation of the title of this work into English. The term *iqtiṣād* derives from a root that means to move in a straightforward, direct path, and means prudence or

economy of use—hence, "moderation." Some translators have, by their choice of terms for this title, connected Ghazālī's work to the classical Greek idea of the "golden mean." Asín's *justo medio,* carrying the connotation of the "happy medium," is one example of this, and Richard J. McCarthy's gloss *"The Golden Mean in Belief,"* which has been followed by others, is obviously another (see *Deliverance*, 106 n. 62). Abū Zayd prefers this as the most accurate translation (*On Divine Predicates,* xxxix), but his position by no means reflects a unanimous consensus. Furthermore, it is not at all clear, either from the connotation of the word *iqtiṣād* or the substance of the work itself, that Ghazālī had any notion of the golden mean in mind; thus, the idea of a "just balance," is better reserved for glosses of another work of his, *Al-Qistas al-mustaqīm.*

Ghazālī begins his treatise with praise for God and those orthodox believers who have been guided to reconcile the requirements of reason with the claims of revelation, avoiding the pitfalls of unquestioningly accepting the extremes of the literalists on the one hand and the intellectualists on the other.[12] The one, he says, misunderstand the revelations because they will not be guided by reason. The others exceed the limits of orthodoxy by adopting rationalized positions that

unnecessarily contradict the plain meaning of or obvious inferences from

revelation. The right course, he says, is one that puts reason at the service of

understanding and properly interpreting of the revelations. "Reason, together

with the Qurʾān, is light upon light" (2.11).

Next comes an explanatory chapter *(bāb)* that amounts to an annotated

outline of the book with its four introductions and four main sections. Ghazālī's

principal topic throughout, he announces, will be "God most high," thus

explicitly situating his treatise as a work of theology.

The First Introduction

The first introduction *(muqadimah)* (at 6.5 ff.) is written to establish that the

subject of the treatise is deserving of human attention, since to waste time on

pointless or frivolous topics while salvation hangs in the balance would be a

grave error. It is here that Ghazālī makes what is perhaps the most direct allusion

to his own state of mind as he composes the *Iqtiṣād*. He says (6–7) that reports of

prophets coming with signs and wonders, showing evidence that there might

indeed be a God who rewards and punishes people with heaven or hell, have the

power

to tear peaceful security from the heart and to fill it with fear and trembling and to move it to study and pondering. [They can] snatch [the heart] from peace and stillness, and frighten it with the danger to which one is exposed while living in negligent ease.

This passage bears a strong resonance with the personal account Ghazālī later gave of his six-month struggle to commit himself fully to the Sufi path of knowledge, a struggle that was underway, as best we can ascertain, during the writing of the *Iqtiṣād*, while Ghazālī was still in his teaching position at the Niẓāmiyya. Recalling that period in *Munqīdh*, Ghazālī wrote:

One day I would firmly resolve to leave Baghdad and disengage myself from those circumstances, and another day I would revoke my resolution. . . . Mundane desires began tugging me with their chains to remain as I was, while the herald of faith was crying out: "Away! Up and away! Only a little is left of your life, and a long journey lies before you! All the theory and practice in which you are engrossed is eyeservice and fakery! *If you do not prepare now for the afterlife, when will you do so? And if you do not sever these attachments now, then when will you sever them?*

At such thoughts the call would reassert itself and I would make an irrevocable decision to run off and escape. Then Satan would return to the attack and say: "This is a passing state: beware, then of yielding to it! For it will quickly vanish. Once you have given in to it and given up your present renown and splendid position free from vexation and renounced your secure situation untroubled by the contention of your adversaries, your soul might again look longingly at all that—but it would not be easy to return to it!"[13]

Ghazālī does not directly say in the *Munqīdh* that he was in search of salvation,

but rather that his quest was for "sure and certain knowledge."[14] The unstated

assumption behind all that he says, however, is that any quest for certainty about

anything must find its premise and terminus in God. A belief in God was so

basic to and inseparable from Ghazālī's quest for truth that to seek the one was to

seek the other.

It was God, he says, who showed him that there are certain primary truths

that cannot be proven or found out by any rational or empirical means, they are

simply "present in the mind."[15] Foremost of these primary truths is the source

that discovers them to the soul in the first place—that is, God. Thus, for Ghazālī,

a conviction of the existence of God and of the other fundamental tenets of the

Islamic creed were not just end points resulting from successful arguments and

proofs, but indispensable and irreducible premises for the acquisition of

knowledge by means of the various human disciplines.

If read in this context, the first introduction to the *Iqtiṣād* shows contemporary

evidence of Ghazālī's growing sense of spiritual malaise—that to know of the

existence of God and of the punishment or reward of the afterlife was not

enough; he was responsible to *do* something about this knowledge by renouncing

the world, seeking purity, and obtaining a more direct knowledge of God. He

writes:

> Once all of this has become clear for us, we would then undoubtedly be
> obliged—if we were prudent—to take our precautions and look to our
> souls and to despise this transitory world in comparison with that other,
> everlasting realm. Thus, the reasonable man sees to his destiny and is not
> deceived by his own works. . . .
>
> There is no other course, once the impulse to find out [about these
> things] has occurred, than to instigate a quest for salvation (8).

Ghazālī's first introduction to the *Iqtiṣād* may thus be read as a poignant

meditation upon his own soul's predicament and evidence of the life-changing

course of action he was contemplating when he wrote it. Less than a year after

completing the *Iqtiṣād* he would renounce his position at the Niẓāmiyya and

embark on the life of a Sufi ascetic. He would journey to Damascus and submit to

the tutorship of one of the Sufi masters there; he would go to Jerusalem and

meditate for many days in the grotto within the Dome of the Rock; and he would

perform the Haj.[16] Ten years later he would return to public life and write his

magnum opus, the *Ihyā' ʿulūm al-dīn* (Revival of the Religious Sciences), a

comprehensive treatment of what he believed true Islam entailed—not only in

creed and outward practice but, at least as significantly, in private, inward

sincerity of intent and devotion.

The Second and Third Introductions

In the second introduction (9.2 ff.), Ghazālī compares rational arguments to the physician's medications, which can do more harm than good if not employed judiciously. He then divides people into four different classes.

The first group are what we might call the simple believers, who accept the revelations and prophethood of Muḥammad on simple, untroubled faith. He respectfully includes the first generation of Muslims in this category, writing with a sense of admiration for those whose faith is not clouded by sophistical pretensions.

The second group (10.5) are the unbelievers and innovators. It is significant that he puts the two in the same group, but his intent here is somewhat difficult to discern, for he does not specify who or what precisely he means by "unbeliever" or "innovator" *(al-mubtadaʿah).* However, in the *Fayṣāl al-tafriqa bayna al-islām wa'l-zandaqa* (Distinguishing the Difference between Islam and Heresy), Ghazālī offers this advice:

[R]estrain your tongue, to the best of your ability, from indicting the

> people who face Mecca (on charges of Unbelief) as long as they say,
> "There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God," without
> categorically contradicting this. And for them to contradict this
> categorically is for them to affirm the possibility that the Prophet, with or
> without an excuse, delivered lies. Indeed branding people Unbelievers is a
> serious matter. Remaining silent, on the other hand, entails no liability at
> all.[17]

In other words, Ghazālī held that anyone who sincerely made the profession of

faith should not be classed as an unbeliever unless they in one way or another

demonstrated that they believed Muḥammad to be false in his claim to prophecy.

Of those facing Mecca to pray, he implies, this ought to be a small group indeed.

Relative to charging with the lesser but still serious transgression of

"innovation" *(bidaʾa)*—which means to introduce teachings or practices that are

not warranted by the canonical authorities of the Quṛʾān, Hadith, and learned

consensus *(ijmaʿah)*—Ghazālī says that one case in which the charge is merited is

when the claims made by a person or party are not sufficiently buttressed by the

logical proofs they adduce.

> If. . . the logical proof is not definitive but gives rise to a preponderance of
> probability while not posing any known threat to religion, such as (that
> underlying) the Muʿtazilites' negation of the beatific vision, then this
> constitutes an unsanctioned innovation, not an act of Unbelief.[18]

Ghazālī deals with the specifics of this example in part one, proposition nine of

the *Iqtiṣād*, which we will discuss in its place.

Ghazālī composed the *Fayṣāl* as a response to what he felt was an over-zealous attitude among the various dogmatic schools; they were too prone to accuse one another of unbelief over theological disagreements. His tone there is more conciliatory and magnanimous than it is here in the *Iqtiṣād*. In this section, for example, he frankly says (10.5 ff.) that the innovators and unbelievers are boorish, lacking the intelligence to follow the plainly revealed truth, let alone the kinds of arguments made in kalam. The whip or the sword might convince them, but even the most spot-on arguments will not, he says in this rather convoluted passage. In fact, logical arguments will only tend to set such ignorant folk deeper in their erroneous views.

The third group (11.3) is subdivided into two further groups. Individuals in each group are acquainted with orthodoxy, but they are troubled by doubts or uncertainty regarding their beliefs. One doubts because of questions their own analytical natures have led them to ask. The other doubts because of acquaintance with doubt-promoting assertions or arguments from others. Ghazālī says that the remedy to such doubts should be carefully calibrated to the

needs and capacities of the "patients" to whom it is applied, with the strong

medicine of demonstrative proofs being used as a last resort, and with reserve

even then.

The fourth group (11.14) are "people in error" (which is presumably more

than just having doubts, as those in the third group have) who might with the

proper, benevolent treatment be led to accept the truth. In this context Ghazālī

gives a pointed warning against fanaticism or harshness in contending for the

faith. Such antagonism, he says, only leads people to resist correction, "so their

false beliefs take even deeper root in their souls." Those who lend such

counterproductive "help," he says, "will be held to account on the day of

judgment."

In the third introduction (13.3) Ghazālī states his position that the discipline

of kalam is a community rather than an individual obligation. He also famously

states his opinion that of the three disciplines—kalam, canon law *(al-fiqh)*, and

medicine—canon law is the most important because it is needed by both the well

and the sick, doubter and believer alike. Ghazālī's position is an unusual one in

that it reverses the priority often found in the writings of jurist-theologians who

held that kalam *(usūl al-dīn)* was logically prior to legal theory *(usūl al-fiqh)*. The postulates upon which legal theory was built were typically supplied by kalam. It was within kalam that fundamental truth claims and principles were established, and upon these the more prosaic or mundane judgments of the Islamic law were based. Ghazālī's attitude seems to have been that this did not necessarily have to be so. The fact that he included discussions of logic in his works on legal theory might be read as an indication that he thought the fundamentals for legal reasoning such as kalam usually provided could be workout within the science itself, without any further resort to kalam.[19] At the very least it might be said that Ghazālī approached the question of the relative merits of the sciences from a pragmatic rather than theoretical perspective. He simply asked which of the professions would be needed by the most number of people, and the answer was canon law.

Ghazālī's attitude toward kalam has been much discussed by scholars. To be sure, Ghazālī does say that kalam is important, even essential, but it is so for a more narrow reason than jurisprudence is. McCarthy uses this as evidence that Ghazālī "almost regarded [kalam] as a necessary evil."

He recognized its essential character of a defensive apologetic and countenanced its use in certain limited cases as a possible remedy for those beset with doubts about the faith. Interestingly enough, his very last work, completed a few days before his death, was *Iljām al-ʿawāmm ʿan al-khawḍ fī ʿIlm al-kalām* [Curbing the Masses from Engaging in the Science of Kalam].[20]

Late in his career, as he wrote his autobiographical *Munquidh mīn al-ḍalāl*,

Ghazālī recalled that for him personally the science of kalam had not been

adequate to his spiritual needs because

> they based their arguments on premises which they took from their opponents and which they were compelled to admit by naïve belief *(taqliḍd)*, or the consensus of the community, or bare acceptance of the Qurʾan and Traditions. . . .
>
> This was of little use in the case of one who admitted nothing at all save logically necessary truths. Theology was not adequate to my case and was unable to cure the malady of which I complained. . . .
>
> [T]hey did not deal with the question thoroughly in their thinking and consequently did not arrive at results sufficient to dispel universally the darkness of confusion due to the different views of men. I do not exclude the possibility that for others than myself these results have been sufficient; indeed, I do not doubt that this has been so for quite a number. But these results were mingled with naïve belief in certain matters which are not included among first principles.
>
> My purpose here, however, is to describe my own case, not to disparage those who sought a remedy thereby, for the healing drugs vary with the disease. How often one sick man's medicine proves to be another's poison![21]

Ghazālī continued to affirm a place and a need for the science of kalam within

the Islamic community to the end of his life, but he also continued to believe that

the scope of its relevance and usefulness was limited. One could be a devout

Muslim and find "success" in obtaining salvation without it.

The Fourth Introduction

In the fourth introduction (15.8), Ghazālī presents the methods of proof that

he will be using throughout the treatise. This section is valuable in its own right

as a précis of demonstrative methods, perhaps the briefest of several that Ghazālī

penned over the span of his career. He himself mentions, for example, the *Miḥakk*

al-naẓar fī al-manṭiq and the *Miᶜyār al-ᶜilm.* Asín gives an analysis of the contents

of these two manuals on logic in the second appendix to his translation of the

Iqtiṣād. He also notes that in the introduction to *Al-Mustaṣfā min ᶜilm al-uṣūl*,

Ghazālī summarizes the doctrine of the aforementioned manuals and that in the

first seven chapters of *Qistas* he also discusses the rules of the categorical,

hypothetical, and disjunctive syllogisms—the same kinds of syllogisms he

reviews here. Finally, the first book of *Maqāṣid al-falāsifah* is dedicated to logic per

se.[22]

In the *Miḥak*, *Miᶜyar*, and *Maqasid*, Ghazālī discusses the conditions for

syllogistic reasoning, beginning with definitions of terms and categories

(including grammar and lexical analysis), continuing with propositions and

conclusions, and finally discussing various kinds of syllogism and proof, all

based on the Aristotelian system. In *Quisṭas*, *Mustaṣfa*, and the *Iqtiṣād* he forgoes

any formal presentation of preliminaries to the syllogism and simply discusses

kinds of demonstration. Of these latter three works, the *Quisṭas* has the most

detailed discussion of the several kinds of syllogism, ranging over a number of

chapters. The summary in the *Iqtiṣād* is more concise.

In this section of the *Iqtiṣād* Ghazālī follows a pattern common to his

discussions of logic in other works—that is, he uses the argument for the

temporal creation of the world as the example to illustrate his demonstrative

methodology. He offers more detailed arguments against the eternity of the

world later in the treatise (see 27.7, ff.).

The first method of proof Ghazālī discusses (15.12–16.10) is called *sabr w'al-taqsīm*, which I have translated as "disjunctive reasoning." Some clarification of

what Ghazālī intended here is wanted. As defined in general terms, *sabr w'al-taqsīm* is "a demonstrative method in which the question is divided into all

possible cases and then each case is rejected until one 'valid' case remains."[23] It is

thus a kind of argument through elimination (called *burhān al-tamānuᶜ* by al-

Juwaynī).[24] There is some question as to whether this should be called a

syllogism in the technical sense, since the first term can technically contain more

than two disjuncts; nevertheless, it is still possible to phrase the entire argument

in syllogistic form. Thus, for example, either A or B or C or D; but not A, not B,

and not D; therefore C. In any event, the example Ghazālī gives of *sabra w'al-*

taqsīm still employs a disjunct with only two alternatives and a conclusion, thus

conforming fully to the classical form of the disjunctive syllogism.

Asín, for his part, translates Ghazālī's *sabra wa al-taqsīm* as "exploracíon

dilemática," meaning "dilemmatic speculation." This choice of words however,

seems to miss the mark. Dilematic reasoning has been defined as a form of

disjunctive proof. The basic disjunctive syllogism has two moods. One is to

> affirm one part of the disjunction in the minor and deny the other in the
> conclusion; e.g. the earth is either at rest or in motion; now the earth is in
> motion; therefore it is not at rest.[25]

The second is to

> deny one part of the disjunction in the minor and affirm the other in the
> conclusion; e.g. the earth is either at rest or in motion; now the earth is not

at rest; therefore it is in motion.[26]

In either of these moods the truth claim of the minor term is either an affirmation or a denial of one disjunct of the major, yielding its opposite as a conclusion. But in the dilemmatic mode there is no conclusion per se. Rather, the major term provides two alternatives in a disjunctive proposition, as usual, but then, rather than a minor term that denies or affirms one of the disjuncts and yields the other as the conclusion, *both* parts of the disjunct are answered in a way unfavorable to the opponent.[27] This is not Ghazālī's method, however. As he himself states it, his aim is to so construct the syllogism so that "no matter what the opponent admits of the two root premises, he will also necessarily and unavoidably have to admit the branch [conclusion] that derives from both of them, and that is the truth of the claim." Thus, Ghazālī's example: "The world is either temporal or it is eternal; but it is absurd [or impossible] that it should be eternal; therefore it is temporal" is not a dilemmatic syllogism in the strict sense because it has a single major premise and a conclusion rather than two conditional minor premises. It is disjunctive syllogism.

The second method Ghazālī mentions (16.11) is the categorical syllogism. He

does not say so, but it may be presumed that any of the various moods of the

categorical are intended. He discusses each of these in detail in the section on

logic of the *Maqasid*.

The third method (17.2) is *reductio ad absurdum*. It is a fairly explicit statement

of the method Ghazālī used throughout much of the *Tahāfut*. Marmura has noted

that in some arguments made in the *Tahāfut* Ghazālī adopts, or seems to adopt,

positions that he later repudiates in the *Iqtiṣād*. The reason for this, as Marmura

persuasively argues, is not that Ghazālī had changed his mind or was being

inconsistent in his beliefs, but rather that he was resorting to this method of

adopting his opponents' own premises for the sake of an argument *ad absurdum*.[28]

Ghazālī's example at this point is not easy to follow and seems a rather weak

demonstration of the method. Summarized, the argument seems to be: If the

revolutions of the sphere have no end [as the opponent claims], then that which

has no end has come to an end; this result is absurd; therefore, the premise is

absurd. But Ghazālī does not explain what he has in mind when he states that

something that has no end has ended, or what his basis is for asserting that such

has been the case. Without that explanation, the example remains ambiguous. It

would seem that Ghazālī simply intends give a foretaste of the kind of *reductio ad absurdum* argument he will be using, without making any attempt at this point to answer the various objections and ambiguities that his chosen example seems to contain—problems he would have to address if he were really trying to establish his claim. He does acknowledge the possibility and even likelihood of objections to both premises of his example; that he does not answer them immediately might be forgiven if it is assumed he is giving it only for purposes of illustration here. However, when Ghazālī raises the example again (32.9) in the context of proving the temporality (or origination in time) of the world, he does no more at that point than in his introduction to explain what he means when he says "something that has no end has ended." His version of the same argument in the *Tahāfut* is equally as vague.[29] We are left to make the best interpretation of it that we can.

I suggest that he might be playing on the distinction between actual and potential infinites (as Aristotle discussed them—or actual and improper infinites as Hegel would later write of them). The revolutions of the spheres as described here are at best potential infinites, since at any given moment the spheres are at a

particular point in their path and have not *yet* completed their endless

revolutions, and in that sense they may be thought of as stopped, their position

finite and measured with finite numbers. The potential infinite presupposes the

ability to enumerate the revolutions up to any given point and thereby,

effectively, stop or cut off what was supposed to have been infinite. To be

actually infinite, those unending revolutions must already be actual and

therefore beyond measure—because they are infinite. Ghazālī seems to be saying

that such an *actual* infinite is not possible.[30]

Ghazālī, like others of his school, is clearly uncomfortable with the idea of

anything other than God having infinite duration, motion, or extension. He

rejects the infinite divisibility of atoms, any infinite regress of accident in

substrate, and the infinite motion of the spheres, all in the interest of denying any

coeternal being with God, a position which is in turn demanded by his

commitment to a straightforward reading of the revealed word, that God is the

creator—that is, the originator—of the world (cosmos).

Before continuing Ghazālī pauses (18.10 ff.) to chide those who get bogged

down in arguments over semantics rather than coming to a clear understanding

of the basic concepts involved and moving forward. In this regard he also

entertains an ostensible objection raised by a pupil who wonders if it may not be

important to know the precise ways that different schools employ the various

technical terms. Ghazālī's conviction that underlying ideas are more important

than the language used to expresses them and that becoming fixated on

terminology will only lead to confusion and unnecessary wrangling is a hallmark

of his approach in the *Iqtiṣād*. Lazarus-Yafeh has shown that in some of his

earliest works, such as *Miʿyār al-ʿilm* and *Miḥakk al-naẓār*, Ghazālī can be seen

using the "commonly accepted terminology" of the science of logic, but that "he

seems to discard it completely from the *Itiqṣād* on."[31] Lazarus-Yafeh identifies a

number of passages in Ghazālī's oeuvre where Ghazālī states

> that he is interested in the content, the ideas ("Maʿānī"), rather than in the
> correct expressions ("Alfāẓ") of his writings, and he seems to include
> technical terminology ("Iṣṭilāḥ") among the latter. Already in his
> introduction to the "Tahāfut" he mentions that he will use in this book
> technical terminology only to address his philosophical opponents in
> order to impress them with his own mastery of, and familiarity with, their
> subject. Later on, however, he developed a certain contempt for accurate
> terminology, maintaining that fastidiousness of expression distracts the
> reader's attention from the intrinsic, real meaning ("Ḥaqāʾiq") of the
> content.[32]

As evidence, Lazarus-Yafeh cites the passage mentioned above from *Tahāfut,* the

passage mentioned here from the fourth introduction to the *Itiqṣād*, three others

from *Iḥyaʾ*, and one from *Mishkāt al-anwār* (ibid., 260–61). In the notes to the

translation I mention a number of further instances where Ghazālī seems to be

changing terms while still referencing the same concepts. This emphasis on ideas

rather than terminology may well be a further reason for Ghazālī's later

favorable appraisal of the *Iqtiṣād* over other works of kalam as "coming closer to

the doors of knowledge" than they.[33] It was more important to see to the heart of

a matter and understand the true meaning of something than to merely have a

command of the jargon. It was his quest to discover the truth of things that

drove Ghazālī across the ascetic meridian of his life, and it is no small factor in

the style of his writing in the *Iqtiṣād*.

Ghazālī concludes this section with an interesting discussion of the mental

activity involved in the construction of a logical argument that proves a desired

proposition. It is significant that he is teaching a system in which the "desired

result" comes first and determines the argument to be made in support of it. But

how does one determine what the "desired result" ought to be in the first place?

On my reading, Ghazālī derives these logical targets from the claims of the

revealed, divine word, the reality and veracity of which are themselves sustained

by logical proofs. That there is a God and that he reveals his word by chosen

messengers—chief among them the Prophet Muḥammad—are claims that do not

rely on faith alone for their acceptance. They are subject to logical demonstration,

and, once demonstrated, they inform the further arguments to be made, such as

that the world is created, not pre-eternal, that God is visible, and that miracles

are simply the operation of the divine will to enact events that do not conform to

the usual pattern. The claims of revelation also inform the counter arguments to

be made against those whose reasoning or uncritical acceptance of tradition have

led them to conclusions incompatible with the revelations.

Ghazālī enumerates six sources of cognition *(mudārik)*. I take these to mean,

the starting points for logical arguments. The first of these he calls the evidence

of the senses and includes both that which is perceived externally *(al-mushāhidah*

al-ẓāhirah) and internally *(al-mushāhidah al-baṭinah)*. In a later treatise, the

Mustaṣfā, Ghazālī elaborates these two modes separately, but here and in the

Miyʿār, he combines them under the single rubric of that which is perceived by

the senses.[34]

The second source is "purely intellectual" *(al-ʿaql al-maḥḍ)*, which recognizes

such a priori truths as constitute the very foundations of logical reasoning. The

third is "corroborative reports" *(al-mutawātir)* which was most often invoked and

explained in works of jurisprudence, a discipline in which Ghazālī distinguished

himself. Based on Ghazālī's discussion of it in his late work on jurisprudence,

Mustaṣfā, the theory of *tawatur* has been stated by Weiss as follows:

> the widespread recurrence of true statements about past events produces
> in the minds of hearers a knowledge that these statements are true.[35]

Weiss goes on to explain that

> "widespread" must. . . be understood to mean "on a scale sufficient to rule
> out the possibility of collaborative fabrication." From this statement of the
> theory two corollaries follow: (1) a recurrence of true statements about
> past events which is not widespread does not produce in the minds of
> hearers a knowledge that these statements are true, and likewise (2) the
> widespread recurrence of false statements about past events does not
> produce in the minds of hearers a knowledge that they are true. . . . What
> the second corollary is meant to say is that knowledge, though a subjective
> state, cannot exist apart from its proper object. . . . If the statement is false,
> one cannot have the knowledge that it is true.[36]

In the *Iqtiṣād* Ghazālī gives an instructive example of a use for *tawatur* having to

do with a foreigner who will not accept the veracity of the Prophet Muḥammad's

revelation of the Qurʾān. It is significant because of the light it sheds on how

Ghazālī understood *tawātur*. In the example (23.7), the foreigner has not heard of

Muḥammad's call as a prophet and cannot, therefore, be expected to accept his

revelation of the Qurʾān until he has had "sufficient time to be informed by those

corroborative reports" of the Prophet's existence, his calling, and revelations.

Implicit in his statement, though, is the assumption that, "God willing," such a

person will eventually be exposed to a sufficient *(kāmil)* number[37] of witnesses to

the veracity of Muḥammad's prophetic mission that a certainty that such a man

did in fact live and did in fact reveal the Qurʾān will become established in his

mind. This certainty will take hold not just because of the large number of

witnesses to it, but because, in addition, and crucially, it is in fact true. If it were

not, it would not take hold, Ghazālī says, despite the number of witnesses. As

Weiss has put it:

> The theory expounded by Ghazzali [in *Mustasfa*] affirms simply that if a
> statement about a past event is true in the sense of being empirically based
> and if it is sufficiently widely circulated to rule out the possibility of
> collaborative fabrication there will occur spontaneously in the mind of the
> hearer, i.e. without any logical antecedents, a knowledge that the
> statement is true.[38]

This is obviously a problematic position as viewed from modern norms of

empiricism and logic. One is tempted to ask, for example, what Ghazālī would

do with the Christians and Jews who "know" widely and persistently attested yet, from his perspective, erroneous things about the sacred past? Would he say that they in fact doubt the veracity of their faith claims because it is simply not possible to really believe a falsehood? Ghazālī seems to offer no answer. He simply classifies knowledge based on corroborative reports as primary knowledge because it has no logical antecedents. It simply occurs within the soul, given the right conditions, through a process that remains unconscious, "hidden." "The logic entailed in the 'hidden' reasoning," Weiss observes, "is obscure at best, and Ghazālī does not choose to elaborate upon it."[39] Nevertheless, because he does say that it comes about without any logical or empirical antecedents, it is to be classed, in his system, among the sources of primary rather than derivative knowledge.

With the fifth and sixth sources of knowledge, which we examine further below, Ghazālī differs significantly from his other, later enumeration of the sources of knowledge (i.e., in the *Mustaṣfā).* In particular, there is no mention here of induction *(al-tajribīyah),* while in the *Mustaṣfā* the fifth and sixth sources discussed here are omitted.

The fifth source (22.5) he calls "things that are heard" *(al-sam ͨiyyāt)*. In one sense this term corresponds roughly to Aristotle's concept of *legomena* (things commonly *said*), but is understood within a more formal framework. Weiss has pointed out that this is roughly synonymous with *naqliyyat* ("things that are transmitted") and *manqulat* ("things that are reported"), the idea in all of these cases being to indicate knowledge that derives from an historical or traditional authority and has been handed down from one person to the next. "*Sam ͨiyyat* represents tradition from the point of view of the hearer. . . . Included under this heading are things like the events of the latter days and the hereafter (eschatology)—things that can only be known from tradition, not through reason."[40] Ghazālī later acknowledges that premises from things that are heard "are not useful except for persons who accept them as valid criteria" (23.15).

The sixth and last source (22.12) is the premise taken from the propositions that the opponent concedes. This kind of premise is interesting because of its tactical nature. Here is an explicit statement of one of the methods Ghazālī famously used in *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, arguing from premises that he himself did not accept, but which his opponents did. Michael Marmura has discussed this

kind of argument by Ghazālī, showing that what has sometimes been mistaken

for inconsistency or vacillation on Ghazālī's part is really simply attributable to

this tactic.[41] It might be asked how this method differs from the second—

argumentum ad absurdum. After all, the point of adopting the propositions of one's

opponent is ostensibly to show them to be untenable—that is, absurd. A partial

answer might be that this sixth mode is more restricted still, because, as Ghazālī

puts it, it is "not useful for rational speculation except to be used in reasoning

with someone who adheres to that school of thought"—in other words, someone

who holds the premises to be valid (23.14). This is different from *argumentum ad*

absurdum which might proceed from hypothetical premises that neither party to

the discussion concedes but which nevertheless ultimately serve to establish

one's position. In the sixth method Ghazālī does not necessarily say that the

point of the argument is to invalidate the premises the opponent accepts. The

point might not be to reach a conclusion that is valid, but simply one that can be

used to refute the opponent. It might even be that Ghazālī had *ad hominem*

arguments in mind here.[42]

The First Proposition

Ghazālī's first proposition concerning God's essence is that God exists.

Ghazālī begins immediately with the argument for a cause for the existence of

the temporal world—which cause must be nontemporal. In the process of setting

up the argument, Ghazālī pauses to define key terms such as "world,"

"substance," and "body." Ghazālī defines the world as "every existent other than

God most high" which, in turn, he defines as "all bodies and their accidents." It

bears noting here that God is exempted from the temporality of the world on the

basis that he has neither body nor accidents. However, this has not yet been

proven. In fact, as the context makes clear, Ghazālī is proceeding on the basis that

God is *by definition* the only non-corporeal and non-temporal existent. But the

basis for such a definition is not provided here. That the world and things in it

are temporal may be observed by the senses, but that God is beyond the world

and outside of time are still not established and will not be established in this

section, but rather in the next four propositions.

Ghazālī's proof for God as the Maker of the world quickly becomes involved

in a complex of ancillary arguments and proofs having to do with the terms and

supporting arguments needed to establish the main syllogism, which he

concludes only at the very end of the chapter (34.14). The definitions and

explanations of basic terms in physical theory ("world," "substance," "body,"

etc.) that Ghazālī proffers during the course of this chapter are admittedly sparse

relative to the size and complexity of the issues they involve. This may well be

attributable to his view of kalam as a limited means to a narrowly defined end

(resolving doubts among a certain segment of the Muslim community) rather

than a comprehensive ontology.[43] Certainly it can be said that other kalam

thinkers wrote at much greater length on these topics and covered other subjects

(such as the nature of space and movement) that Ghazālī remains almost entirely

silent on in the *Iqtiṣād*. Nevertheless, what he does have to say about the various

topics he visits in this and other chapters constitute important statements of his

position on several basic matters; and those positions serve to establish his

affiliation with the Ashʿarite school of thought and his opposition to the ideas of

both the Muʿtazilites and the *falāsifah*.[44]

One of the most important terms Ghazālī raises at this point is *jawhar*, which I

usually translate as "substance," since the discussion often refers to *jawhar* as the

substrate for accident. Lane writes that "in the conventional language of scholastic theology *jawhar* signifies *Substance, as opposed to accident*" (*Lexicon*, 476a). In his translation of the second part of the *Iqtiṣād*, where the context again is usually a discussion of accidents and their substrates, Abū Zayd (*Divine Predicates*) also uses "substance" to render *jawhar* (see, for example, pp. 3–4). The first time Ghazali uses the term (24.10) he adds the qualifying term *fard*, meaning "simple," thus giving "single substance." Ghazālī defines "single substance" as that which occupies space but cannot be differentiated within itself (in other words, is indivisible). This indicates the most irreducible form of substance that is, the atom.

Although other Ashʿarites proffered other definitions for *jawhar* (Juwaynī, for example, offered several definitions, including "that which occupies space," "that which has volume *[ḥajm]*," and "that which receives accidents")[45] the basic idea seems to hold that, within kalam, *jawhar* meant indivisible substance. In any event, Ghazālī's view is in distinct contrast to the *falsafah* definition which affirmed the divisibility of physical entities ad infinitum. This was a fundamental difference between the schools of kalam and the *falāsifah*. Ghazālī's teacher, al-

Juwaynī, wrote that

> Among the most important foundations of religion *(aʿẓam arkān al-dīn)* is denying an infinite regress of temporally created objects *(ḥawādith)*. The proof *(dalāla)* for the temporal creation of the world cannot continue to stand without the establishment of this [premise].[46]

The kalam denial of the infinite divisibility of the atom was required by their commitment to the temporal origination of the world and of all material bodies (which are composed of atoms). To admit the infinite divisibility of an atom would be to allow the possibility of other kinds of infinite regress, including an infinite regress of time and causation, which threatened the argument for God as the origin of temporal matter.

In recent years a debate has emerged over aspects of Ghazālī's view of God's causality, and though much of the evidence used in the various readings and arguments derives from the second part of the *Iqtiṣād* and is therefore somewhat outside the scope of this study, a brief overview of the issues is warranted. For though the minutiae of the arguments have to do with God's causality, the larger issue is whether Ghazālī owed greater allegiance to the Ashʿarite school of kalam or to the peripatetic school of the *falāsifah*. Richard Frank first raises the subject in a 1991 monograph entitled *Creation and the Cosmic System* where he argues that

Ghazālī, while rejecting certain tenets of Avicennan-style philosophy,

nevertheless seems to adopt the *falsafah* position on matters that are even more

fundamental, such as whether God is or is not the *direct* cause of every event,

regardless of any appearance to the contrary (such as the regular operation of

forces in nature, the actions of angels or humans, etc.). The Ashʿarite

occasionalist position held staunchly that God is the direct cause of every event,

but Frank adduces evidence that Ghazālī tacitly did not hold this, concluding

that

> from a theological standpoint, most of the [*falsafah*] theses which [Ghazālī]
> rejected are relatively tame and inconsequential compared to some of
> those in which he follows the philosopher.[47]

This position was elaborated further by Frank in a second book, *Al-Ghazālī and*

the Ashʿarite School, to which further reference is made in the notes to the

translation.

To this position (particularly as first put forward in *Creation and the Cosmic*

System) Marmura has responded with a careful and well-informed analysis of the

evidence from Ghazālī's oeuvre. He has shown that Frank's critical points in

Creation and the Cosmic System are based either on questionable readings in the

original, on prejudiced translations of his own, or on ambiguous passages that

might be interpreted one way or another but where Ghazālī's established pattern

of thought would argue for the reading that Frank wants to overthrow.[48] Further

evidence that in *Al-Ghazālī and the Ashʿarite School* Frank continues to read

Ghazālī as a sometime crypto-Aristotelian, a theory that he attempts to buttress

with sometimes forced and even inaccurate readings, is offered in the notes to

the translation of the first proposition.[49]

The Second and Third Propositions

In the second and third propositions Ghazālī argues for the eternity of God *a*

parte ante and *a parte post* respectively. His discussion of proposition two (35.4–

11) is very brief, based on the argument that if God is the origin of the world he

must have no beginning himself or else he would in turn have an originator and

so on ad infinitum. Based on this same argument, Ghazālī adds that God's

preeternity is essential and not something superadded to his nature (as the

attributes are).

The third proposition, on God's eternal duration is more involved, in part

because Ghazālī draws up the discussion to include the quarrel with the

Muʿtazilites over whether nonbeing is a positive reality in the same sense as

being, and again because he pauses (37.5) to set forth his occasionalist doctrine of

substances and accidents being continually originated and annihilated in their

essence, in contrast to God, whose essence is to be and to remain from eternity to

eternity. As Dhanani has shown, the occasionalism of the Ashʿarites, which we

find alive and well in Ghazālī's writings, seems to be based on a "lattice" model

wherein not only space, but also time is composed of minimal units that are not

susceptible of any further division, much like matter is composed of irreducible

substances (atoms). On this model, from instant to instant God is continually

creating and annihilating the substances that constitute the world. Something

that is said to be at rest is really a new version of that thing from instant to

instant, created by God with substances appearing same arrangement, filling the

same places in the lattice as the ones previous, which have just been annihilated.

Something in motion is undergoing the same process of continual creation and

annihilation of its component substances (atoms), only these are created by God

in cells of the lattice that are contiguous to the cells where the substance existed

in the previous instant. The strong determinism of the occasionalist model entails

problems—including such fundamental questions as the meaning or purpose of

anything's existence other than God, the meaning of human agency, and the

notion of possible worlds (if God annihilates and originates everything instant by

instant, is each instant tantamount to a new world?). A more detailed and careful

analysis of these questions is warranted but lies outside the scope of this survey.

In discussing the pre- and post- eternity of God as aspects of his essence,

Ghazālī differs from his teacher, Juwayini, and the Ashʿarite school more

generally where nearly every aspect—whether positive or negative—of God's

existence (and sometimes even his existence) was characterized in one way or

another as attribute. Juwaynī, for example, speaks of essential attributes (*ṣifāt*

nafsiyya) and conceptual attributes *(ṣifāt maʿnawiyyah).* He does not discuss God's

existence as an attribute because, as he says, "existence is the essence itself."[50]

However, among the essential attributes, Juwaynī says, are God's pre-eternity,

omnipotence, difference from contingent beings, and oneness.[51] Significantly,

Juwaynī holds that God's post eternity, rather than being an essential attribute

like God's pre-eternity, is not an attribute additional to God's essence but is

identical with his continued existence. In this he, too, departed from the usual

Ashʿarite position which held that God's post-eternity was a conceptual attribute

like knowledge and power. But Juwaynī's position here seems problematic

within the context of his own thought. In arguing that post-eternity is not an

attribute, he says that "if we accepted such an eternal attribute, it would also

necessarily be pre-eternal, and this leads to an infinite regress"[52] which then begs

the question as to why he has already characterized God's pre-eternity as an

attribute. Ghazālī avoids these and other problems by establishing a more

consistent position with respect to God's pre- and post-eternity and by

(apparently) using the criteria of what applies to God's existence as the way to

differentiate between aspects of his essence and the attributes that are applied to

him. The difference is between aspects (or concepts relating to) God's *existence*

and the accidents that pertain to *him* not just his existence. This difference might

be best expressed in terms of the language that must be used to apply the various

concepts to God. Thus, for example, God *is* eternal (or, his existence is eternal);

he *is* noncorporeal (or, his existence is noncorporeal); and he *is* visible (his

existence is visible), etc.; but God *does* live, *does* speak, *does* will, etc. and it is not

his existence that *does* these things, but God himself. The aspects of his existence

are affirmed of what he *is*, the accidents are affirmed of what he *does.* More will

be said on this subject below, in the concluding section of the introduction.

However much is said on this subject, though, the problem remains that Ghazālī

himself does not explicitly explain why he has made the distinctions he has and

taken such a different approach to the question of God's essence and attributes

than any of his predecessors.

The Fourth through Eighth Propositions

The next three propositions Ghazālī discusses all share in Ghazālī's *via*

negativa approach, denying any physical aspect of God. Thus, God is neither

substance, body, nor accident as those terms are typically understood. The

argument that God is not body (39.7 ff.) depends on the argument that he is not

substance, which Ghazālī argues in turn based on God's eternal essence (38.2 ff.),

for if he were to occupy space (as he would by definition if a substance or body),

he would be subject to movement or rest, which are temporal in essence and

therefore have nothing to do with God.

The proposition that God is not accident (40.2 ff.) relies in turn on the claim

that accident by definition cannot exist independently of a substrate—that is,

something that is essentially body or corporeal substance. Again the semantic

definition of the terms is critical, and Ghazālī allows that if accident is taken to

mean an attribute that has no temporal or corporeal basis, the nature of the

argument shifts from one about whether God has attributes (called accidents) to

one about whether such attributes apply to his essence or are additional to it

(40.9 ff.). Given these parameters, Ghazālī still opts for the *via negativa*, denying

any attribute of God's essence but allowing that attributes may be superadded to

the divine essence.

With the seventh proposition (41.2) Ghazālī continues his contention that

there is no spatial aspect to God: He is neither "up" nor "down," nor on any

other "side," if these terms are taken to refer to three dimensional space.

Furthermore, God is no "state" residing in any corporeal substance (such as the

celestial spheres?)[53] whereby he would be in any or all of their spatial sides. Thus

this claim, too, is based on those preceding it—specifically, that God is not body

and God is not accident.

In reply to questions about what must therefore be the meaning of facing the

qibla or bowing to the dust if God is in no particular place (44.3 ff.), Ghazālī

digresses into a lucid explanation of the spiritual reasons for such revealed

requirements. It may be that such sections as this by Ghazālī are part of the

reason he opined of the *Iqtiṣād* that it brought men closer to the gates of gnosis

than other works of kalam. At least, Ghazālī attributes the aptness of his

discussion to the virtue of seeing beyond the superficial and delving "more

deeply into the mysteries of the hearts." It is a discussion much like those found

in the *Iḥyaʾ*, which he was to compose only after a long period of personal

cleansing and meditation.

Ghazālī then resumes the discussion of God having no spatial aspect and

reiterates an argument, the premises of which he has previously established.

Every being that occupies place is temporal; every temporal being ultimately

requires a nontemporal agent for its existence; therefore, there must be a being

that does not occupy place. The conclusion is based on the equivalence of

temporality and dimensionality. If what exists in time and space must ultimately

be traced to an originator devoid of either, and if God is that originator, then God

must be devoid of any temporal or spatial aspect.

Finally, in response to another objection, Ghazālī offers some statements on

the conceivability and intelligibility of God (49.8 ff.).[54] God, he says, cannot be

fully comprehended by the limited, human mind, but his existence and other

aspects of his essence can be shown through logical proofs.

Ghazālī's final move down the *via negativa* is to address certain problems

raised for his positions by the anthropomorphic imagery of the Qurʾan. In this he

followed the model of his teacher in kalam, al-Juwaynī, though the kind of

arguments he offers are different from Juwaynī's in significant ways.[55] Ghazālī

specifically singles out the imagery of God sitting upon a throne for discussion in

this, his eighth proposition (50.15 ff.).

Invoking the points he has just made about God having no spatial or

temporal aspect (including accident), Ghazālī argues against the literal

interpretation of God sitting on a throne. He must then offer an alternative

explanation for the meaning of such passages as indicate that God has any kind

of relation to temporal or spatial objects (51.7 ff.). It is in this context that Ghazālī

becomes most explicit about his doctrine of withholding intellectual or

allegorical interpretations of the sacred texts from the common person and only

imparting them to those who are intellectually capable of receiving them. Here

he is referring to any problematical, anthropomorphic allusion that someone

might ask about, not just those about the sitting on the throne.

As for his own position, Ghazālī says a proper response "should conform to

what some of the forefathers *(salāf)* said" (52.4). The dictum Ghazālī reports from

the "forefathers" is: "That he is seated is known, in what manner *(al-kayfiyya)* is

not known. . . ." Asín's translation of this passage has Ghazālī naming the author

of the quote here as Mālik ibn Anas. Asín's basis for doing this is uncertain on

one level at least, since none of the manuscript traditions name Mālik but simply

refer to "some of the forefathers." On the other hand, it is possible that Ghazālī,

though a Shāfiʿī jurist, did have Mālik or someone of the school named for him

in mind here, for it conforms to the early traditionist reading attributed variously

to the Ḥanbalites or to Mālik, who wrote that "God sits on His Throne *(istiwāʾ)*,

descends towards the earth, has eyes, has a hand, because the text says so. But no

one knows the acceptation given by God to these terms."[56] Thus, Malīk and his

followers refused to interpret the texts in any way, while the Muʿtazilites did so

liberally, using metaphorical analogy and philology to rationalize the meaning of

anthropomorphic passages. The early Ashʿarites accepted the attitude of Mālik

and formalized their position in the *bi lā kayfa* doctrine, which stated that the

anthropomorphic language of the revelations was to be accepted as true without

speculating *how,* it nevertheless being understood that it had to be true in some

way other than the literal sense of God having a body. But, as Gardet observes,

another position later was admitted into kalam thought, this time from the

unlikely quarters of the Muʿtazila and the *falāsifa.* This was

> a metaphorical interpretation into which allegory may creep, if need be,
> and which comes very close to the Muʿtazilite legacy, with the following
> differences: 1) the attitude of the "ancients" is regarded as valid. . . ; 2)
> only the specifically anthropomorphic passages are accepted as
> metaphors; where the "apparent" *(ẓāhir)* sense would lead to a real
> impossibility. . . .[57]

One of the early "moderns" or proponents of this idea was Ghazālī's own

teacher, al-Juwaynī,[58] and it is clear from the *Iqtiṣād* and later treatises such as the

Miskhāt and especially the very late work *Iljām al-awwām* that Ghazālī adopted

this line of thought and maintained it throughout his life. In the chapter under

consideration here (at 53.3 ff.), Ghazālī offers metaphorical interpretations of a

number of Qurʾanic verses and prophetic sayings of Muḥammad before

returning to the original topic of God seated upon the throne (at 55.8 ff.), which

he also interprets metaphorically. This is one of the lengthiest sections of the

entire *Iqtiṣād*. Ghazālī gives numerous examples and discusses in considerable

detail how the correct interpretation of several of them is derived. All of this

would indicate that Ghazālī was committed to further establishing this

"modern" approach to exegesis of the Muslim canon. *Iljām al-awwām*, contains

the fullest development of his metaphorical readings of the anthropomorphic

passages, and a comparison between that work and this section of the *Iqtiṣād*

would undoubtedly be a valuable contribution.

The Ninth Proposition

With the ninth proposition (60.9 ff.) Ghazālī makes a significant departure

from the *via negativa* and offers another positive argument that is striking and

curious in its own right, particularly in light of the discussion just concluded.

There, Ghazālī had advocated and demonstrated the uses of metaphorical

interpretation when confronted with anthropomorphic passages referring to the

being of God. Now, however, with respect to God's visibility, he strenuously

resists doing so and specifically opposes the Muʿtazilites who do employ *taʾwil*

(metaphorical interpretation)[59] rather than allow that God might be visible in

some straightforward sense of that term. Ghazālī is attempting to show that God

is "visible in his being, by the existence of his essence and not by reason of some of his acts or attributes." It is because Ghazālī affirms that God is visible by his essence, by virtue of being an existent, that he sees fit to include it here in this first section of his treatise, which is dedicated to explaining the essence of God.

The critical qualifier Ghazālī posits in this case is that it is *possible* to see God, because he is real and all real beings are by definition visible and cognizable in some sense at least. However, that God is potentially visible does not necessarily imply that any vision of him has actually taken place or will take place for any given potential "viewer."

Ghazālī begins by offering two arguments to show that it is logically possible that God is visible (61.8 ff.). The first argument is a line of reasoning which states that it is appropriate to affirm of God the same things that are affirmed of any other being except those qualities or attributes that are specific to temporal/spatial beings. God is cognizable just as other beings are, and "vision is a kind of knowledge that does not imply any kind of alteration in the attributes of the object that is seen, nor does it suggest temporality; therefore, [the possibility of vision with respect to God] must be admitted just as with respect to

every other being."

To the objection that what is visible must be spatial/corporeal, Ghazālī makes several replies. First is an argument from silence: Just because we have no experience of a being that is visible despite being without extension or location does not prove the impossibility of such (and after all, it is only *possibility* that Ghazālī claims for the visibility of God). Next is the argument that since most everyone agrees that God can see himself and the world, he must be visible, and this argument is buttressed or complicated, as the case may be, with a lengthy and somewhat inconclusive digression on the example of a man who sees himself in a mirror. Ghazālī does not get down to the physics of how a person does actually see himself in the mirror. Rather, he simply agrees with his opponent in disallowing several would-be explanations, but then disagrees with him in his contention (65) that "if I am not in front of myself I cannot see myself." The unstated conclusion is that the opponent may not be able to explain *how* he sees himself, or his various explanations may be incorrect, but the fact of what he sees remains. This line of explanation might therefore be understood as another use, albeit a very tacit one, of the *bi lā kayf* doctrine.

Next Ghazālī turns to the evidence from revelation that God has been seen (65.8 ff.) even if this cannot be taken in the same sense as seeing a corporeal substances with accidents. To explain how this might be so, Ghazālī proposes to discuss all of the different possible meanings "vision" might have, and eliminate those which cannot be applied a the vision of a being without body or accidents. Then, he says,

> if there should remain of those meanings one that is not incompatible with the essence of God most high and that can be called "vision" in all truth, then we shall affirm it with respect to God most high and we shall conclude that he is truly visible. On the other hand, if it is not possible to use the name "vision" except in a metaphorical sense, then we shall use that word when revelation enjoins us to, but understanding it in the sense that reason indicates to us that it should be understood.

In other words, Ghazālī wants, if possible, to claim a more literal reading for the word "vision" than the Muʿtazilites do. They take it metaphorically in some way, but Ghazālī, if he can, would prefer to find a commonly accepted meaning of the word "vision" that will allow him to say that God is—in that sense, at least— truly visible. Failing that, he says, he will settle, as the Muʿtazilites before him, for a metaphorical interpretation. This passage is thus a valuable summary of Ghazālī's exegetical methodology. The language of revelation should be taken at

face value wherever possible. However, the constraints of what is possible in that regard are supplied by logical reasoning. When the plain meaning of the language of revelation is determined to be logically impossible—given the premises upon which that logic is constructed—then a metaphorical rather than literal interpretation of the revelation may be warranted.

Ghazālī begins by noting that the eye is not the only organ of the body that is commonly said to be capable of vision; the heart and the mind are also (66.10). Next, he shows that the object of vision may be any of a number of things or a combination thereof and so there is nothing essential to vision in its object. "Thus," he concludes, "the basis upon which the word "vision" depends will be. . . the reality of the meaning without any relation to its subject [that is, its locus in the viewer] or its object" (67.5). The question of what the "reality" of vision is, then, Ghazālī answers by comparing it, using examples, to imagination. He says that vision is more complete and perfect than something that is merely imaged or conceptualized within the soul through imagination. It is more exact and more immediate than latent knowledge. The vision is "knowledge most perfect and clear" and as such

is not granted in this world because the soul, preoccupied in the governance of the body, its native purity and cleanliness tainted by the impurities of the world, is hindered as though by a veil from having such perception.[60]

Ghazālī concludes that once the soul is freed from the body, its temporal attachments, and veils of misunderstanding, it should be able "see" God in this sense.

Having shown that there is, in fact, a proper sense of the word "vision" that can be applied to human knowledge of God, Ghazālī next turns to the revelations (69.14) to show that they do not rule out the vision of God according the meaning he has posited. Then he discusses the position of other sects on this question (72.11 ff.). The Hashwiyya are basically corporealists, which presumably solves the problem of God's visibility for them, but—from the "orthodox" perspective— at the considerable expense of *tashbih*, conceiving of God in terms comparable to human. Of greater interest is Ghazālī's attitude towards the Muʿtazilites whom he accuses of "openly contradict[ing] the revealed doctrine on this point." In their fervor to avoid anthropomorphism, he says, they have taken the *via negativa (tanzih)* too far by unnecessarily denying the visibility of God. This is another significant point of disagreement between Ghazālī and both the Muʿtazilites and

the *falāsifah*, one that must be taken into account by those who would argue that

Ghazālī was a committed though cagey Aristotelian.[61]

A passage, from the *Faysal*, throws several elements of this section into

greater relief. Ghazālī sets forth a "rule for figurative interpretation" in which he

enumerates a succession of levels of interpretation that ought to be observed

when considering problematical passages. His rule states that

> the permissibility of engaging in figurative interpretation is contingent
> upon having established the logical impossibility of the apparent meaning
> *(ẓāhir)* of a text. The first level of apparent meaning corresponds to
> ontological *(dhātī)* existence. Whenever this is conceded, the remaining
> levels are entailed. If this proves (logically) impossible, however, one
> moves to the level of sensory existence *(hissī)*, for it too embraces those
> levels below it. If this proves impossible, one moves to the level of
> conceptual *(khayālī)* or noetic *(ʿaqlī)* existence. And if this proves
> impossible, one moves to the level of analogous, allegorical existence *(al-
> wujūd al-shabahī al-majāzī)*.
>   Now, no one is permitted to move from one level (of interpretation) to
> a level beneath it without being compelled by logical proof *(burhān)*. Thus,
> in reality, the differences among the various parties revert to (differences
> regarding) logical proofs. In other words, the Ḥanbalite says that there is
> no logical proof affirming the impossibility of the Creator being specified
> by the direction of "above."[62] And the Ashʿarite says that there is no
> logical proof affirming the impossibility of the beatific vision. In other
> words, it is as if each party is simply dissatisfied with the justification
> adduced by its opponent and does not deem it to constitute a definitive
> proof. But however the matter may be, neither party should brand its
> opponent an Unbeliever simply because it deems the latter to be mistaken
> in what it holds to be a logical proof.[63]

Significantly, Ghazālī includes the matter of the vision of God as an example of a question over which there could be disagreement as to how to logically approach it. The fact that the Muʿtazilites err in denying the reality of the vision of God, Ghazālī elaborates, merits them the charge of innovation. But the fact that this error poses no immediate danger to the community of believers and because the proof that is adduced (by any party, presumably) "is not decisive but leads to a more probable conjecture" exempts them from the charge of unbelief.[64] Though Ghazālī's criteria for innovation or unbelief are stated with greater clarity in the *Fayṣāl*,[65] and his tone there is more conciliatory than it is in the *Iqtiṣād*, still nothing he says here would seem to contradict his later position as to what constitutes unbelief, innovation, and so forth. Ghazālī disagrees strongly with the Muʿtazilies, but he still allows that they are believers in contrast to the *falāsifah*, whom he declared to be unbelievers in the *Tahāfut*, a position he also reiterates later in the *Iqtiṣād* and which he maintained throughout his career.[66]

The Tenth Proposition

In the tenth proposition (73.9 ff.) Ghazālī aims to show what it means to say that God is one in his essence. He argues that God can have no peer since he is by

definition the originator of all things and there cannot be two such beings,

otherwise the very notion of a truly supreme being becomes meaningless.

Meaningless also is any argument that God is more than one in his essence or

attributes since that would mean that he is identical to himself (since, by

definition, there can be no being greater than himself), and being identical in

every respect means to have no distinguishable duality or plurality. Ghazālī

wields this argument also to counter the suggestion that two creators might have

cooperated in the creation of the world. He argues that any being with power to

create the heavens could also create the earth and anything else, therefore any

being with absolute power and of the essence previously posited would be

indistinguishable from and therefore identical to another such being. Therefore

there must only be one such being. The next suggestion is that there might be

two creators, one of substances, one of accidents, and that they cooperate in

creation. This Ghazālī counters by saying that since substances and accidents

require each other for actualization, there might arise a case in which one creator

would be compelled by the other in bringing something into existence, or

conversely, the one might frustrate the creative intention of the other.

One might take a number of further exceptions to the line of reasoning developed by Ghazālī in this chapter. For another example it might be suggested that there are two creators, but what distinguishes them is an ontological, essential difference, even though they are absolutely equal in power and even will, which will is to act cooperatively, one agent refraining from some aspect of creative action (of which he is nevertheless fully capable) in order to accommodate that very action on the part of the other. Ghazālī, we suppose, might make any of several replies to this. First, he might say it defies comprehension that two ontologically distinct beings of universal power and dominion should be distinguishable one from another. It is absurd. Second, Ghazālī could contend that even if this proposition is granted (if the judgment that it is absurd is suspended and we allow that there may be two such beings, though we cannot say how), then it must also be admitted that there may be more than two such beings, and that, in fact, there may be an infinite number of them, and this is another absurdity. Finally, Ghazālī would have recourse to the plain meaning of the revealed word, the Prophetic utterances, and the unanimous consensus of the *ahl al-haq*, to whit, that God is one and that this must

be understood in an absolute sense: he is the only one of his unique kind. This is, in fact, the kind of step that he does take at the conclusion of the chapter when he quotes Qurʾan 21:22 to the effect that "if there were in both [the heavens and earth] other gods besides God, [surely both] would be destroyed." It is ultimately upon the basis of authority that Ghazālī rests his contention of the oneness of God, saying "nothing exceeds the Qurʾan in clarity" (79.5).

With that Ghazālī concludes the first part of the *Iqtiṣād*, treating the essence of God. In the next section he will deal with the attributes that apply (being super-added) to God's essence. These are the seven attributes that are typically posited of God: knowledge, power, will, life, sight, hearing, and speech. Ghazālī's treatment of these topics is beyond the scope of this study, but it still appropriate here to inquire as to the difference between the attributes enumerated there and the essence just discussed. What criterion is Ghazālī using to distinguish between what is essential and what is superadded to the divine essence?

Ghazālī on the Essence of God

There are a number of questions to be asked of the first chapters of the *Iqtiṣād*, not the least of which is, What did Ghazālī understand to be the essence of God?

This would seem to be a question that ought to have a straightforward answer,

since the entire first part of the treatise is devoted to that one topic, to whit: God

exists, is eternal *a parte ante,* is everlasting, is not atom, is not corporeal, is not

accident, is not bounded, has no spatial locus such as a throne, is visible in the

sense of being cognizable, and is one. However, when we ask what it is about

these propositions that relates them uniquely to God's essence, it becomes

difficult to articulate a defining criteria. And when these propositions are

juxtaposed with those from the next part of the *Iqtiṣād*, dealing with God's seven

cardinal attributes, the problem becomes more complex still.

It might be that this is a problem larger than Ghazālī. After all, in writing the

Iqtiṣād he was following in a tradition that had been established by previous

theologians of his Ashʿarite school and which, at the very least, he could not

dismiss lightly. But as has already been noted, Ghazālī was not an uncritical

Ash'arite. Even before he chose the path of the Sufi and in the *Iqtiṣād* itself he

showed that he was prepared to set aside convention or go beyond it when it

suited his purpose to do so. Therefore, absent any compelling reason not to, we

must in fairness take what we are given in the *Iqtiṣād* to be genuine Ghazālī,

reflective of his actual beliefs—at least to that point in his career—however much it might resemble the work of others before him.

The Arabic term I am translating as "essence" also deserves attention at this point. Is "essence" indeed the right gloss for Ghazālī's use of *"dhāt"*? A useful opening discussion of this term is given by Fazlur Rahman in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam.* He notes that there are indeed a number of meanings that have come to be associated with it. In general usage it can mean "thing," "being," "self," or even "ego." "But most commonly," he says, it "is employed in the two different meanings of 'substance' and 'essence.'"[67] Used in the first of those two senses, he continues, "it is the equivalent of the subject or substratum. . . and is contrasted with qualities or predicates attributed to it and inhering in it." Used in the other sense, however, it "signifies the essential or constitutive qualities of a thing as a member of a species, and is contrasted with its accidental attributes." I translate *dhāt* as "essence" in the *Iqtiṣād* because Ghazālī consistently distinguishes between essence and substance and refers to the latter—that which forms the substrate for accidents *(ʿaraḍ)*—using the term *jawhar*, never *dhāt*. In addition, he devotes the second part of the *Iqdiṣād* to a discussion of God's

accidental attributes *(arād)*, juxtaposing them with the characteristics of *dhāt*, just

as one would expect, given Rahman's characterization of *dhāt* as essence.[68]

Rahman goes on to observe, however, that the meanings of "essence" and

"substance" are sometimes conflated, especially in theological or philosophical

discussions about God, "because essence is regarded as being constitutive of the

substance which is a substance only in so far as it is constituted by this essence."

The theologians Rahman has particularly in mind, as he points out, are the

Muʿtazila, who, like the *falāsifah,* but for different reasons than they, denied the

existence of divine attributes and declared God to be "simple substance and

simple essence," basically identifying the two. As will be seen in what follows,

Ghazālī did not subscribe to this view and in fact argued forcefully against it on

the grounds that it simply contradicted the plain meaning of revelation. As a

result, Ghazālī was never tempted to confuse substance and essence, and does

not do so in this work.

The question of what was essential to God and what was distinguishable

from his essence was one to which a number of answers were posed in kalam.

The Muʿtazilites evolved one line of response, the Ashʿarites another. Within the

Ashʿarite school, al-Juwaynī developed his own thought on the subject distinct from that of other Ashʿarites, and Ghazālī, his pupil, here offers yet another answer to the question.[69] These differences were seldom explained or defended as differences by their various proponents, and Ghazālī offers no straightforward explanation of the criterion by which he determined the difference between what was essential and what was superadded to God. However, it seems reasonable to suggest that the criterion has to do with what may be said of God's existence as opposed to what may be said of his activity. The first aspect of God's essence as discussed by Ghazālī (that God exists) is a special case in that it is first in a list of aspects the rest of which refer back to that first premise of God's existence. That is, every other aspect of the essence may be formulated as a description—negative or positive—of God's *existence*[70] while none of the attributes can be. Thus, God's existence is eternal *a parte ante* and *a parte post*, is non-spatial, non-corporeal, and without accident, is visible, and is one; while it is not said that God's existence is powerful, knowing, willing, living, seeing, hearing, or speaking. These are terms that are said of what God does rather than what he is and are to be dealt with in the next section of the *Iqtiṣād*.

Notes

[1] Hourani, "Revised Chronology."

[2] Marmura, "Al-Ghazālī on Bodily Resurrection," 49–51.

[3] Watt, "Al-Ghazālī," 1040.

[4] Hourani, "Revised Chronology," 294.

[5] Hourani, "Revised Chronology," 295.

[6] Hourani, "Revised Chronology," 294.

[7] From *Kitāb al-arbaʿīn fī uṣūl al-dīn,* (pp. 21–2 in the edition by M. M. Abū al-Ala [Cairo, 1964]). The version here is my amalgam based on translations by Marmura ("Ghazālī and Ashʿarism Revisited," 91–110) and Abū Zayd (*Al-Ghazālī on Divine Predicates*, xxix).

[8] Marmura, "Ghazālī and Ashʿarism," 101.

[9] Watt, "Al-Ghazālī," 1040.

[10] See, however, James T. Monroe's *Islam and the Arabs in Spanish Scholarship,* which gives an excellent survey of the field generally and of Asín's work in particular. See especially pp. 191 ff.

[11] See Marmura, "Al-Ghazālī on Bodily Resurrection," 296 n. 38.

[12] Ghazālī's terminology here includes *"taqlīd"* (uncritical assent to teachings) and *iʿtiqād* (belief). The use of these and other important terms within Ashʿarite contexts has been explored by Richard Frank in "Knowledge and Taqlīd."

[13] McCarthy, *Deliverance,* 79, emphasis added.

[14] McCarthy, *Deliverance*, 55.

[15] McCarthy, *Deliverance*, 58.

[16] This chronology is based on Hourani, "Revised Chronology," 294–295 and Ghazālī's own account as given in the *Munqīdh*.

[17] Translation from Jackson, *Limits*, 112.

[18] Translation from Jackson, *Limits*, 114.

[19] These comments have been enriched by suggestions from Bernard Weiss.

[20] McCarthy, *Deliverance*, 22.

[21] Watt, *Faith and Practice*, 28–29.

[22] This last work was known to the scholastics, having been translated into Latin at Toledo.

[23] Saflo, *Al-Juwaynī's Thought*, 133.

[24] Saflo, *Al-Juwaynī's Thought*, 133.

[25] Cotter, *Scholastic Philosophy*, 84.

[26] Cotter, *Scholastic Philosophy*, 84.

[27] Cotter, *Scholastic Philosophy*, 84.

[28] See Marmura, "Ghazālī on Bodily Resurrection and Causality in *Tahāfut* and The *Iqtiṣād*."

[29] See Marmura, *Incoherence*, 54 f.

[30] My thanks to Peter von Sivers for his insights into this problem.

[31] Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies*, 251.

[32] Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies*, 253.

[33] See the fuller quote and citation above, in the discussion of the second and third introductions.

[34] See Weiss, "Knowledge of the Past," 101.

[35] Weiss, "Knowledge of the Past," 96.

[36] Bernard Weiss has discussed Ghazālī's use of this important concept at length in "Knowledge of the Past." For a less nuanced definition of *tawātur* in the context of Ghazālī's writings, see Jackson, *Boundaries*, 47. Jackson translates the concept as "diffuse congruence" (ibid., 112–13).

[37] See Weiss, "Knowledge of the Past," 93–94.

[38] Weiss, "Knowledge of the Past," 92.

[39] Weiss, "Knowledge of the Past," 103.

[40] Weiss, email correspondence.

[41] Marmura, "Al-Ghazālī on Bodily Resurrection and Causality."

[42] My thanks to Bernard Weiss for his observations on this subject.

[43] See Dhanani, "Al-Ghazālī's Attitude," 18.

[44] Dhanani, "Al-Ghazālī's Attitude," 1.

[45] Dhanani, "Al-Ghazālī's Attitude," 4; Saflo, *Al-Juwaynī's Thought*, 174–75.

[46] Juwaynī, *al-Shāmil*, 148, as translated in Dhanani, *Physical Theory*, 189–190.

[47] Frank, *Creation and the Cosmic System*, 86.

[48] Marmura, "Ghazālian Causes."

[49] See note 150 and, in particular, note 171, herein. For a more systematic critical treatment of Frank's heavy handed method in *Al-Ghazālī and the Ashʿarite School*, see Dallal, "Perils of Interpretation."

[50] Juwaynī, *al-Irshād*, 31, as translated in Saflo, *Al-Juwaynī's Thought*, 130.

[51] Saflo, *Al-Juwaynī's Thought*, 129–134.

[52] Juwaynī, *al-Irshād*, 139, as translated in Saflo, *Al-Juwaynī's Thought*, 148–49.

[53] Ghazālī gives no example along these lines, but the argument would seem to be most properly warranted if it is supposed that Ghazālī is responding to the idea that God might be a celestial body of some kind. If this supposition is accepted, it still has nothing to imply about whether Ghazālī himself did or did not subscribe to the emanationist cosmology of the *falāsifah*.

[54] Though also outside of the scope of this study, these statements have relevance to the discussion of God's unknowability (or otherwise), for which see, Burrell, "Unknowability of God," and Shehadi, *Ghazālī's Unique Unknowable God*.

[55] For a discussion of the superiority of Ghazālī's methodology here to Juwaynī's, and it's ground-breaking rigor, see Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, 120–25.

[56] L. Gardet, "Allāh," 412. See also Abrahamov, "The *bi-lā kayfa* Doctrine," for a discussion of its possible origins.

[57] L. Gardet, "Allāh," 412–13.

[58] L. Gardet, "Allāh," 412.

[59] By using *taʾwīl*, Gardet says, the Muʿtazilites could deny the vision of God without contradicting the Qurʾan. (See L. Gardedt, "Allāh," 412; and D. Gimaret,

"Muʿtazila," 792.)

⁶⁰ 68.12 ff.

⁶¹ This would be particularly true if this doctrine turns out to be original to Ghazālī (and not just his following pro forma the Ashʿarite position). However, confronted with this kind of evidence a scholar who holds this view, such as Richard Frank, would likely dismiss it as unimportant relative to the larger questions, where, he asserts, Ghazālī aligns himself with the *falāsifah*. Ghazālī himself implies that the issue is not of fundamental importance when he says it poses no threat to the Islamic community (see the quotation, below).

⁶² It will be remembered that Ghazālī treats this question under his seventh proposition of the *Iqtiṣād* (41.2 ff.).

⁶³ This passage is based primarily on Sherman Jackson's translation of the *Faysal* (*Boundaries,* 104) with some words grafted from McCarthy (*Deliverance,* 135) where his reading is less awkward and closer to the language of my translation of the *Iqtiṣād*. McCarthy, however, seems to have struggled to understand or capture the gist of this passage.

⁶⁴ Based on the translation in McCarthy, *Deliverance,* 140.

⁶⁵ See also the brief discussion of these criteria in the analysis of the second and third introductions of the *Iqtiṣād,* above.

⁶⁶ This point is significant in the context of the discussion that has emerged over the question of whether Ghazālī subscribed to certain fundamental tenets of Aristotelian philosophy as propounded by Avicenna et al. See the earlier notice of this discussion the treatment of Ghazālī's first proposition, above. The same point is also made by Marmura in his critique of Frank's *Creation and the Cosmic System* ("Ghazālian Causes," 100).

[67] Rahman, *"Dhāt."*

[68] It is possible that "being" could also be a tenable translation of *dhat* as used in this work, but the structure of Ghazālī's book makes it clear that he is writing in the theological vein that deliberately juxtaposed "essence" and "accident" on principle and as a point of argument. Accordingly, I adopt the equivalent English term most consistently employed in the dialectical idiom: "essence."

[69] For a detailed discussion of Juwaynī's thought on this subject, see Saflo, *Al-Juwaynī's Thought,* 129 ff. For a discussion of the main Ashʿarite position and the key terms involved see Richard Frank, "Ashʿarite Ontology."

[70] Al-Fārābī used similar language relating essence to existence. As translated by Abū Zayd, he states, speaking of God's essence:

There is no existence which is more perfect or prior to His and there is no existence which is more ancient than His or on the same level, and, therefore, He could not possibly receive His existence from it; He is totally different by His essence from anything other than He is. . . . (Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-siyāsah al-madaniyyah,* ed. F. M. Najjār (Beiruit, 1964), 42–3; translation in Abū Zayd, *Divine Predicates,* xi.)

[1.1; A 23] In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Upon Him we depend.[72]

[1.3] The sheikh, the imam, the proof of Islam, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī said (may God sanctify his spirit):[73]

[1.4] Praise to God who has elected from his choice slaves[74] a company of truth, a people of orthodoxy.[75] Out of all the other sects he has specifically [endowed] them with the qualities of kindness and benevolence. Upon them he has emanated his guiding light by which he unveiled for them the truths of religion. He has caused their tongues to speak his proofs, by which he uprooted the waywardness of the atheists. He has cleansed their mind of satanic whisperings.[76] He has purified their heart of unholy suggestions. And he has filled their soul[77] with the lights of certainty until they penetrated the secrets brought down by the tongue of his chosen prophet, Muḥammad, chief of all of the other messengers (the blessings of God be upon him and all his family). They

thus came to know the way to reconcile [any] incongruity between the

requirements of revelation[78] and the demands of reason. Indeed, they have

confirmed that there is no contradiction between the revelation of tradition and

the truth of reason. They have come to know that those among the Ḥashwiyya[79]

who believe in the necessity of rigid adherence to imitative belief[80] [A 24] and the

outward form of religion only do so because of [their] poverty of intellect and

shortsightedness of vision. [1.12] And those among the *falāsifah*[81] and the

inordinate Muʿtazilites,[82] who so commit themselves to the use of reason such

that they end up clashing with the definitive pronouncements of revelation, do

so out of the wickedness of their minds. Thus, the former group tends toward

negligence, the latter toward excess, and both are far from prudence and caution.

Indeed, the norm that must needs be followed in principles of belief is

moderation and restraint upon the straight path,[83] and anything that deviates

from the proper intent of things is reprehensible.

[2.1] How can someone establish a proper course who is content blindly to

accept traditions and reports[84] while ignoring the methods of investigation and

theoretical reflection?[85] Could it be that he does not know that reason has no

other basis besides the sayings of the Chief of Men[86] and that intellectual demonstration is what shows the correctness of his report? And, how can someone be guided aright who [A 25] only follows reason and nothing more, without being illuminated by the light of revelation[87] and without considering [it]? For, let us come to terms: how can he flee to reason when he is exposed as so feeble and full of limitations? Could it be that he does not know that the capacity of reason is very meager and that its sphere of action is narrow? O how one falls short and trails behind in misguided paths when one does not bring together these differences of reason and revelation! For reason is like healthy sight that has no ailments or flaws, and the Qurʾān is like the sun that shines abroad.

[2.8] How shabby it would be for you to seek guidance from those who were lacking in one or another of these two, being in the throes of ignorance. For, someone who declines to use reason, being satisfied with just the light of the Qurʾān, is like someone who stands in the light of the sun with his eyes shut. There is no difference between that person and someone who is blind. For, reason, together with the Qurʾān, "is light upon light."[88] Someone who has his eye trained exclusively on only one of these two will remain bound in delusion.

[2.12] It will become evident to you, O seeker of instruction in the fundamental dogmas of the Sunnis, who demands to know their verification through decisive proofs, that the ability to achieve consistency between reason and its implementation is to be found in only one sect, which is this [the Sunni] sect. I thank God most high that he has caused you to follow in their footsteps and affiliate with the community of their order,[89] [A 26] to enter into their abundance[90] and join company with their sect. For, perhaps in this way you will be able to be resurrected among their ranks on the day of reckoning.

[3.1] We ask God most high to cleanse our souls of the stains of error and that he will illuminate our souls with the light of truth; that he will cause our tongues to be silent rather than to speak words of falsity, and cause them to utter words of truth and wisdom. For, he is bounteous in the effusion of his grace and replete with mercy! [3.3]

Notes

[71] I adopt this heading from Asín, who used it aptly to designate this section [1.1–3.3] in which Ghazālī makes perambulatory comments prior to his formal introduction. It praises those who hold to the truth and reproaches those who have gone astray. It also introduces the theme of walking a middle road between extremes in religious views.

[72] The various manuscripts present several different invocations here, and D omits it altogether.

[73] Asín omits this line, following manuscripts D and J. Such an honorific phrase could well be a later addition.

[74] The term *ʿibādihi* is often translated more palatably as "his servants," but "his slaves" is not too strong and may in fact be more apt given Ghazālī's acceptance of the traditional Ashʿarite belief in God's omnipotence and total authority over human action. In this rendering of the passage, then, I take Ghazālī to mean all of humanity when he speaks of God's slaves, not just Muslim believers, as might be implied if the term "servants" were used here instead. It is thus out of the totality of humanity that "a company of the truth, a people of orthodoxy" are chosen, by which Ghazālī therefore intends all Sunni Muslims, not just an elite and learned subset of them.

[75] This translation of *ahl al-sunna* follows what would have been intended by Ghazālī. It could be more literally rendered as "people of custom." Except where context demands otherwise (as it does here), I will use the anglicized form of the Arabic term: the Sunnis.

[76] *Wasāwis.* Al-Ghazālī much later devoted a chapter of his *ʿAjāʾib al-qalb* (in the *Iḥyaʾ*) to the significance of this term from a primarily Sufi standpoint.

[77] For lack of better terms, I have resorted to "mind," "heart," and "soul" here to refer to the spiritually perceptive faculties denoted by Ghazālī's *sarāʾir*,

damā'ir. and *if'adah.* But it should be noted that he seems to be avoiding the more pregnant terms of *'aql, qalb, ruḥ,* or *nafs* that these glosses most frequently indicate. For a discussion of the specialized meanings of these last for terms, see again his *'Ajā'ib al-qalb,* first *bayāan* or "exposition" (this section available in McCarthy's translation in appendix 5 of *Deliverance*, 310 ff.).

[78] *Shari'ah:* this often refers to the code of Islamic law that is derived from the Qur'ān and the sayings of the prophet Muḥammad. As such, it contains prescriptions for human action which are based upon revelation (as opposed to originating from pure reason or custom). In the context of this work, however, Ghazālī seems most consistently to be using the term in the broader sense of revelation—specifically revelation given through Muḥammad—rather than just the legal code that has been constructed from it. See the discussion of *shar'*, below.

[79] *Al-ḥashwiyya:* These were a traditionalist theological school who accepted as literal the anthropomorphist language of the Qur'an, much like—and indeed sometimes identified with—the Hanbalite school. See also Asín, *Justo Medio,* 23; and A. S. Halkin, "The Hashwiyya." Al-Ghazālī makes further reference to them at 72.11, below.

[80] *Taqlīd:* For an important discussion of this term, see Lazarus-Yafeh, "Some notes on the term 'taqlīd' in the writings of al-Ghazzālī," appendix B in *Studies in al-Ghazālī,* p. 488 ff. He says that Ghazālī's use of the term influenced many theologians after him. He summarizes Ghazālī's usage of *taqlīd* generally to indicate

blind adherence to, or following, ancestral tradition and pronouncements by teachers, without independent examination, meditation and reflection. It has a distinctly negative, derogatory connotation, and appears as the contrary to the faith which is founded on examination and study or

personal religions experience" (488–89).

[81] These were Muslim thinkers such as al-Fārābī and Avicenna who saw themselves as inheriting and carrying on the Aristotelian tradition of logical reasoning about matters of ultimate importance. This is the same group, of course, who were targeted in Ghazālī's famous *Tahāfut al-falāsifah* (Incoherence of the Philosophers). As with *mutakalimūn,* I choose not to translate this term in favor of adopting it for its own precise use in this text.

[82] In his note at this point, Asín calls the Muʿtazilites "the most liberal theologians of Islam, strongly associated with the philosophers."

[83] Ghazālī's language here recalls the title of this work and of *Qawaʿid al-aqaʿid*. See my further comments in the introduction.

[84] *Al-athar wa al-khabar:* "Evidences and reports." Here Ghazālī is referring chiefly to the canonical sources of Islamic law: the Qurʾan—which is an evidence of God's intervention in human affairs and of Muḥammad's prophetic calling—and the sunna or practices of the Prophet Muḥammad.

[85] Ghazālī is here distinguishing two very different bases for true knowledge: the one is tradition, which transmits the revealed word of God; the other is reason. Presumably, though he does not state it explicitly here, Ghazālī understands this to include all aspects of the inductive process, beginning with a priori principles and direct observations and ending with proofs and logical conclusions. At 18.4, below, Ghazālī will detail theoretical reflection *(naẓar)* as a syllogistic process.

[86] *Sayyid al-bashr:* This is, of course, is the Prophet Muḥammad.

[87] *Al-sharʿ:* The context of this usage governs how I translate this important term. Wehr defines it as "the Revelation, the canonical law of Islam." See the

discussion of *Shariʿah*, above.

[88] *Nūr ʿala nūr:* "Light upon light" is a quote from Qurʾān 24:35, known as "The Light Verse." This verse provides one of the themes upon which Ghazālī elaborated in his later work, *Mishkāt al-anwār.*

[89] *Niẓāmihim:* At the time he composed this work, Ghazālī was the head of the great legal and theological university of Niẓām al-Mulk. Called the Niẓamiyya, it was the bastion of Sunni Islamic thought. Al-Ghazālī's choice of word here suggests that he was writing not only to Sunni students of jurisprudence, but specifically to his own students at the Nizamiyya.

[90] This phrase might also be rendered as "cast your lot with them."

[EXPLANATORY] CHAPTER

[3.5; A 27] Let us begin the dialogue[91] by explaining the title of the book and its division into introductions, parts, and chapters. As pertaining to the name of the book, it is: Moderation in Belief.[92]

[3.8] As pertaining to its organization, [this book] contains *four introductions*, which constitute prefaces or preambles, and *four main parts*, which constitute the aims or objectives [of the book].

[3.10] The first introduction is to show that this science is one of the things that are important for the faith. The second introduction is to show that it is not important for all Muslims, but rather for a specific portion of them. The third introduction is to show that [the study of this science] is an obligation for the qualified, [A 28] not an individual obligation.[93] The fourth introduction analyzes the methods of proof that I use in this book.

[4.1] As for its main parts, they are four, and all of them taken together reduce to the study of God most high.

[4.2] For if we are to consider[94] the world, we will not consider it inasmuch as

it is a world, body, heaven, and earth, but inasmuch as it is a work of God most

high. And if we are to consider the Prophet (peace be upon him), we will not do

so inasmuch as he is a man, noble, wise, and virtuous, but inasmuch as he is a

messenger of God. And if we are to consider his sayings, we will not do so

inasmuch as they are sayings, elocutions, and expressions, but inasmuch as they

derive instruction, through [the prophetic] mediation, from God most high.

Thus, we do not consider anything except about God; and there is no other object

of inquiry save God.[95] All the limits of this science encompass theoretical

reflection on the essence[96] of God, the attributes of God, the works of God, and

the messenger of God (peace be upon him) along with whatever of God's

instruction has come to us through the ministering of his tongue. Thus, the basic

parts [of this book] are four:

[4.12] *Part One: Considering the essence of God most high.* In this part we show:

the existence of God; that he is from eternity; that he is everlasting; that he is

neither substance, body, nor accident; that he is not bounded by any limit; [A 29]

that he is not specified by location; that he is visible even as he is cognizable; and

that he is one. These are ten propositions that we will explain in this part, God most high permitting.

[5.1] *Part Two: On the attributes of God most high.* In this part we explain that God is living, knowing, powerful, willing, hearing, seeing, and speaking; and that he possesses life, knowledge, power, will, hearing, sight, and speech. We will note the governing rules of these attributes, their requisites, and their divergent and convergent principles. We will note that all of the [attributes] are superadded to essence, being eternal and subsistent in essence, and that it is impossible that any aspect of the attributes is temporal.[97]

[5.7] *Part Three: On the acts of God most high.* Here there are seven propositions, which are: that God most high is not obliged to give [any] commandment to men, nor to create [them], nor to reward [their compliance with] the commandments, nor to observe what is best for his servants; that it is not absurd that God should give commandments that cannot be fulfilled;[98] that God is not obliged to punish sinners; and that it is not impossible for God to send forth prophets; but that [all of these things] are possible for him. In the introduction to this part the meanings of the terms *obligatory*, *good*, and *bad* are also explained.

[5.12] *Part Four: On the messengers of God* and what comes [to men] by the

tongue of God's messenger (may God bless him and give him peace) relative to

the resurrection, heaven and hell, [prophetic] intercession, the punishment of the

grave, and the weighing[99] of human actions in the balance, and the path.[100] It is

comprised of four chapters. The first chapter establishes [A 30] the prophetic

calling of our Prophet, Muḥammad (may God bless him and give him peace).

The second chapter is on what has been delivered by the tongue of the Prophet

regarding the matter of the hereafter. The third chapter is on the imamate and its

conditions. The fourth chapter explains the canonical criterion[101] for declaring the

apostasy[102] of the innovating sects.

Notes

[91] *Al-kalām:* While not a dialogue in the sense of Plato's dialogues, this treatise is certainly dialectical in nature. Al-Ghazālī presents arguments to which an imaginary opponent usually offers objections, allowing Ghazālī to refine his point or to present counter arguments.

[92] Asín at this point opts for a more descriptive title ("The use of reason and of revelation respectively in dogmatic theology") than the one Ghazālī actually gives, stating that "it expresses with more fidelity and exactness the object and content of the book, which, as will be seen, is a compendium of dogmatic theology in which both [rational] proofs and the authority of revelation are used to demonstrate the truth of Islamic dogmas." For more on the title and its translation, see the translator's introduction.

[93] As will become clear in the third introduction (13.3 ff.), Ghazali means by this that he sees the study of kalam as necessary for the good of the Islamic community in general; each area needs to have access to experts in theology, but it is not something that each Muslim needs to be proficient in. In fact, in Ghazālī's view, that would be undesirable.

[94] *Naẓara:* To view, gaze at, observe.

[95] At this point Asín notes that "coinciding with this point of view is that of St. Thomas Aquinas. See *Summa,* c.g. 1.2.c 4: Quod aliter considerat de creatures philosophus et aliter theologus; and *Summa theol.* p. 1a, q. 1.a, a. 7: *Utrum Deus sit subjectum hujus scientiae,* where he says: Omnia autem pertractantur in sacra doctrina sub ratione Dei: vel quia sunt ipse Deus; vel quia habent ordinem ad Deum, ut ad principium et finem: unde sequitur quod Deus vere sit subjectum hujus scientiae.

[96] *Dhāt:* what something is in itself; essence.

[97] *Ḥādith:* the root sense is of something episodic—that is, taking place as an

event, as opposed, in this context, to something that is of infinite duration, without beginning or end.

[98] As he does elsewhere in this treatise, in each of these points Ghazālī is specifically opposing tenets of Muʿtazilite doctrine.

[99] *Al-Mīzān:* The root image is of balancing scales, connoting justice and strict evaluation, or judgment.

[100] *Al-Ṣirāṭ:* Way or path; in this context, each person's walk of life. Asín also adds "the trial of the bridge," which does not appear in the Arabic but is likely his amplification on the previous phrase.

[101] This is, of course, a reference to the Sharia, which derives its authority from two canonical sources: the Qurʾān and the Hadith or reported words and deeds of Muḥammad, and from the consensus of Muslim legal scholars.

[102] *Takffīr al-farq al-mubtidaʿa.*

THE FIRST INTRODUCTION

[6.6; A 31] Explaining that involvement with this science is important for the faith.

[6.7] Know that to squander attention on something that is of no import and to waste time on something that has no point to it is the height of error and the ultimate ruin, whether this has to do with things theoretical or things practical. God preserve us from the study of useless sciences!

[6.10] The most important thing for the whole of mankind is to obtain eternal happiness and to avoid endless misery. And prophets have come forth, and they have informed all creatures[103] that God most high imposes duties upon his slaves and has expectations[104] for their actions, their words, and their beliefs. Thus, the person whose tongue does not speak faithfully, whose spirit does not respect the truth, and whose bodily members are not adorned with equity—his end will be hellfire, and his fate will be destruction.

[6.13] But the prophets have not limited themselves just to delivering this

message, but they have provided a testimony of their veracity by doing uncommon acts and wondrous works that break with the habitual course [A 32] [of nature], far from what is possible for men to do. So when someone has seen such things, or has heard of their happening through a succession of corroborative reports,[105] the possibility of their veracity occurs to his intellect;[106] indeed, it is probable that that thought occurs to him the first time he hears [such reports, even] before [his] reason is able to discern between genuine miracles and fabricated wonders. This spontaneous impression and inevitable suggestion are sufficient to tear peaceful security from the heart and to fill it with fear [7] and trembling and to move it to study and pondering. [They can] snatch [the heart] from peace and stillness, and frighten it with the danger to which one is exposed while living in negligent ease. [They can] convince him that death will surely come and that what comes after death is hidden from the view of men, and that what those prophets have said is not at all outside the realm of possibility. The realistic thing to do is to forsake one's state of negligence in [an effort] to unveil the reality of this affair. For, [even] before any inquiry [can be undertaken] to verify the reality of what the prophets say, the marvels that they have shown in

[support of] the possibility of their veracity are no less worthy of credit than the words of some person who informs us that we ought to get out of our house and fixed dwelling because there is a possibility that a lion has gotten into it, telling us: "Beware, and be careful to stay away from it." [7.7] Upon merely hearing their warning, upon the mere thought that what that person is saying is [A 33] within the realm of possibility, we would not step forward to enter the house. Rather, we would go out of our way to take precautions.

[7.8] Now, death being our destiny and our inevitable homeland, how could it not be important to take precautions concerning whatever lies beyond it? Therefore, the most important thing of all will be for us to investigate what [the Prophet] has said, the possible truth of which the mind avers at first glance and prior to any theoretical reflection. Might it truth be impossible in itself, or is it an indubitable truth?[107]

[7.11] Now, one of the things that the Prophet says is, "You have a Lord who has rightfully imposed certain obligations upon you; and he punishes you for neglecting them, and he rewards you if you do them. He has sent me as a messenger to you so that I can make this clear to you." And so, the obligation is

incumbent upon us to know whether or not we have a Lord. And if there is a

Lord, is it possible that he is a being endowed with speech such that he can

command and prohibit, impose duties and send messengers? And if he is

endowed with speech, is he powerful so as to be able to punish and reward

according as we disobey or obey him? And if he is powerful, [A 34] then is this

very person truthful in saying, "I am the messenger sent to you"?

[8.2] And once all of this has become clear for us, we would then undoubtedly

be obliged—if we were rational[108]—to take our precautions and reflect upon our

souls and despise this transitory world in comparison with that other, everlasting

realm. Thus, the rational man reflects on his destiny and is not deceived by his

own works [here below].

[8.5] Now then, the object of this science is to establish apodictic proof of the

existence of the Lord most high, his attributes, his works, and the truthfulness of

the messengers [he sends], as we specified in the summary. Thus, all of this is

unavoidably important, to any reasonable man.

[8.7] You might say, "I am not denying this impulse from my soul to find out

[about these things], but I do not know whether it is the result of a natural

disposition and [my] physical constitution, or whether it is a demand of reason,

or whether it is a duty imposed by the religious law. For, people dispute about

the source of obligations."

[8.9] This will only be made known at the last part of the book, where we turn

our attention to the source of the obligation. To get involved with this right now

is unproductive. But, there is no other course, once the impulse to find out [about

these things] has occurred, than to instigate a quest for salvation. The person

who turns from that is like the man who is bitten by a viper or a scorpion that is

about to strike again [A 35] and who, though he is able to get away, nevertheless

remains there to see whether the viper has come to bite him on the right or on the

left.[109] Such is the doing of fools and imbeciles. God save us from laboring for

that which is of no use while neglecting matters of fundamental importance!

Notes

[103] *Al-khalaq:* Literally, "the creation," but the traditional use intends that portion of God's creation who are answerable to him—that is, humanity.

[104] *Waẓā'if:* I translate this as "expectations" based on the context; but other glosses, such as "dispositions," "assignments," or "appointments" are also possible, conveying again the idea of God's absolute sovereignty over his creatures.

[105] *Bil-akhbār al-mutawātira: Tawātur* is a technical term used in hadith criticism. Difficult to render with any single gloss in English, it carries the sense of "a tradition with so many transmitters that there could be no collusion, all being known to be reliable and not being under any compulsion to lie" (J. Robson, "Ḥadīth," 325). For a fuller discussion of the concept as used specifically by Ghazālī, see Weiss, "Knowledge of the Past," and the translator's introduction.

[106] The root here *('aql)* is what in other contexts is translated as "reason."

[107] Asín has a note at this point which reads:

The topic briefly alluded to here by al-Ghazālī is a theme in nearly all ascetic works. The passages from the *Ihya', Mizān,* and *al-Arba'in,* where he develops them more fully, can be read in [Spanish] translation in my section entitled *Los precedentes musulmanes del* pari *de Pascal* (Santander, "Boletin de la biblioteca de Menendez y Pelayo," 1920).

[108] The Arabic term here, *'uqalā',* is cognate with the important term *'aql* which I usually translate as "reason" or "intellect."

[109] Asín provides a note at this point which reads, "The theme of this analogy seems to be drawn from that of the legends of Locman *[Luqmān?]*, entitled, *La gacela y el xorro* (The gazele and the fox), and *El niño que se ahoga* (The boy that

drowns)." Qurʾān 30, *ṣura* "Lokman," is named for a man "of old" who is noted as having received wisdom from Allah and then imparting it to his son. This might be the same Lokman al-Ḥakīm ("the wise") of pre-Islamic Arabic tradition to which Asín is referring, but further investigation of Asín's enigmatic allusion is warranted. It lies, however, beyond the scope of this study.

THE SECOND INTRODUCTION

[9.2; A 36] Showing that although involvement in this science, is [generally] important, it is actually not so for certain people; indeed, the important thing for them is to leave it alone.[110]

[9.4] Know that the proofs we will be adducing in this science are like medications by which diseases of the heart are treated. If the doctor that uses them is not skillful, having keen intelligence and sound judgment, he might do more harm than good with his medication. Let anyone know, then, who desires to get some result from the contents of this book and some benefit from this science, that there are four kinds of people.

[9.9] THE FIRST GROUP had faith in God, acknowledged his messenger, believed him to be true and cherished him in [their] hearts. They engaged in both the devout life as well as work with their hands. Such persons ought to be left alone just as they are, and their beliefs [left unshaken,] by [not] insisting that they study this science. In fact, the giver of the divine revelation (God's blessing and

peace be upon him) in his discourse with the Arabs never required anything

more of them than [A 37] belief, without distinguishing whether that be faith

through trusting authority,[111] or conviction based on apodictic proof.

[9.13] This is one of the things that is known with certainty, because of the

powerful increase in faith among those rustic Arabs who [first] believed [the

Prophet]. It was not through investigations, nor by apodictic proofs, but rather

simply through circumstance or through some sign that passed into their hearts

and moved them to submit to the truth and to believe the truthfulness [of the

Prophet's message]. Thus, those people [in this group] are true believers, and one

must not confound their beliefs. For if the apodictic proofs were to be related to

them along with the difficulties that can be raised in opposition to those proofs,

and the resolution thereof, there is no assurance that one or another of those

problems might not lodge in their mind and seize them, and not be erased by

anything that might be mentioned in order to resolve them. That is why there is

no evidence that the companions of the Prophet ever occupied themselves in the

study of this science—neither by personal study, nor by oral teaching, nor by the

editing of works. Rather, their sole occupation was the devout life and inviting

others to practice it, exhorting the people to their guidance, their benefits, their actions, and their [manner of] living.

[10.5] THE SECOND GROUP: This set is comprised of all those who incline away from belief in the truth, such as the unbeliever and the innovator. The crude and boorish among them—weak of mind, [A 38] blindly obedient of imitative belief from his first breath up to his old age—is helped by nothing but the whip and the sword. The majority of the unbelievers became Muslim under the shadow of the sword; for, with the sword and the spear God brings about what does not come about through proof. That is why, when the pages of history are studied in detail, one never encounters a fight between Muslims and unbelievers that has not resulted in a group of the people of error bowing down to the stipulations [of Islam]. On the other hand, one never encounters a group for theological discussion and argumentation that has not resulted in an increase of recalcitrance and obstinacy [among the ignorant].[112] And do not think that what we have said is to close our [eyes] to the [high] estate of reason and its proofs.[113] But the light of reason is a divine gift that God does not bestow except upon a few of his [choosing] while [most] people struggle in backwardness and ignorance. Such

people, due to their insufficiency, do not comprehend the decisions of reason,

just as the light of the sun does not reach the eyes of bats. Such persons would be

hurt by such learning, just as the rosebud is hurt by the beetle. It is like the

saying of al-Shāfiʿī (may God be pleased with him and give him contentment),

"He who gives knowledge to the ignorant wastes it. And he who prevents those

who deserve it acts unjustly."

[11.3] THE THIRD GROUP: This consists of those who believe [A 39] the truth on

the basis of authority and through what they hear; but, endowed as they are with

acumen and perceptiveness, they become aware by themselves of problems that

disturb their faith and shake their confidence. Or some specious sophistry

assailed their ears and lodged within their hearts. It is important to treat these

with benevolence in order to restore their confidence and dissipate their doubts

through whatever arguments are likely to be sufficiently effective for them,

whether through stigmatizing and denouncing [the idea], or by reciting a verse

[from the Qurʾān], or relating a tradition [of the Prophet], or speaking a sentence

from a well-known person whom they hold in esteem. If that much is sufficient

to remove the doubt, then it will not be necessary to address them with proofs

written according to dialectic protocols. For such proofs might open other doors

to problems. Now, if we are dealing with someone very perceptive and alert who

will only be content with reasoned arguments that result in settling the dispute,

then it will be appropriate to elucidate a proof of the truth for him; but only to

the extent that it is needed, and on the specific subject of the doubt in question.

[11.14] THE FOURTHH GROUP: This is comprised of people in error in whom

may [nevertheless] be detected signs of acumen and perceptiveness and for

whom it might be expected, therefore, that they will [yet] accept the truth, [12]

whether through their being freed of doubts regarding their beliefs, or because

their hearts are softened [A 40] by those doubts so as to accept [resolution of] the

problems due to their natural disposition and temperament. These should also be

treated with benevolence so as to win them to the truth and guide them to true

belief; not with vehement and fanatic argumentation, for that only increases the

impulse to go astray and arouses a stubborn obstinacy and willfulness. Most

errors take root in the hearts of the common person only because of fanaticism on

the part of some group of ignorant true believers who expound the truth with an

air of confrontation and argumentation, looking upon their weak opponents with

contemptuous and disdainful eyes, which causes in their hearts an impulse to be

obstinate and contrary, and so their false beliefs take even deeper root in their

souls. [Thereafter] it is more difficult for kindly disposed ulama to erase those

errors despite the obvious manifestation of their corruption. Fanaticism has even

lead a sect to claim to believe that the words a man pronounces in the present

moment are of everlasting duration, even after he falls silent.[114] Were it not for

Satan's seizing control through the obstinacy and fanaticism [of persons] with

heretical whims, such a belief would not be found lodged in the hearts of a

madman, much less in the hearts of intelligent people.   Contrariety and [A 41]

obstinacy are quite simply a sickness that has no cure. So let the religious person

guard against them with all care, avoid hatred and rancor, and look upon God's

creatures with eyes of benevolence. Use gentleness and love as means to guide

fellow believers who are in error, and keep from harshness, which, for one in

error, only stirs the impulse to go [further] astray. Be sure that to arouse the

impulse to willfulness through obstinacy and fanaticism is the thing that will

most surely help [13] willfulness to take root in the soul, and the one responsible

for having lent such "help" will be held to account on the day of judgment.[115]

Notes

[110] The editors of the Arabic text at this point have a note that reads, "Compare this with what is found in *Fayṣal al-tafriqah*," in particular pp. 69–71 of the Cairo 1319/1901 edition." Ghazālī's final work, *Iljām al-ʿawāmm ʿan al-khawḍ fī ʿIlm al-kalām* (Curbing the Masses from Engaging in the Science of Kalam) must also be mentioned in this regard.

[111] Here the idea of *taqlīd* is used in a positive sense.

[112] For some reason Asín omits the rest of the paragraph from this point on. The ellipses he inserts here indicate that this was deliberate, but I cannot discern any obvious reason for his decision.

[113] Ghazālī's comment here is sometimes read as a critique of all kalam schools, including even the Ashʿarites, to claiming that they are ineffective at accomplishing one of their primary objectives, which is to credibly ward off attacks and to convince detractors of the validity of the Islamic creed. As I read his statement here, however, Ghazālī seems to be saying simply that even the most orthodox and intelligent theological minds will not be able to convince unbelievers and innovators (who are obstinate by nature) of the correctness of a given position, and that it will be a waste of time to try; but there are other kinds of persons for whom kalam will be a genuine benefit, thus justifying the position that it is a duty for the community of believers generally to cultivate experts in kalam insofar as possible.

[114] Asín includes a note at this point which reads: Al-Ghazālī alludes to the doctrine of extreme orthodox [Sunni ?] theologians who explained the eternity of the word of God—meaning the Qurʾān—in such a literal and irrational sense that they even considered the words of the Quʾānic text pronounced by a man to be eternal and uncreated. On the history of the aforementioned polemics on this subject, see Goldziher, *Le dogme et la loi de l'islam*, 93, ff.

[115] For a broader treatment by Ghazālī of this subject, Asín recommends *Iljām al-ʿawām*. Asín treats this material in his *La psicología de la creencia según Algazel.*

THIRD INTRODUCTION

[13.3; A 42] Explaining that involvement in this science is [only] an obligation for those who are qualified.[116]

[13.4] Know that to become immersed in this science and involved in all it entails is not an obligation for individuals. Rather, it is an obligation for the qualified.

[13.6] As pertaining to its not being an obligation for individuals, the demonstration of this would have already become apparent to you in the second introduction, where it was shown that nothing was obligatory for the common people except to affirm true conviction and to purify their hearts of all doubt or uncertainty concerning the faith. So, in reality, arriving at a point where doubt is eliminated is a duty devolving [primarily] upon the people who are accosted by doubt [themselves].

[13.9] Someone might say, "How can this be an obligation for the qualified when you previously said that the majority of those classes of people would be

harmed by this [study] rather than it benefiting them?"

[13. 11] Know that, as was previously [A 43] stated, to eliminate doubts about

fundamental dogmas is an obligation that ought to be fulfilled. That a doubt

should arise is not impossible, though it happens only rarely except among those

of keen intellect. The call to the truth through rational proof to whoever is

languishing in error and who carries within his intellect the capacity to

understand is of religious importance. Furthermore, it is not unlikely that a

heretical innovator will influence and entice orthodox believers[117] into error,

suggesting doubts to them. Therefore it is indeed indispensable that someone

should rise up to unmask his sophistry and put a stop to his enticement by

showing its evil. Now, that [14] cannot happen except by this science. And as

there is no country anywhere that is free from such threats, there must be, in

every region and territory, a defender of the truth who is involved in this science

to stand up to the heretical innovators who are attracting those who are

wavering from the truth and resolve the doubts that arise in the hearts of the

orthodox. If there were no one in the region who could attend to this need, the

inhabitants of an entire region would be in dire straits, just as they would be if

there were no doctors or jurists at all. However, if there were no one that

professed either canon law or theology and someone were disposed to study

only one of the two sciences for lack of sufficient time to study both together, and

if we were asked which of the two sciences he ought to choose, we would say

that he [A 44] should study canon law, because the need for it is more general

and there are more cases to be handled in this discipline. For, there is never a

lack of someone day or night who does not need legal counsel, while, by

comparison there is much less frequent need to alleviate dogmatic doubts

through the study of theology. Likewise, if there is no one in the whole country

that practices medicine or cannon law, it would be more important to

concentrate on the study of the jurisprudence, since it is needed by the masses

and common people alike, while the healthy do not need a physician, and the

sick are fewer in number relative to them; the sick person, on the other hand,

cannot do without the jurisprudence, just as he cannot do without medicine,

since the need he has for medicine is to save his mortal life, while he needs the

canon law for his everlasting life, and the difference between those two lives is

substantial.

[14.12] When you compare the fruit of medicine with the fruit of jurisprudence, you can see how great the difference is between the one and the other. That jurisprudence is the most important of the sciences will be shown to you in the fact that the Companions of the Prophet applied themselves to its study in their councils and conferences. Nor should you let yourself be misled by the high-sounding name given by those who would give primacy to the art of kalam [A 45] as being the root and jurisprudence one of its branches. It is indeed correct, but it is still of no use for the topic that presently concerns us. The root, really, is correct belief and sure faith, which faith is acquired [simply] by submission to authority and only rarely by resorting to apodictic proofs and dialectical subtleties. The doctor would also cloud the issue saying, "Your existence, your health, the existence of your body rely upon my art. Your life depends on me. Life and health are the main things; then after that comes involving yourself with religion." Nevertheless, the meaning behind these words of misrepresentation by the sophist is not hidden from anyone, as we have previously alluded.

Notes

[116] *Farḍ kifāyya:* This refers to an obligation within Islam that is incumbent upon the few who are qualified to perform it for the sake of the community as a whole.

[117] *Ahl al-ḥaq,* literally, "the people of the truth"; this was a common way the Ashʿarites referred to themselves.

THE FOURTH INTRODUCTION

[15.8] Explaining the methods of proof that we have used in this book

[15.9] Know that there are a variety of demonstrative methods. Some of them we have already noted in *The Touchstone of Theoretical Reflection on Logic,* and we have studied them in greater depth in *The Standard of Knowledge.*[118] But in this book, we will bypass the abstruse ways and the more obscure methods with the purpose of seeking clarity, looking for conciseness, and [A 47] trying to avoid prolixity. We will therefore limit ourselves to studying just three methods.

[15.12] THE FIRST METHOD is disjunctive reasoning.[119] It consists of our reducing the question to just the two parts into which it divides; then we declare one of them false and deduce from that the affirmation of the other. So, for example, we say: The world is either temporal or it is eternal; but it is absurd that it should be eternal; therefore it follows indisputably [16] that it is temporal.[120] This is the necessary conclusion we sought; it is the cognition that we intended to derive from two other cognitions.[121]

[16.3] One of them is our saying, "The world is either temporal or it is eternal"; for, the judgment resulting from that restriction[122] is a cognition.

[16.4] The second of them is our saying, "It is absurd that the world should be eternal." This is another cognition.

[16.5] The third is the one that necessarily follows from the other two. It is what we were seeking—that the world is temporal. No cognition that is sought can be obtained by any other means than by deduction from two cognitions, which are its two premises.[123] But not just any two premises will suffice. Rather, it is also crucial that there be a certain connection between the two from a particular standpoint and under particular conditions. Once the connection is made according to its condition, it will give rise to a third cognition, the one being sought. This third cognition we will call a *claim* when we have an opponent and *desired outcome* when we have no opponent, for it is just what is *desired* by the one who is making the inquiry. We will [also] call it *benefit* and *branch* because of its relationship to the two *root premises*;[124] for, it results from both [A 48] of them. No matter what the opponent admits of the two root premises, he will also necessarily and unavoidably have to admit the branch that

derives from both of them, and that is the truth of the claim.

[16.11] THE SECOND METHOD consists of stating the two premises from a different standpoint, such as when we say, "Everything that is not devoid of temporal things is temporal." This is one premise. "The world is not devoid of temporal things." This is the other premise. From both of them follows necessarily the truth of our claim, which is that "the world is temporal," and that is the desired conclusion.[125]

[16.15] Consider whether it is possible to imagine that the opponent would allow the two premises. Then, if it is possible, let him [try to] deny the truth of the claim, and you will know for certain that that is impossible [for him to do so].

[17.2] THE THIRD METHOD consists of our proposing not to demonstrate the truth of our claim, but rather to prove the impossibility of the opponent's claim by showing that it leads to an absurdity and that whatever leads to absurdity must undoubtedly be absurd.[126]

[17.5] For example, we could say, "If what our opponent affirms were true, that the revolutions of the sphere have no end, it would necessarily follow that one would also be stating the truth when he said:

[17.6] "'Something that has no end has been destroyed and come to an end.'[127]

But it is well known that this result is absurd; therefore, from this it indubitably

follows that what gives rise to this absurdity is also [itself] absurd—that is to say,

the thesis of the opponent." Here also there are two premises.

[17.8] One of them is our saying, "If the revolutions of the sphere have no

end, then something that has no end has been destroyed." The judgment that

necessarily follows from the destruction of something that had no end, based on

the statement affirming that the revolutions of the sphere have no end, is the

cognition that we claim and judge [to be so]. It is possible to suppose [however]

that the opponent might admit it or deny it, saying, "I do not concede that this

result necessarily follows."

[17.11] The second [premise] is our saying, "This result is absurd." And it can

also be supposed that [the opponent] will reject this, saying, "I concede the first

premise, but I do not concede this second one," (that being the impossibility that

something that has no end should be destroyed). But if the opponent admits the

two premises, then the admission of the third cognition that follows from both of

them will follow necessarily—the third cognition being an acknowledgement of

the absurdity of his premise which lead to that absurd conclusion.

[17.16] These are the three clear methods of demonstration that produce

evidence that indubitably yields knowledge. And the knowledge that is obtained

is the proposition that was sought and desired to be proven. The pairing of the

two premises which necessarily resulted in that knowledge is called, "proof."

Knowledge of the manner [by which] the thing sought results from the pairing of

the two premises is knowledge of the manner by which the proof indicates [its

conclusion]. Your thought by which you bring the two premises into

consideration and seek how to infer from both of them the third term is

theoretical reflection.

[18.4] Therefore, in order to acquire the knowledge sought, you must fulfill

two tasks: The first is to bring the two premises to your mind; this is called

thought. The other is to try fervently to understand the way to derive the desired

conclusion from the relation between the two premises.[128] This is called

investigation. Therefore, those who attend only to the first of these [A 50] two

requirements say, in defining theoretical reflection, that it is thought; and those

who attend only to the second requirement say, in defining theoretical reflection,

that it is to seek the most probable cognition or opinion; but those who attend to

both requirements at the same time say, in defining theoretical reflection, that it

is thought which investigates[129] the most probable knowledge or opinion.

[18.10] Therefore, this is what ought to be understood by proof, the proven,

the method for proving, and the true essence of theoretical reflection. And after

this, leave behind you all of the pages blackened with so many prolix and

repetitive admonitions that are of no use to satisfy the longings of the inquirer

and do not satiate the thirsty. For, the meaning[130] of these precise technical terms

may only be penetrated by someone who, after perusing many works, realizes

the futility of his endeavor. For if you wanted now to find the truth about

everything that has been said to define what theoretical speculation was, that

inquiry would demonstrate to you that, after long reasoning, you would have

not come up with any useful result at all. On the other hand, if you know that

there are only three cognitions, two of which are premises that must be related

one to another in a particular way, and a third [19] that necessarily follows from

them; and [furthermore, if you know that for all of this] you need to observe but

two requirements: one, to have the two premises in mind; and the other, to seek

the way to derive from them the cognition of the third; then after that, you are

free to choose any of the definitions [A 51] of theoretical reflection—whether you

take it to mean thought (that is, the presence of the [first] two cognitions [in the

mind]), or inquiry (which is seeking to understand, from the standpoint of the

third cognition, how it necessarily follows [from the first two]), or both of these

operations together; for [all] these explanations work, and there is no need to

make too much of the technical conventions.

[19.6] You might say, "But my purpose is to know the technical terms of the

theologians—that is, can they explain [what they mean by] 'theoretical reflection'

or not?"

[19.7] Know that when you hear someone define theoretical reflection as

thought, and another as a search, and another as the thought by which a search is

undertaken, then you will not be left with any doubt that the differences in their

technical terms reduce to those three senses. It would be amazing if someone still

did not understand this and attributed to kalam a definition of theoretical

reflection that confused the issues because he felt obliged to choose one of the

definitions without noticing that there is no [significant] difference in the basic

meaning of what is said on these issues, and that there is no significance to the

differences between the technical terms. Therefore, if you consider theoretical

reflection carefully and allow yourself to be guided on the right course, you will

know for sure that most captious questions arise from the errors of those who

seek for meaning in words when in truth they ought first to establish the ideas

and then, second, examine words.[131] [Such persons] should know that intelligible

concepts do not [A52] change based on the technical terms used to express them;

but it is those to whom success [from God] is denied that turn their back on the

path and reject the truth.

[20.1] But you still might say, "I do not doubt that the truth of the claim is

necessarily inferred from the two premises as long as the opponent admits their

truth. But what would compel the opponent to admit them? And how are these

admitted premises (whose admission is necessary) to be grasped ?

[20.3] Know that there are various sources [of cognition], but we will

endeavor in this book to limit ourselves to six:

[20.5] First: Sensations—I mean, [objects of knowledge] attained [either] by

external or internal observation. For instance, if we were to say, for example,[132]

"Every temporal thing has a cause; and there are temporal things in the world; therefore, these necessarily have a cause." Our affirmation, "There are temporal things in the world" is one premise whose truth must be admitted by the opponent, for by the evidence of the external senses he perceives temporal things such as individual animals and plants, clouds, and rains; and also accidents such as sounds and colors. And although he imagines that these accidents transfer [from one subject to another], the transfer [itself] is also a temporal event. For, we do not claim anything but that there are temporal things without specifying whether they are substances or accidents, transferences, or something else. So also, by the evidence of the internal senses he knows the temporality [A 53] of pains, joys, and the burdens of his heart. He would thus be unable to deny [this].

[20.13] Second: Pure intellect—when we say that the world is either temporal or eternal and that beside these two alternatives there cannot be a third, every intelligent man must necessarily recognize the truth of this assertion. If we say, for example, "That which is not prior to temporal things is temporal; and the world is not prior to temporal things; therefore it is temporal," then the first premise, saying "that which is not prior to temporal things is temporal" must

necessarily be admitted by the opponent, because that which is not prior to

temporal things must be either simultaneous with them or subsequent to them,

with no possibility of a third hypothesis. And if the opponent should claim a

third hypotheses, he would end up negating something with it that is obvious to

the intellect. And if he should deny that what is simultaneous or subsequent to

what is temporal is not temporal, he would also be denying what is immediately

self-evident.

[21.5] Third: Corroborative reports. For example, we could say that

Muḥammad (the blessings of God and peace be upon him) was truthful[133]

because everyone that brings forth a miracle is truthful; he brought forth a

miracle; therefore he was truthful.

[21.8] If someone were to say, "I do not concede that [Muḥammad] brought

forth a miracle," we would respond, [21.9] "He brought forth the Qurʾān;[134] the

Quʾān is a miracle; therefore he brought forth a miracle." [The opponent] might

concede one of the two premises (that the Qurʾān is a miracle) either

spontaneously or after seeing proofs and then want to reject the other premise

(that [Muḥammad] brought forth the Qurʾān), saying, "I do not concede that the

Qur'ān was brought forth by Muḥammad" (the blessings of God and peace be upon him). [A 54] But he could not do this, because corroborative reports give us this knowledge, just as they give us the knowledge of Muḥammad's existence [in the first place], and of his prophetic mission, and of the existence of Mecca, and the existence of Jesus, Moses, and all of the other prophets.

[21.14] Fourth: That the premise is already proven by means of another syllogism that is based on one or several of the other steps—whether that be [22] evidence of the senses, intellection, or unbroken historical testimony. That which branches from the root can become the root of yet another syllogism. Thus, for example, after we have demonstrated that the world is temporal, it is possible for us to place the temporality of the world as the premise of a new syllogism, saying, for example, "Every temporal thing has a cause; the world is temporal; therefore, the world has a cause." For they[135] cannot deny the world's being temporal after we have already established it with proofs.

[22.5] Fifth: Things that are heard.[136] For instance, we may claim, for example, to demonstrate that acts of disobedience exist by the will of God and say, "Everything that exists does so by God's will; acts of disobedience exist;

therefore they exist by God's will." Now, the existence indicated by our saying

"everything that exists" is known by sensory evidence; and that they are acts of

disobedience is known through the revealed law. If an opponent denies our

affirmation that "everything that exists does so by God's will," he may be refuted

either by means of revelation—as long as he acknowledges revelation—or by

rational demonstration. But we would prove this premise through the

unanimous consensus of the [A 55] Islamic community that holds as true the

following sentence: "That which God wills [to exist] exists, and that which he

does not will, does not exist." It will be the hearing [of this statement] that

impedes the denial of the aforementioned premise.

[22.12] Sixth: The premise taken from what the opponent believes or

concedes.[137] For, although its proof is not established for us by sensory or rational

evidence, we could benefit from it by taking it for the premise of our syllogism

without the opponent being able [23] to reject that which is destructive of his

belief. Examples of this kind abound and it is not necessary to single out any one

in particular.

[23.2] You might say, "Might there not be some difference between these

cognitions in terms of their usefulness for syllogistic, speculative reasoning?"

Know that they are differentiated in terms of the pervasiveness of their benefit.

The truths of intellectual and sensible evidence are generally acknowledged by

all people, except those who have no intelligence or [are lacking] a sense, the

premise being known [to others] through the sense [he] has lost.[138] An example of

this would be a premise that is known through the sense of sight. If used with a

blind person, it will be of no benefit. And if the blind person is the one engaged

in theoretical inquiry, he cannot use it as a premise. The same holds true with the

deaf for what [is known] through hearing.

[23.7] The criteria of corroborative reporting [A 56] is also useful, but only [in

establishing] the truth for those to whom the corroborative reports have come.

For, if someone comes to us in the condition of being from a distant place, not

having heard of the Prophetic call [of Muḥammad], then no matter how much

we wanted to show him by means of [these] corroborative reports that

Muḥammad (may the blessings of God and peace of all peace be upon him)

showed his calling by [revealing] the Qurʾān, it could not be done without our

first allowing [the newcomer] sufficient time to be informed by those

corroborative reports, the Lord willing that the tradition be established without rebellion.[139]

[23.11] The statement of al-Shāfiʿī (may God be pleased with him) on the question the killing of a Muslim for [his] killing a *dhimī*[140] is known through corroborative reporting according to the Islamic lawyers who followed him, but not for the commonality of [traditional] imitators. How many a question in [al-Shāfiʿī's school] concerning individual questions is not considered to be known through corroborative reports for most of the Islamic lawyers [of other schools]!

[23.13] As for the premises whose truth is based on a prior syllogism, they are not useful except with those for whom the truth of that syllogism is secured.

[23.14] As for the admitted premises of the [various] schools of thought, they are of no use to one engaged in theoretical inquiry except to be used in theoretical inquiry with someone who adheres to that school of thought.

[23.15] As for [premises] from things that are heard, they are not useful except for persons who accept them as valid criteria.

[24.1] These are the criteria for knowing the premises that, through their proper placement and order, generate cognition of matters sought for but

heretofore unknown. And with this we conclude the initial introductions. Let us

now concern ourselves with the cardinal themes that are the purpose of this

book.

Notes

¹¹⁸ These are *Miḥak al-naẓar fī al-manṭiq* and M*ʿiyār al-ʿilm*. Asín gives an analysis of the contents of these two manuals on logic in the second appendix to his translation of the *Iqtiṣād*. He also notes that in the introduction to the *Mustasfa*, Ghazālī summarizes the doctrine of the aforementioned manuals and that in the first seven chapters of *Qistas* he also discusses the rules of the categorical, hypothetical, and disjunctive syllogism. Finally, the first book of *Maqasid* is dedicated to logic per se. This last work was known to the scholastics, having been translated into Latin at Toledo.

¹¹⁹ *Sabr wa al-taqsīm*. This is a form of argument used mostly by the *mutakalimūn* which involves enumerating all the alternatives to a proposition and showing all but one to be invalid.

¹²⁰ More detailed arguments against the eternity of the world are offered later in Part 1. See 27.7, for example.

¹²¹ This is an interesting use of the term *(ʿilm)*, which is usually translated as science or knowledge here. Sometimes, however, the context demands a different rendering, and I have chosen "cognition," because it carries the connotative meaning of "understanding" while preserving an etymological connection to "knowledge." For another example of a translator who opted for this term, see Richard J. McCarthy's translated excerpt from *ʿAjāʾib al-qalb* in appendix 5 of *Deliverance*, 312.

¹²² That is, the restriction to the two given alternatives.

¹²³ This awkward phrasing reflects awkwardness in the Arabic.

¹²⁴ *Aṣl*, the word here translated as "premise," is more literally translated as "root," a basic connotation that Ghazālī was clearly exploiting in developing the analogy he does at this point.

[125] Al-Ghazālī refers here to the categorical syllogism.

[126] This is the *reductio ad absurdum* method.

[127] We seem to be missing a step here. What evidence forms the basis for the assertion that something that was not supposed to stop has in fact stopped? Ghazālī does not answer at this point.

[128] It is significant that Ghazālī is teaching a system in which the conclusions come first and determine the argument to be made in support of them. This accords, of course with the idea that revealed truths are the starting point. But what happens when the revelations leave room for different rational interpretations?

[129] *Baḥatha* is translated here as "investigate" for the sake of consistency in glossing this term throughout the text. It should be noted, however, that it carries the connotation of searching, so that this phrase might also be rendered, "it is thought which searches for the most probable cognition or opinion."

[130] Al-Ghazālī uses an interesting word here; *qadr* means scope, quantity, value, degree—in other words, something that can be understood with mathematical precision.

[131] This is an important reference to Ghazālī's commitment to giving primacy to ideas over terminology in his writing. See the translator's introduction for further comments and references to the work of Lasarus-Yafeh on this subject.

[132] The redundancy is in the Arabic.

[133] *Ṣādiq* : Meaning, genuine, truly what he represented himself to be—a prophet.

[134] Asín renders this and later passages as saying that Muḥammad was the author of the Qurʾān, a significantly inaccurate translation.

[135] Meaning, the opponents.

[136] For further discussion of this concept see the translator's introduction.

[137] Here is an explicit statement of one of the methods Ghazālī used most famously in *Tahāfut al-falāsifah*.

[138] Or, if we follow Asín's rendition of this passage, "In such cases, even though the proposition continues to be knowable in itself, what is lacking is the faculty to know it."

[139] For some reason Asín omits this last sentence and the next paragraph, indicating such with ellipses.

[140] In classical Islamic civilization, a non-Muslim who was subject to the protections and regulations of Islamic law.

PART ONE

[24.3] Considering the essence of God most high

Consisting of ten propositions

The First Proposition

[24.6] The existence of God most high and holy, and demonstration thereof.

[A 59] We [indeed] say: The existence in time of every temporal thing has a

cause; the world[141] exists in time; therefore, it follows necessarily from this that

[the world] has a cause. By "world" we mean every existent other than God most

high. By "every existent other than God most high," we mean all bodies and

their accidents. The detailed explanation of this is as follows: We do not doubt

the basis[142] of existence. Next, we know that every existent either occupies space

or does not occupy space. Everything that does occupy space but has no

composition [of parts] we call a single substance.[143] If, on the other hand, it is

compounded with another [single substance], then we call it body. If it does not

occupy space and requires for its existence a body in which to subsist, we call it

accident;[144] and if it does not [have such a requirement], then that is God most

glorious, most high.

[24.13] Concerning the existence of bodies and their accidents, these are

known by observation. And pay no mind to anyone who would dispute the

[existence of] accidents, even though he might rant and rave and demand proof

from you, [A 60] for his own arguments, disputes, exclamations and protests [25]

do not exist, then how can one get involved in responding to him or listening to

him?[145] And if, on the other hand, they do exist, there can be no doubt that they

are something distinct from the body of the disputant, since his body existed

earlier, when the disputation did not exist. You know, therefore, that the body

and the accident are apprehended by the senses.

[25.3] As for the existent that is incorporeal and not a substance that occupies

space and that is not accident, its existence cannot be perceived by the senses.

Now then, we claim its existence, and we claim that the world exists by it and its

power. But this is perceived through the proof of reason, which proof we have

previously mentioned, not through sense perception.

[25.6] Let us return, then, to verifying [the argument that the world has a

cause]. We had brought together two premises relating to it, either of which might be denied by an opponent. We say to him, then: Which of the two premises do you dispute? He might respond: I dispute your saying that every temporal thing has a cause, for how do you know this? Then we will say: This premise must be admitted because it is primary and necessary evidence in the mind, such that, whoever hesitates [in accepting it] does so because it has not become clear to him what we mean by the ter "temporal thing " and the term "cause." Once he has understood the significancation of those terms, his intellect will necessarily affirm that "every temporal thing has a cause," [A 61] for, by "temporal thing" we mean that which was nonexistent and which then became existent.

[25.12] Now then, its existence, before existing, was either impossible or contingent. It is untrue that it was impossible, since that which is impossible never exists at all. Then, if its existence was contingent (and by "contingent" we only mean something conceivable as existing and conceivable as not existing, and if it is not existent it is because its existence is not necessary in its essence— since if its existence existed essentially it would be a necessary existent and not

contingent); rather, its existence would require a deciding factor[146] for its

existence over nonexistence so that its nonexistence would change to existence.

And if its nonexistence should continue, inasmuch as there was no deciding

factor for its existence over nonexistence, then that which the deciding factor

does not bring into being does not exist. And by "cause" we mean nothing but

the deciding factor.[147]

[26.2] In short, that nonexistent being which continues in nonexistence—its

nonexistence will never be supplanted by existence so long as a deciding factor

that renders existence over continuing nonexistence is not realized. Once the idea

explained by these words is conceived in the understanding, the intellect is

compelled to acknowledge its veracity.

[26.5] This is the explanation of that premise,[148] which in reality is [just] to

explain the terms "temporal thing" and "cause," not to establish the proof for the

premise.

[26.6] If someone were to say, "With [A 62] what would you deny [the

opponent] who disputes the second premise—that is, your saying that "the

world is temporal?"[149] We would say: This premise is not axiomatic; rather we

shall prove it by a demonstration, constructed from two other premises. (Now, when we say that the world is temporal, by "world" we mean only bodies and substances[150] only.) Let us say, then, that no body is devoid of temporal things; whatever is not devoid of temporal things is temporal; from this it necessarily follows that every body is temporal. Now, which of the two premises is contested?

[26.11] [The opponent] might say: Why do you say that "no body or spatial being is devoid of temporal things?"[151] Then we would say: Because it is not devoid of movement and rest, and those are two temporal things. [The opponent] might say: You claim their existence and then their temporality; but we concede neither.

[27.1] We say: In the works on theology the answer to this problem is stated at great length, though it does not merit such prolixity. For the problem can never at all occur to someone who sincerely seeks guidance, since it would never at all occur to a reasonable person to doubt the existence in himself of accident by way of pains, sicknesses, hunger, thirst, and [A 63] other states, nor their temporality.[152] Likewise, when he considers the bodies of the world, he will not

doubt that they are subject to changes of states and that these changes are temporal. If the opponent is obstinate it will be pointless to contend with him over this. For to suppose that [such] an opponent will be convinced by what we say is to suppose an impossibility—to wit, that the opponent is a reasonable person.

[27.7] Now, those who are opposed to the temporality of the world are the *falasifah.* [However,] they maintain that the bodies of the world divide into the heavens (which move continuously and whose individual movements are temporal but in a continuous succession from eternity and to eternity) and the four elements[153] that are contained within the sublunary world. These share matter as the basis of their forms and accidents, the matter being eternal while the forms and accidents are temporal and follow on one another in succession from eternity and to eternity.[154] [The *falāsifah* add] that through heat water comes to be air and that air is changed by heat into fire, and so on with the rest of the elements.[155] [They also say] that these intermix through temporal admixtures and thereby the minerals, plants, and animals come to be, so that the four elements never are separated from those temporal forms, and [A 64] the heavens

[likewise] are never separated from temporal movements. The *falāsifah* only

dispute our saying that "whatever is not devoid of temporal things is temporal."

Hence, there is no point in lingering over this premise. Nevertheless, so as not to

fail to follow the rules of the discourse, let us still say:

[28.1] Substance is necessarily[156] either in motion or at rest, both of which are

temporal [states]. As for motion, its temporal occurrence is sensed. If one

supposes a stationary substance such as the earth, the supposition of its motion is

not impossible. Rather, the possibility [of its being in motion] is known

necessarily. For, when that possibility is actualized, it has a commencement[157]

and annihilates what is at rest. And rest also, prior to [movement], is something

that has a beginning, because what is eternal cannot be annihilated, as we will

note when formulating the proof of the eternity of God most high.

[28.6] And if one wished to draw a proof for the existence of a motion

superadded to a body, we say: When we say that this substance is moved, we

affirm [the existence of] something other than the substance, even though when

we say, "this substance is not moved," what we say is [also] correct, because the

substance remains static.[158] For if what is understood by "movement" were the

same as [what is understood by] "substance," the negation of the former would be the negation of the latter. Likewise, the proof [A 65] can be extended to the affirmation and negation of repose. But in general, undertaking to prove what is evident serves only to make it more obscure than to clarify it.

[28.11] It might be said, "How do you know that [movement is something that] is originated? Perhaps it is latent [within substance] and manifest [at different times]?

[28.11] We say: If we were to operate in this book on topics external to its objective, we would have refuted the doctrine of the latency and emergence accidents. But we will not bother with what does not impinge on our objective. But we will [just] say: Movement, whether latent or manifest, cannot exist but in substance; and both [latent and manifest movement] are originated; therefore, it is established that substance is not devoid of temporal events.

[29.1] But perhaps [the opponent] will say: Maybe movement transfers from some other place [to the body that is moved]. How do you know it is false to say that accidents transfer [from one subject to another]?

[29.2] We say: The proofs that have been mentioned to refute this theory[159]

are feeble, so we will not add to the length of this book by summarizing and

countering them. But the correct way to expose its error will be for us to explain

that the explanation of the [correct] theory cannot be conceived by the

understanding of anyone who fails to grasp what accident truly is and what

transfer truly is. He who truly understands [A 66] what accident is will realize

the impossibility of its transference.

[29.6] To clarify this [further], "transfer" is an expression used for the transit

of substance from place to place. This is established in the intellect if [the concept

of] substance is understood, and place is understood, and the specification[160] of

substance by place being superadded to the essence of substance is understood.

And, moreover, it is known that accident invariably has a substrate, just as

substance invariably has a place. So it is imagined that accident is related to

substrate as substance is related to place. From this [notion] arises in the

estimative faculty [the fallacy] of the possibility of [accidents] transferring in

[substrate], similar to substance [transferring from place to place].[161] But if this

analogy were correct, then the specification of accident by substrate would be

[something] superadded to the essence of accident and substrate, just as the

specification of substance by place is [something] superadded to the essence of

substance and place. The result is that accident may subsist in [another] accident.

But predication of accident of accident requires another specification that is

superadded to the predicate and what is predicated of it, and so on successively

[ad infinitum]. The result is that one accident does not exist without there also

existing an infinite number of accidents along with it.[162]

[29.15; A 67] Let us examine, therefore, the cause by reason of which there is a

difference between the specification of accident by substrate and the specification

[30] of substance by place, since one of the two specifications is superadded to

essence of specified thing and the other is not.[163] From [this] the error in

imagining the transfer [of accident] becomes clear. The secret [to the problem] is

that although substrate is necessary for accident the same as place is necessary

for substrance, there is nevertheless a difference between the two necessary

[requirements] since [one kind of] adherent to a thing is essential while [another

kind] of adherent to a thing are not essential. By "essential" I mean that which,

when it is annihilated, annihilates [also] the thing [to which it is related]. That is,

if it were annihilated in existence, then the existence of the thing [it was

connected to] would also be annihilated. If it is annihilated in the intellect, then that which is known through it would [also] be annihilated in the intellect. But place is not essential to substance.

[30.7] Let us first consider body and substance. Then, after that, we will consider place—whether it is something fixed[164] or something imagined. We come to the truth of this question through proofs of reason. We perceive the body through the senses and what is evidenced without a proof. That is why the specific place[165] of Zayd's body, for example, does not pertain essentially to Zayd, nor does the annihilation of Zayd's body follow from [its] vacating that place and [that place] being exchanged [for another].[166] But it is not that way with Zayd's height, for this is an accident that subsists in Zayd; we do not think of it per se, without Zayd. Rather, we think of Zayd [A 68] the tall [one]. Zayd's height, therefore, is thought of as consequent on Zayd's existence, so that from the hypothetical nonexistence of Zayd necessarily follows the annihilation of Zayd's height. Zayd's height has neither subsistence in existence or in the mind without Zayd. Thus, the specification of Zayd's [height] is by his essence. That is, it exists by reason of its essence and not because of a new concept that is a specification

being superadded to it. If that specification [of height as belonging to Zayd] is

annihilated, then [the height] itself[167] is annihilated. Transfer[168] annihilates [this]

specification, and thus [the height's] essence is annihilated, since its specification

as pertaining [exclusively] to Zayd is not superadded to its essence, [and by

"essence"] I mean that which annihilates [whatever pertains to it when it ceases

to exist, because it is essential, not additional].[169] So the discussion reverts to the

essence of accident in contrast to the specification of [the essence of substance] by

place. For [the specification of place as it pertains to substance] is additional to

[substance]. Hence, the annihilation of [that specification] through [the

substance's] transfer [to another place] does not [31] annihilate [the substance]

itself.[170] And [so] the discussion [now] reverts to whether transfer annihilates

specification by substrate. For if specification by substrate were something [only]

superadded to the essence, then the [essence] would not be annihilated by [the

annihilation of that specification]. But if the specification is not a superadded

meaning, [then] with its annihilation the essence is annihilated. This has been

made manifest and the inquiry comes down to [the fact] that the specification of

accident by its substrate cannot be something superadded to the essence of

accident in the way that substance is specified by its place. And this is for the

reason we have mentioned: that substance is thought of in itself and place is

thought of in terms of [substance], not that substance is thought of in terms of

place.[171] [A 69]

[31.6] As for accident, inasmuch as it is thought of in and with substance, not

in and of itself, the essence of accident is that which has its subsistence in specific

substance and does not have an essence without it. Thus, when its separation

from that specific substance is reckoned, the nonexistence of its essence is [also]

determined.

[31.8] We have based the discussion on [the example of] height in order to

make [our] intent understood. For whereas height is not an accident but rather

an expression for a large number of bodies in one respect, it brought our

objective closer to the understanding. And if it is understood, then let the [same]

explanation be applied to accidents.[172]

[31.11] This precision and probing after truth, though not really appropriate

for this compendium, was nevertheless needed [here] because what has been

mentioned concerning it [up till now] has been unconvincing and opaque.[173] We

have now finished proving one of the two premises, which is that the world is

not devoid of temporal things,[174] since it is not devoid of motion and rest, which

are two things that are temporally originated and that do not [come about]

through transfers [of accidents or properties]. But it is not necessary to belabor

this point in answering the opponent who believes it, since the *falāsifah* are

agreed that bodies of the world are not devoid of temporal things, though they

deny the temporality of the world.

[31.15] But if someone says: The [A 70] second premise still remains, which is

[32] your affirmation that that which is not devoid of temporal things is a

temporal being. What is the proof of it?

[32.2] We say: If the world were eternal (despite the fact that it is not devoid

of temporal things), it would be necessary to affirm that temporal events have no

beginning, and it would have to be [the case] that the revolutions of the sphere

were infinite in number. But this is impossible because it leads to an

impossibility, and everything that leads to an impossibility is an impossibility.

We will explain that three impossibilities follow [from this hypothesis].

[32.5] The first is that, if it were correct, then that which is endless would have

elapsed and there would have been a finish to it and an end. There is no

difference between our saying "it elapsed" and our saying "it stopped," nor

between our saying "it finished," and our saying "it ended." It follows

necessarily that one would have to say that something that had no end has

ended. What it is clearly impossible is that something with no end should end,

and that that which was endless should finish and elapse.[175]

[32.9] The second [absurdity] is that if the revolutions of the sphere were

unending, they would either be even, odd, or neither even or odd, or both even

and odd at the same time. But these three[176] alternatives are [all] absurd, and so

what results from them is absurd. It is clearly absurd to have a number that is

neither even nor odd, or that is both even and odd at the same time. Even is that

which is divisible into two equal parts—such as ten, for example. Odd is that

which cannot be divided into two equal parts—such as seven.[177] [In the case of]

every number composed of units, it is either divisible into two equal parts or

unequal parts, and is either prone to division or to no division, or it is devoid of

any of these [properties], which is impossible.[178] It is not true that it can be even,

because the even is [33] not odd for lack of only one [unit]; when one unit is

added, it becomes odd. But how, how can one unit be lacking from a number

that is supposedly infinite? It is [equally] absurd that it should be odd, for odd

becomes even with the addition of one. Therefore, if it remains odd it is for lack

of this unit. But how can a number that is supposedly infinite be lacking one

unit?

[33.4] The third [absurdity] that follows for the aforesaid hypothesis is the

existence of two numbers both of which are infinite [in and of themselves] and of

which one is smaller than the other. Now, it is impossible that one infinite be

smaller than another infinite, because "smaller" is that which lacks something

which, if that something were added to it, it would become equal. But how can

anything be lacking from the infinite?

[33.8] The demonstration[179] of the aforesaid is that Saturn, according to the

[falāsifa], makes one revolution [around the earth] every thirty years, and the sun

makes one every year. Therefore, the number of revolutions of Saturn is like one

thirtieth of the revolutions of the sun, since it makes thirty revolutions every

thirty years while Saturn makes only one, and one is one thirtieth part of thirty.

Now, the revolutions of Saturn are infinite, but nevertheless their number is less

than those of the sun, since it is known necessarily that one thirtieth of something is smaller than the thing itself.

[33.13] The moon makes twelve revolutions in one year. Therefore the number of the revolutions of the sun would be like one twelfth of those of the moon; and notwithstanding that both numbers are infinite, one of them is smaller than the other, which is an obvious absurdity.

[33.16] It might be said [by someone] that things within the power of God most high are [A 72] infinite according to you as well, likewise the objects of his knowledge. But the objects of his knowledge [34] are greater [in number] than things within his power, since neither the essence of the Eternal, his attributes, nor likewise the continuously existent being, nor any such thing are within [God's] power to enact.[180]

[34.2] We say: When we say that the possible objects are infinite [for God] we do not mean to say the same as when we say that the cognizable objects are infinite for him. Rather, what we mean to say is that God most high has an attribute called power by virtue of which he bestows existence upon beings and that the efficacy [of this attribute] is never annihilated.

[34.5] Now then, this last phrase, "the efficacy [of this attribute] is never annihilated," does not imply in any way any affirmation of things, much less the predication of finitude or infinitude of them. Thus, no one falls into this error except those who examine ideas through words and who, upon seeing that the morphology of both terms "the cognizable" and "the possible" are of the same [grammatical] type suppose that the meaning of both is one and the same. Not at all! There is no analogous relationship whatsoever between the two of them. On the other hand, our saying that "the cognizable [objects] are infinite [for God]" contains a hidden meaning that is completely the opposite of the one that initially occurs to the mind upon hearing the phrase for the first time. The first [thing] that occurs to the mind is that the existence is affirmed of various things called cognizables that are infinite, which is absurd. Rather, the things that are spoken of here are existents and they are finite. But the demonstration of this point would require prolonged explanations.

[34.12] Anyway, the problem has been dispelled by explaining in what sense [A 73] objects of [God's] power are infinite. A consideration of the other extreme [of the objection], which has to do with cognizable objects, is not necessary in

order for it to be refuted. And with this the second premise has been established

as correct through the third demonstrative method of those that we expounded

in the fourth introduction to this book.

[34.15] At this point you will know the existence of the Maker, since [this] has

become evident in the aforementioned proof—namely our saying, "The world is

temporally originated; every temporal thing has a cause; therefore, the world has

a cause."

[35.1] This first proposition has therefore become established through that

proof. But nothing seems clear to us as yet except the existence of the cause.

Now, whether this cause is eternal or temporal we cannot yet clearly discern. So,

we will turn our attention to that. [35.3; A 74]

The Second Proposition

[35. 4] We propose that the cause which we have established for the existence

of the world is eternal[181] [*a parte ante*]. If [the cause] had a beginning, it would

require another cause, which would require yet another cause, and so on in a

chain that is either infinite, which is absurd, or that terminates without absurdity

in an eternal [being]. Now then, this is what we were seeking, and we call this

[eternal being] the Maker of the world, whose existence must per force be acknowledged. By "eternal [being]" we do not mean anything but a being whose existence has not been preceded by nonexistence. Thus, nothing comes under the term "eternal" except the affirmation of a being and the negation of a prior nonbeing.

[35.9] Do not think, then, that eternal [being] indicates something superadded to the essence of the eternal [being], for in such a case you would have to say that this is something that was eternal by virtue of another eternity that was superadded to it, and the chain would continue thus without end. [35.11; A 75]

The Third Proposition

[35.12] We propose that the Maker of the world, in addition to being an existent [from eternity] also has no end. He is of an everlasting duration because it is impossible that his eternal existence should lead to his nonexistence.

[35.14] We say this because if it were to cease to exist its annihilation would require a cause, since it passes away after its existence had persisted from eternity. And we have already noted that everything that passes away requires a cause, not in that it is an existent but in that it passes away.

[36.1] Just as the change from nonbeing to being requires a deciding factor for being over nonbeing, so also the transition from being to nonbeing requires a deciding factor for nonbeing over being.

[36.3] But that deciding factor[182] is either the agent that [actually] annihilates [it] by way of power, or is an opposite, or is the suppression of one of the necessary preconditions for the existence of that [thing]. It is impossible that it would change due to the power [of an agent] since existence is a positive thing that is considered to [A 76] proceed from[183] the power [of an agent], and the one having power thus becomes, through the use of that power, the active [cause] of something. Nonbeing [on the other hand] is not a [positive] thing and therefore it is absurd that it should be an actual thing resulting from power. For we say: Is the agent of nonbeing the maker of something? If yes is the answer, then that is absurd because nonexistence is not a thing.

[36.8] If the Muʿtazilite says that the nonexistent is a thing and an essence, that essence would not be the effect of an [divine] power. It is inconceivable for him to say, "the act that comes about from [divine] power consists in enacting that essence," for [according to the Muʿtazilite], it is eternal. Rather, [God's] act is

the negation of the existence of [such] an essence. The denial of the existence of [such an essence] is not [the negation of] a thing. Hence, [God] did not enact anything.

[36.11] Now if what we have said is true, that "It has not done anything," then our other statement is also true that the agent has not exercised power to leave any trace or effect, and, therefore, it has remained as it was, and has not done anything.

[36.13] It is [also] false to say that an opposite annihilates it.[184] For if this opposite being is temporal, then it will [first] be destroyed due to the contrariety of the eternal [being]. This [actually] takes [logical] precedence over its destroying the eternal [being]. [37.1] And it is impossible that an eternal being should have an opposite that is eternal [also], coexisting with it from eternity and, having not already annihilated it, annihilates it now.[185]

[37.2] [Finally,] it is false to say that the eternal [being] is annihilated by the annihilation of some condition for its existence.[186] Actually, if the condition [A 77] were temporal, it would be impossible that the existence of the eternal [being] should be conditional upon something temporal. And if it were eternal, then the

same thing must be said of the condition as was said of the being that is

conditioned by it: it is impossible that either of them are annihilated, being

eternal.

[37.5] Someone might say: And how is it that, according to you, substances

and accidents are annihilated? We answer: As for accidents being annihilated, we

mean that they are annihilated in themselves and in their essence, it being

inconceivable that anything remains.

[37.7] Understand this school [of thought] by applying it, for example, to

movement [which is an accident]: The different states that follow one another in

successive instants are not considered to be movements [in themselves] but

rather inasmuch as they are in continuity by way of those states being

continually originated and continually annihilated. Actually, if [such states]

remain everlastingly, they then would constitute rest, not movement. For the

essence of movement cannot be conceived without also conceiving of

annihilation following existence. This is understood in [the case of] movement,

without any further proof.

[37.11] And as for colors and the other accidents, if what was just said is

understood about what [would follow] if they remained everlastingly, it would be impossible that they should then cease to exist (whether through power, or an opposite being) the same as [we said] before with respect to the eternal [being] and the example of that [being's] annihilation. [A 78] It is impossible in the truth of God most high.

[37.13] We have shown first God's[187] eternity [*a parte ante*] and the continuity of his existence without end. And there is no being that is necessary for his reality or that determines [his existence] in succession like there necessarily is for movement wherein there is a successive annihilation of existence. And as for substances, their annihilation consists in that neither movement nor rest is created in them. Thus, with the indispensable condition [for them] to exist being supplanted, their continuity or permanence [in being] cannot be conceived. [38.1]

The Fourth Proposition

[38.2] We propose that the Maker of the world is not substance occupying space because his eternity has been established. Thus, if he occupies place, he cannot but be in movement or at rest in that place, and therefore, he cannot but be affected by temporal things, and he consequently would also be temporal,

according to what we said previously.

[38.5] But someone might say: And why do you reject those who call [God] substance, even when they do not affirm a spatial nature for him? We say: in our judgment, human reason cannot see any problem with the use of these words in referring to him except for what is correct in language and what is correct for revelation.

[38.8] Regarding the language: If [the opponent] claims that this accords with the usage of the [Arabic] language, this calls for investigation. If someone who submits this claims, [A 80] that this is [God's] name—that is, that the one who has set down the language applied that it to God most high—this would be a lie against the language. Should he claim that this is a metaphor that views the meaning shared with that from which the metaphor is taken, then, if this is appropriate for the metaphor, one would not disavow it for lexical reasons. But if it is inappropriate, it would then be said to him, "you have sinned against the language," though [his] sin may not be that serious unless and to the extent that he is one of those literati who use symbols of dubious analogy. Now then, the discussion of this topic does not correspond to intellectual studies.

[38.14] With respect to divine revelation and the permissibility or impermissibility of [using the term "substance" as applied to God], that is a debate among jurists, since there is no difference between the inquiry into the permissibility of the use of words without meaning to indicate something evil by them, and the inquiry of the permissibility of other acts. And there are two opinions on this:

[39.1] It might be said that a [given] term should not be used in reference to God most high without the allowance [of revelation], and such allowance is not found in [the revealed text]. Or it might be said that [the use of a given term with respect to God] should not be forbidden except by prohibition [in the revealed text], and such prohibition is [also] not found, therefore there is a debate. For if there is danger of error [about God], [A 81] then one should guard against it, since the mere hint of error about the attributes of God most high is forbidden. On the other hand, if there is no danger of error then there should be no judgment forbidding it. Both solutions might then be admissible. What is more, the hint of error will vary according to the terms in question and the norms for

their use: Sometimes a word might be suspect to some people but not to others.

[39.6; A 82]

The Fifth Proposition

[39.7] We propose that the Maker of the world is not corporeal, because every

body is composed of at least two substances[188] that occupy space. But it is

impossible that God is substance;[189] therefore, it is also impossible that he is

corporeal; for by "body" we do not mean anything else but this. If someone

called [God] corporeal but by "corporeal" meant something other than this

meaning, then there would have to be a debate with him over the intent of the

language or the intent of the revelation, but not with arguments from natural

reason. For natural reason does not adjudicate in matters of the use of terms, nor

does it study the letters and sounds that are conventionally used. Furthermore, if

God were corporeal, he would have a specified quantity. He could, therefore, be

conceived of as being lesser or greater [in quantity that what he is]. Now then,

one of two equally possible things is not realized except through the choice of a

[third] party that is capable of specifying one of them over the other, according to

what we previously have said. Therefore, God would have need of some

specifier who would have influence over him in order to give him the specific

quantity [that he has]; therefore, God would be something made instead of being

the Maker; and he would be created instead of being creator. [40. 1; A 83]

Sixth Proposition

[40.2] We propose that the Maker of the world is not accident because by

"accident" we mean that whose existence requires an essence in which it

subsists—and that essence is either body or atom;[190] therefore, being innovated,

as every body necessarily is, the conditional thing that subsists in it must also,

without doubt, be innovated, since [the notion] of transfer of accidents is false.

[40.5] We have already demonstrated that the maker of the world is eternal;

therefore, it is not possible that he be accident. If "accident" is understood to be

something that is an attribute of a thing that does not occupy place in space, we

would not deny the existence of a such a being; rather, we would [take it in that

sense] to demonstrate the attributes of God most high. Verily, the argument

reduces to the absolute sense of the term "maker" or "agent," since the absolute

sense is applied to the essence which is endowed with attributes, the priority of

its absolute sense being with respect to the attributes.

[40.9] If we say that the Maker is not attribute[191] we mean that the making

refers to the essence in which [A 84] the attributes subsist, not to those attributes

themselves. Likewise when we say that the carpenter is not an accident nor an

attribute, we mean to say that the art of carpentry bears no relation to the

attributes, but to the essence of which the aggregate of the attributes must

necessarily be predicated in order for that essence to be an artificer. Thus it must

be said also of the maker or artificer of the world. If our opponent understands

"accident" as a thing that is neither a state or mode of being that resides in body,

nor is it an attribute that subsists in essence, then the duty to refute it belongs not

to intellectual reason but to lexicology or revelation. [41.1; A 85]

Seventh Proposition

[41.2] We propose that [God] has no specified aspect from any of the six sides

[of a three-dimensional body]. He who knows the significance of the term "side"

and the meaning of the term "specification," will surely understand the

impossibility of sides with respect to [beings that are] not corporeal substances

and accidents, since space is actually something that is conceived of as that by

which a body is specified. But space only becomes a "side" when it is related to

something else that is spatial.

[41.6] The sides are six: top, bottom, front, back, right, and left. "The thing is above us," means that it is in a space that is contiguous to the head. "The thing that is below us," means that it is in a space contiguous with the foot. And so on with the other sides.[192] Thus, anything that is said to be on a side, is said to be in a space, but with the addition of a relation.

[41.9] Our saying "Something is in a space" may be understood in two ways. One of them is that [the thing] is specified by [that space] in the sense that another thing like it is impeded from existing in its stead [in that space]; and that [is what is meant] by corporeal substances. The other way is that [A 86] [that thing] is a state that resides in the corporeal substance, because it has been said to be on a [given] side—even though it is [really only so] because of the setting of the corporeal substance. Thus, the existence of the accident on a [given] side is not the same as the existence of the corporeal substance [there]. Rather, the side pertains to the corporeal substance first and foremost, and to the accident through the setting [of the corporeal substance to which it pertains]. These are the two aspects in which [something] can be said to be specified in space.

[41.14] If the opponent intends one of these two [meanings], prove his error to

him with the [same] proof of error [for the claim] that God is corporeal substance

or [42] accident. And if the opponent intends anything other than these two

[understandings], his interpretation will be incomprehensible. The truth about

the correct use of his term will rest upon what is understood [by it], on

lexicology[193] and revelation, not on intellectual reason.

[42.2] Now, it may be that the opponent says: "In affirming that [God] is on

some side I mean it in a sense that is different from this [that you have said]." But

we will [still] refuse to allow this and say, with respect to your term, that I reject

it if you are using it in [any] way that adopts its plain meaning, for this [plain

meaning] connotes the idea of corporeal substance and accident, which is an

untruth regarding God most high. Nevertheless, it is still possible that I might

not reject what you intend to say; for how could I reject that which I cannot

comprehend? It might be that by this term you intend [A 87] God's knowledge

and power. In such a case, clearly, I will not deny that God is of some aspect[194] in

the sense that he has knowledge and power. Yet once you have opened this

door—that is, the door of using the term in a sense other than its obvious

meaning and what people give it in order to understand [one another]—then it is

no longer possible to restrict it from any number of meanings you might want to

give it. Nevertheless, I will not reject them as long as those meanings do not

imply concepts that lead to temporality, for whatever leads to [the idea of]

origination in time [with respect to God] is in its essence impossible and leads,

furthermore, to the falsehood of saying that [God] has sides, because this would

occasion contingency in God, giving him a specific aspect, particularizing him to

[just] one of the possible sides. This would be impossible in two aspects:[195]

[42.11] The first of them is that the side on which God would be specified

would not be specified by him essentially, since all sides are equal to one another

with respect to priority. Thus, to specify just one of these various is not

essentially necessary; [43] only possible. It requires, therefore, a specifier to

specify it, and this specification of it will be superadded to its essence. And

whatever implies contingency [with respect to God] is incompatible with his

eternity, since he is a necessary [A 88] existent in all aspects.

[43.4] It might be said that [God] is on the top side since it is the noblest of the

sides. To this we say that if one of the sides has come to be the top side, it is so

because [God] created the world in space such that [the top side] was created there. Prior to the creation of world, above and below did not exist at all, since both sides are derived from the head and the foot. But at that time there was no animal at all with respect to whose head "above" could be named as the side contiguous with it and "below" as its opposite.

[43.8] The second reason is that if God were on a [given] side, he would be in a spatial [relation] with the world, and every spatial thing would either be lesser than, greater than, or equal [to him in size]. All this necessarily implies a determination [of the size of things] by one who determines, and reason conceives it to be possible that that determiner may require [something] to be lesser or greater than what it [actually] is. Therefore, [God] would need a determining and specifying agent.

[43.11] Someone might say, "If something is specified as being on a side, then there must be one who determines [which side]; but accidents are determined."[196] We say: Accident does not exist on any side in and of itself [essentially], but through its inherence in a substance.[197] So of course it is also determined by that inherence. If we know [A 89] that ten accidents cannot not

exist except in ten substances, then it cannot be conceived that they exist [44] in twenty. The determination of the accidents to be ten [in number] must come by way of [their] inherence in the determining substances, just as the determination of [something] to be on a side must [come about] by way of [its] inherence [in substance].

[44.3] Someone might say, "If [God] is not specified as being above, what is the point of raising the face and hands to the heavens in supplications, whether as a prescribed action or by natural impulse? And what is to be made of what [Muḥammad]—God's blessing and peace be upon him—said to a slave whom he intended to manumit but wanted first to be sure of her faith, [asking her]: Where is God? And she responded with a gesture toward the sky, and he said that she was a believer?

[44.6] The response to the first [question] is that it is similar to someone saying, "If God is not in the shrine of the Kaʿaba, which is his house, then what does it matter if we come to this shrine on pilgrimage in order to visit him? And why are we orienting ourselves in the direction of that shrine when we make the ritual prayer? And if God is not in the earth, then why do we humble ourselves

to the point of touching our face to the earth when we prostrate ourselves in

ritual prayer?" To this it should be said: The reason revelation has inculcated the

precept that people should face the shrine of the Ka'aba in their ritual prayers is

to require a single, fixed direction, because it is indisputable that it brings a

greater submissiveness and [awareness of] the presence of God in the heart [A

90] than irresolution in the direction [of prayer]. Therefore, since all of the

directions are the same with respect to the possibility of being selected for the

direction of prayer, God most high specified a certain area, ennobled it and

magnified it, establishing special relationship between himself and it and

kindling within the hearts of the faithful a certain affection towards it deriving

from the nobility with which he had distinguished it in order to establish the

orientation [for worship]. In like manner, the sky is the qibla for the stars, just as

the shrine [of the Ka'aba] is for ritual prayer even though the one who is

worshiped and the one to whom we direct our pleas is unbounded by shrine or

sky. There remains, however, in this direction of our gaze heavenward as we

pray, a subtle mystery that very few are capable of penetrating. It is that the

salvation of man, his definitive victory in the life hereafter, shall be achieved only

by humbling himself to God in his soul and acknowledging the greatness of his

Lord.

[45. 3] Now then, this humbling oneself and acknowledging [God's] greatness

are acts of the heart whose instruments are the intellect and the members of the

body inasmuch as these are used to purify and cleanse the heart. The heart

actually has been created by God so as to be influenced by the action of the

body's members. Likewise he created the members to be influenced by the

beliefs of the hearts. If the [A 91] goal to be achieved is that man should humble

himself—in his mind and in his heart—recognizing how insignificant he is so

that he can then become aware of the nobility and excellency of the being of God

most high in relation to this, his baseness; and as one of the greatest proofs of his

own lowliness and one of the most effective ways to induce in his own soul

feelings of humility, [let him recognize] that man has been created from the dust

of the earth and that is why the religion demands, as a ritual, that he place upon

the dust (the most base of all things) his own face, which is the most noble of his

members, in order that his heart might be humbled on bringing the forehead into

contact with the earth. In this way the humbling of oneself affects not only the

body to the degree and manner that it is able, that is, being embraced by the base and detestable dust, but also with the intellect in the way that corresponds to its being, that is, recognizing its lowly condition and its base estate upon recognizing the thing of which it has been created.

[45.12] The same should be said of reverence for God most high, which is as indispensable as humility for the salvation of the soul. The members [of the body] must also participate in this sentiment to the degree possible [46] and in the way that they are capable of. Heart-felt reverence consists in believing and acknowledging the exalted station of the respected person. Respect in the members [of the body] consists in attitudes or gestures upwards, which suggest the elevated class of the respected person. It is so much so that in the language of familiar conversation it is usual to express the elevated social status of a person and the respect he deserves by saying of him that he is in the seventh heaven, by which is metaphorically indicated not just [A 92] the material elevation of a place, but also the elevation of status. Also the head is moved toward the sky in order to signify the respect merited by the person of whom we are speaking, and this gesture indicates that the esteem of that person is in the heavens—that is to

say, on high—so that the heavens in these cases indicate what is high.

[46.7] See, then, with what subtlety religion has known how to guide hearts

and bodies to the respect and reverence that are due to God most high. [See] also

how ignorant a person is shown to be who sees only superficially the members of

the body and, negligently, does not bother to delve more deeply into the

mysteries of the hearts. Such an ignorant person supposes that the most

important thing in all of this is what is indicated by the organs of the body in

their gestures and attitudes without noticing that, on the contrary, the first and

principal thing is to know the sentiment of respect within the heart, a sentiment

that, in having respect for [God], indicates high esteem, not a high place in space,

and that the organs of the body fill no role here other than simple subjects and

servants of the heart, serving it in that task of showing to [God] the respect that is

his due—but only to the degree that such is possible—that is, through gestures or

indications in the direction of [47] certain points. This is the subtle mystery that

abides in raising our faces to the heavens when we want to show respect and

reverence to God most high. And prayer cannot but be a plea [A 93] or petition

for any one of the divine mercies or benevolences. The keep of those blessings

are the heavens, and the guardians charged with distributing them are the angels

whose fixed abode is the kingdom of the heavens. That is why God most high

says "And in the heaven is your providence and that which ye are promised."[198]

Now, instinct moves us spontaneously to turn the face in the direction of the

closet in which is kept the food that we desire. The subjects that hope to receive

something from the rulers, when they know that the gifts will be apportioned,

gather at the door of the treasury and their faces along with their hearts are

inclined to the place where the treasure is found, even though they do not

believe that the king is personally present at the place of the treasure. This is the

same thing that turns the faces of religious people in the direction of heaven by

instinct and by the revealed law. Clearly the common people simply believe that

the Lord whom they worship is in fact in the sky, and this belief is also one of the

causes that moves them to raise their faces in prayer. The Most High is Lord of

all lords. I affirm that those who deviate [from His truth] greatly err.[199]

[47.10] As for [Muḥammad's] judgment that that slave was a believer for the

simple act of facing heavenward, this also has a clear explanation, for it is

evident that the world has no other way of expressing the high station of a

person besides the gesture towards what is high. Now then, according to what is said, that slave was dumb, and as it is supposed that she was an idolater—that is to say, of those who believe that [God] dwells in the temple of idols—then, when it was required of her to clearly indicate what her belief was, she let it be known through that gesture, signaling [A 94] towards the sky, attempting thereby to say that her Lord, whom she served, did not dwell in the [48] houses of the idols as the idolaters believed.

[48.2] Someone might say, "To deny [that God is in some] place leads to absurdity, which is affirming the existence of a being that is not in any place, that is neither within nor without the world, and that is neither united with nor separated from it, which is absurd." We say: It is granted that for any existent capable of relative position to have an existence that is not relative and not divisible is absurd. [This is so] because it is absurd that every existent capable of occupying a place in space should have its existence without the six sides [that are possible] for it. But if there is an existent that is not capable of relation, nor of occupying a place in space, then it is not absurd that such should be devoid of that condition.[200] It is as if someone were to say, "It is absurd [to suppose] an

existent that was neither powerless nor powerful, neither knowing nor ignorant,

for one of these options must obtain for that thing." To someone [who reasoned

thus] it might be said: If that being is capable of the two opposing attributes, it is

actually absurd that it should exist without one or the other of them. But if it is

not capable of either of them, then it is not absurd that it should exist without

them.

[48.10] As for inanimate body,[201] for which not one [of the opposing

attributes] obtains because it is lacking in the precondition for them—which is

life—its existing [in spatial relations] without them is [certainly] not absurd.

Therefore, the essential condition for being contiguous [with another body] and

for occupying a place in space is fully to be in space or to subsist in a being that

is. [49; A 95] If this [condition] is lacking, then the being with opposing

[attributes] cannot exist either. The question then reduces to whether or not an

existent is possible that does not occupy place in space, neither subsists in

another being that occupies it but rather is in fact devoid of the condition for

relation and of having parts.

[49.4] If the opponent supposes that such a being is absurd or impossible, we

would prove it to him by [saying] that, insofar as every being that occupies place

is temporal, and every temporal being [ultimately] requires an atemporal agent,

then from these two premises there necessarily follows the certainty that there is

a being that does not occupy place. As for the two premises, we have already

demonstrated them. And as for the conclusion that we claim to derive from both

of them, there is no way to deny it, once they are admitted.

[49.8] The opponent might say: "A being like the one your proof has lead us

to admit must exist cannot be understood." Then say to him: What is it that is

meant when you say "cannot be understood?" If you mean to say that that being

is inconceivable, unimaginable, and beyond comprehension, then you speak the

truth, because nothing enters into the conception, the imagination, and the

comprehension except body endowed with color and extension. That which is

devoid of color and extension cannot be represented by the imagination, because

the imagination has been attuned to visible objects, so that it cannot conceive of

anything if it is not so as to be a visible being, and therefore, the things [A 96]

that are not amenable to sight cannot be conceived of by the imagination.

[49.13] But, if what the opponent means is that such a being is unintelligible,

or rather, that it cannot be known through rational proofs, then what he says is absurd, since previously we have set forth the rational proofs that demonstrate the existence of that being which is God. Intelligible only means that to which the intellect is obliged to assent by the power [50] of a proof that is impossible to deny. And we have already demonstrated this.[202]

[50.2] Now, if the opponent should say that what cannot be conceived by the imagination does not exist, we would judge that imagination has no existence in and of itself. And we say: The imagination cannot undertake imagining in and of itself if seeing does not enter the imagination and likewise knowledge, power, hearing, smell, and motion. And if imagination[203] were obliged to affirm a being of sound, it would per force have color and extension; likewise its image.[204]

[50.6] The same can be said of all of the affections of the soul: shame, fear, passion, anger, happiness, sadness, and vanity. One who tried to impose upon his fantasy the difficult task of forming an exact concept of the being of those states of the soul after having perceived those states of the soul in themselves through all their evidences, would find that he was incapable of doing it without supposing some error. And then he would afterwards deny the existence of a

being that did not come within the conception of his own fantasy. That is, then, the way to resolve the objection.

The Eighth Proposition

[50.15] We propose that God most high has nothing to do with the characteristic of being seated upon the throne. For every [51] being that is situated upon a body and abides thereon certainly has extension, since [that being] must either be greater, lesser than, or equal to [the body in which it resides], all of which cannot but imply extension. For, if it is possible for him to contact the body of the throne on that upper side, then it is [also] possible for him to contact the other sides and he turns out to be spatial. But the opponent does not in any way suppose this, even though it may be logically inferred from his doctrine. In sum, [God] does not abide upon any body [as a body], and there is no [other] condition by which he could except as accident , and it has already been shown that God most high and holy is neither body nor accident. Therefore, this proposition has no need of being demonstrated further than this.

[51.7] It might be said: Then what do these divine words mean, "The Merciful is established on the throne"?[205] And what do those other [words] of Muḥammad

mean: [A 98] "God most high descends each night as low as the heaven of this lower world"?

[51.9] We would say: The discussion that would be required to explain this issue would be lengthy. Nevertheless, we will suggest the straight path through those two citations that leads to their correct interpretation, and that is for us to speak of people as being of two kinds: common and learned.

[51.12] For the common people we believe it best not to impose allegorical interpretations of those texts upon them, but to eliminate [52] from their beliefs anything that would imply anthropomorphism or argue for temporality [in God], and verifying that God is a being "like unto whom there is nothing else; he hears and sees [all]."[206] When the common people ask the meaning of these verses, rebuke them and say to them, "That is beyond your capacity. Continue on your own path. Each science has its practitioners."

[52.4] [Our response] should conform to what some of the forefathers[207] said when questioned about [God's] sitting [upon the throne]. They said, "That he is seated is known, in what manner is not known. To ask about it is heretical innovation, [A 99] but it is incumbent [upon us] to have faith in it." This is

because the intellects of the masses are not capable of understanding

intelligibles[208] and they do understand them through words, for they are also

incapable of perceiving the many various meanings that the Arabs give to words,

taking them metaphorically.

[52.7] On the other hand, for those who are learned, it is appropriate to

explain the [intellectual] meaning to them and cause them to understand it. But I

do not mean by this to say that such a method is obligatory for everyone, for

there is no obligation imposed except the obligation to deny any resemblance

between God and his creatures. But as for the meaning of the Qurʾān, the

revelation does not oblige everyone to comprehend all of the Qurʾān. Nor do we

agree with the opinion of those who say that this pertains only to obscurities,

such as the single letters that open certain chapters of the Qurʾān.[209] These single

letters have not actually been placed there as though they were words whose

meaning was based on the usual value that the Arabs gave to them of old;

therefore, we are in the same case as if someone were to speak to us with single

letters that were words for him, but without having previously agreed with us

[53] about their meaning. It is clear that that meaning would be unknown by us.

In the way he uses them, [A 100] those single letters come to be the same as a

language newly invented by him.

[53.3] On the other hand, those words of Muḥammad (the blessing and peace

of God be upon him), "God most high descends to the heaven of this world,"

have an intelligible meaning, and it can be seen that they have been given in

order to make something understood, since, upon hearing them, any person

understands that they mean either what they literally express or some other

metaphorical meaning. How, then, can it be said that this is ambiguous? Rather,

it is a text about which the ignorant will imagine an erroneous meaning while

one with understanding will grasp the correct meaning. It is like the saying of the

Most High, "He [God] is with you wherever ye are" (Qurʾān 57:4). An ignorant

person will imagine it in an associative meaning, contrary to the meaning of the

position of God on the throne. The wise person, on the other hand, will

understand it in the sense that God is with all things inasmuch as he knows and

comprehends all with his knowledge. Likewise with [Muḥammad's] saying

(upon him be peace), "The heart of the believer is between two fingers of the All-

Merciful." The ignorant person imagines two members made of flesh, bone, and

nerves ending in cuticles and fingernails and originating in the palm of the hand.

The wise person, on the other hand, interprets that meaning metaphorically,

excluding the literal value of the words. That is to say, in this text the fingers

indicate the end for which fingers serve—the mystery, the spirit, and the reality

of [the fingers] is the power [A 101] to turn things around whatever way the

subject desires. So also, in the previous saying of the Most High, "He [54] is with

you," the union expressed by the word "with" is the union that is had in the

understanding between subject and object.

[54.2] But one common expression[210] of Arabic is for the effect to be expressed

by the cause, and the means to the end to denote the end. As God most high says

in a sacred hadith, "Whosoever will draw near to me a handbreadth, I will draw

near to him an arm's length; and whosoever will come to me walking, I will go to

him running."[211] Here "running" means to the ignorant person the motion of

moving the feet with great rapidity, and in the same way "come" means for him

the action of coming closer in distance. On the other hand, for the intellectual it

means the end or object which the physical coming closer is trying to achieve—

that is, grace or favor. Thus, the metaphorical meaning of the text is this: My

mercy and my grace are poured out upon my servants with much more

promptness than that with which they serve me. This is also like what God most

high says elsewhere, "Verily, great is the desire with which the pure of heart

have to come to meet me, but my desire to meet them is unsurpassed."[212] The

Most High is certainly above the literal meaning of that word "desire" here,

which is a kind of [A 102] moral pain and a need that demands to be satisfied so

that the subject can rest and be comforted—that is, an actual imperfection. But,

on the other hand, as desire causes the person desired to kindly welcome the

desiring person and to pour out favors upon him then it will turn out that the

word "desire" here comes to be used to mean that effect produced by desire.

Likewise, the words "wrath" and "pleased" express the will to punish and to

reward, [55] which are ordinarily two effects of the same. So likewise, when

[Muḥammad] said, "The black stone is the right hand of God upon his earth,"[213]

the ignorant person believes that by this was meant the hand as opposed to the

left hand—that is, a corporeal member made of flesh and blood and divided into

five fingers. But if this same ignorant person were to open the eyes of his

intellect, he would know that if [God] is seated upon a throne, his right hand

could not be in the shrine of the Kaʾaba, nor would that hand be a black stone.

He would notice, therefore, if he had the smallest amount of aptitude, that the

term "right hand" is a metaphor for the means of receiving guests. It is

commanded that the stone should be touched and kissed in the same way that it

is commanded for the hand of the king to be kissed, and it is in this sense that the

word is used. The man of perfect intellectual insight into language does not make

too much of such things, because he understands right away their true import.

[55.8] Let us return, then, to the meaning of [A 103] "sitting" and

"descending." As for "sitting," that it indicates a relation to the throne is not

impossible; but it is not possible that the throne should be related to God except

inasmuch as the throne is an object of the knowledge of God or of his will, or of

his power; or inasmuch as it is a substrate similar to the substrate of accident; or

inasmuch as it is a place such as is occupied by [physical] body. But some of

these relations are intellectually inadmissible and several do not accord well with

the meaning of the word taken metaphorically. But there should be, among all of

these relations—besides which there are no other—a relation [56] that reason

would not disallow and that would not be incompatible with the meaning of the

term. Now then, that [the throne of God] is a place or a substrate, like substance

is to accident, is not incompatible with the meaning of the word, but reason

insists that it is impossible, as has already been demonstrated. That it is the object

of God's knowledge and will, reason does not contradict, but it is incompatible

with the meaning of the word. As for the throne being an object of God's

power—that is, something that falls within the realm of his determining and

dominion even though it is the greatest of the created beings[214]—this brings

praise to God [A 104] because it points out and emphasizes the greatness of the

one besides whom there is no greater. This is something that does not contradict

and is consistent with the meaning of the term. That the metaphor is consonant

with its literal meaning is obvious to anyone who knows the Arabic language.

The only ones who will find any difficulty in understanding it are those who,

because of their lack of philological training consider only vaguely the import of

the Arabic vocabulary, similar to the way an Arab would understand the

language of a Turk knowing only the rudiments of it. One of the phrases that are

well said and common is: "The ruler sat over his kingdom." And the poet says:

In Iraq did Bashir establish his seat,

Sans sword, sans bloodshed, he accomplished the feat.

[56.10] On this subject some of the companions of the Prophet said that the meaning of "The All-Merciful is seated upon the throne," encompasses the same [56] idea as "Then went he to set himself in the heaven, which was then a vapor of smoke."[215] As for what pertains to the words of Muḥammad, "God descends to the heaven of this lower world," they also admit of metaphorical interpretation for two reasons. The first is because the attribution of the descent of God himself is a metaphorical attribution, since in reality [A 105] it must be attributed to one of his angels, the same as in the text in which God says, "inquire of the city," where those inquired of are actually her inhabitants. And this also is a very common metaphor in the language—I mean, the metaphor that consists in attributing acts to the lord that belong to his subject. Thus, it is said, for example, that "the king has halted at the gate of the city," when what is meant is his army. For if it were said to the person who had informed us that the king had halted at the gate of the city, "Why have you not gone out to meet him?" he might respond, "I have not gone out because the king has left to hunt and he has not stopped yet," to which no one would then say, "Then how can he

have halted if you now say that he has not yet stopped?" The reason is that the meaning of the first phrase was that not the king but his army had halted at the gate of the city. This is obvious and evident.

[57.11] The second reason is because the word "descend" is often used in the sense of stooping benevolently, graciously condescending to one's neighbor, just as, on the other hand, the word "lift oneself up" is used in the sense of pride or haughtiness. It is said, for example, "So and so lifts his head to the clouds of heaven," to indicate that he is haughty. And it is also said, "He has lifted himself up on high" to indicate that he has become haughty; and if his social status has become elevated, it is said that he is in the seventh heaven. On the other hand, if [58] his position declines it is said, "He has fallen to the depths." And if he shows himself to be benevolent and kindly toward his neighbor it is said, "He lowers himself to the ground and abases himself even to the lowliest degree." [A 106] Once this is understood—once it is understood that the word "descend" can be interpreted in the sense of coming down in position, or in rank because of having lost status, or in the sense of "condescend," which is to lower oneself through humility and benevolence by omitting all of those acts that bring with them the

high status of the noble and rich, then it only remains to consider in which of the three senses to which the word "descend" is given may it reasonably be permissible to refer [to God].

[58.6] As for descent being a downward path, reason holds it to be impossible [that this would apply to God], as we said previously. For, that movement is not possible except with respect to beings that occupy a place in space. As for [it being] a lowering of status, that is also impossible, since God most high is eternal in his attributes and in his glorious majesty, of which it is impossible that he should be deprived. As for descent understood in the sense of condescension, benevolence, and the omission of those acts that are [usual] for one who is wealthy and in need of nothing—this sense is possible, that descent may be predicated of God.

[58.10] And it is said that when the speech of God most high came down saying "[His is] the highest estate and he hath the throne," the companions of the Prophet were overcome by a [A 107] great fear. They lost the confidence needed to make their pleas to a being endowed with such overwhelming majesty. But then it was explained to them [by the Prophet] that despite his majesty and the

exaltedness of his state above his servants, God most high was merciful to them,

and solicitous of them, and would listen to their petitions. Now then, answering

petitions is a veritable condescension in relation the height of God's majesty and

self-sufficiency. And so the use of the term "descend" was to encourage the

hearts of people to offer their petitions and even to bow and prostrate themselves

before him. For, someone who is overcome with fear before the majesty of God

most high, will feel inadequate [even] to bow and prostrate himself before him.

[59.4] The [collective] offerings of all men, when compared to the majesty of

God most high, would be something more base and contemptible than the

meager movement of just one finger made by a slave in order to endear himself

to the king of the land. And if that slave were to attempt to honor any king in

such a way, it is certain that he would be deserving of lively punishments for it.

In fact, it is the custom of kings to sever from their service men of base condition,

not allowing that such people should prostrate themselves to them and that they

should not even kiss the doorpost of their palaces, because it is beneath them that

any other than princes and nobility should serve them [A 108], as has been the

custom among some caliphs. And if the Most High did not condescend from his

exalted majesty in mercy and benevolence, it is for certain that the hearts of men,

astounded by the majesty of his glorious presence, would lose their command of

reason so as to think, their tongues so as to make mention of him,[216] and their

members would lose the power of movement. Thus, whoever reflects on how

great the divine majesty is and, at the same time, how great the divine

condescension, will understand without any kind of doubt that the metaphorical

sense of the word "descent" is in perfect harmony with the majesty of God and

with the semantic value that that term has in the Arabic language, though it is

not just as the ignorant would understand it.[217]

[60.1] But someone might still say, "Is it not the case that [the Qurʾan]

specifies that the heavens [belong to] the world?"[218] We would say this refers to

[the world's] rank as last, below which there is no other, such as when it is said,

"He has come down even to the earth and he has ascended even unto the

Pleiades," in the supposition that the Pleiades are the highest stars and the earth

the lowest place of all.[219]

[60.4] Does it not specifically say [in the Qurʾan] that [God] descends by

night, saying, "He descends every night"? We would say this is because in

solitude is the most appropriate condition in which [A 109] to pray, and the night

is precisely the best time to be alone, since that is when all the world sleeps and

when, therefore, the remembrance of created things is most easily erased and the

soul of one who prays feels more inclined to the remembrance of God most high.

Such a prayer is precisely the kind that might most be hoped to be heard by

God, not [the prayer] that comes from distracted hearts full of mundane

concerns.

Ninth Proposition

[60.9] We propose that God most exalted and high, is visible, contrary to [the

claims of] the Muꜥtazilites. There are two reasons why we treat this problem in

this first part, which is dedicated to the study of the being of God most high:

First, is because to deny visibility with respect to a being logically leads to a

denial of all spatial relation for him.[220] But we want to show how the negation of

all spatial relation with God can be reconciled with the affirmation that he is

visible. Second, because the most high [61] is, according to us, visible in his

being, by the existence of his essence and not by reason of some of his acts or

attributes. Indeed every being of actual essence must necessarily be visible, just

as he must be cognizable. But I do not mean to say by this that he has to be cognizable and visible in act, but rather in potency—that is, by reason of his essence he can be the object of vision without there being in his same essence any obstacle or impossibility to his being seen, so that if some obstacle were to impede the reality of the vision, it would be an obstacle that was extrinsic to his essence, such as when we say that the water in the river is capable of quenching thirst and [A 111] that the wine in the vessel is capable of intoxicating, when that is not exactly so, because drunkenness and satiety are effects contingent upon the act of drinking. Nevertheless, it is correct because it is understood to mean that both liquids are *capable* of producing those effects. This [proposition that God is visible] can be shown in two ways:

[61.8] The first is by showing that it is logically possible. The second is by the actual fact [of the vision of God], which can have no greater demonstration than that of revelation.[221] Once the fact is demonstrated, the possibility is also demonstrated, but let us nevertheless first prove the possibility [of seeing God] through two rational arguments.

[61.11] In the first we say that the Creator most high is a being and an essence

having reality and positive [existence] and differing from all other beings only by

the impossibility of his being temporal, as they are, or of possessing any attribute

that entails this temporality or that contradicts [62] the divine attributes of

knowledge, power, and so forth.[222] As a consequence, everything else that can in

truth be affirmed of [other] existent beings is also true for the reality of God, so

long as it does not argue for temporality or contradict any of the [divine]

attributes. And so it goes with God's "cognoscibility." God can be the object of

knowledge without this causing any change in his essence or implying any

contradiction with respect to his attributes or suggesting temporality in his

existence. Thus there exists between God on the one hand and bodies and

accidents on the other a perfect [A 112] equality with respect to the possibility

that their essences and attributes be objects of knowledge. And vision is a kind of

knowledge that does not imply any kind of alteration in the attributes of the

object that is seen, nor does it suggest temporality; therefore, [the possibility of

vision with respect to God] must be concluded, as with respect to every other

being.[223]

[62.7] But someone might say, "God's being visible requires that he be in a

place, and that requires that he must be accident or substance, which is absurd.

Put in the form of a syllogism, the argument is as follows: If God were visible, he would have to be on one side [or another] of the observer; but this result is absurd; therefore, so is the visibility of God." We say that we concede to you one of the two premises of this syllogism, to whit: "This result is absurd"; we reject, on the other hand, the first premise, which is that that result of necessity derives from the dogma of divine visibility.

[62.12] Why do you affirm that "If God were visible, he would have to be on one side [or another] of the observer?" Do you know the truth of this premise by immediate evidence or by reasoning? There is no way to claim it is by direct evidence, and if it is by reasoning then surely you can show it to us. Now then, the closest the opponents have come to making such a demonstration is to affirm that they have never up till this time seen anything that was not on some specific side [A 113] with respect to the observer. But to that demonstration it may be replied that from what has never been seen no judgment can be made about what is [63] impossible, since if that were allowed it would also be allowed for the anthropomorphist to affirm that God most high is body, because he is active.

It is just that we have never yet seen any actual being save it was a body. But now [the Muʿtazilites] might say that if God is an actual and existent being, he must be either in or out of this world, either contiguous with or separated from it, and so he cannot but have six sides, since no existent is known that is not thus. And so there is no difference[224] between you and those [anthropomorphists]. Thus the essence of their objection [always] reduces to proclaiming that [given] what is seen and known, it must be that nothing else can [ever] be understood except on that same basis. It is like someone who knows bodies and yet denies accident saying that if such a thing existed it would occupy a place of its own in space that would preclude other accidents from being [in that same place] by reason if its being a body. Now then, this is the same as claiming that it is impossible for beings to exist as distinct from other [beings] in certain essential properties that pertain to them while [at the same time] sharing other properties in common. Such an affirmation is without any foundation, to say nothing of the [other] argument against them, which they cannot have failed to notice, that God can see himself and see the world with no need for being on any [particular] side [A 114] with respect to himself or with respect to the world. If that be the case,

then their objection is demolished, and this is what the majority of the

Muʿtazilites now recognize, for there is no escaping it for any who admits that

God knows himself and knows the world. And if someone denies that this is

true, still he cannot deny that at least man can see himself in the mirror, and it is

well-known that this happens without the viewer being in front of himself. And

if the opponents claim that the man does not actually see himself but rather that

he only sees an image that is a copy of his form that is thrown on the mirror in

the same way that the shadow image of a person is thrown on a wall, then one

should respond to them saying that that is obviously impossible.

[64.1] If the observer distances himself two cubits from a mirror hanging on a

wall, he will see his image distanced from the body of the mirror by two cubits;

and if he goes three cubits, so shall [the image]. Now then, that image that is

distanced from the mirror by two cubits, how can it at the same time be

imprinted in the mirror when the thickness of the mirror is no more than the

thickness of a grain of barley? That the image is being held by something behind

the mirror is impossible, since behind the mirror there is nothing more than the

wall, or air, or another person that is hidden from the viewer who cannot see

him. Likewise with the right and left, the above and below and all of the six sides

of the mirror: when the observer sees the image distanced two cubits from the

mirror and that image is sought on any of the [six sides] adjoining the mirror, it

is [always] found [in front of] the mirror. [A 115] Now then, that image that is

seen has nothing that causes it to resemble any of the bodies around the mirror

except the body of the one looking in the mirror; so that person must be the

object seen, without any need for him to be standing in front of himself, nor,

therefore, in a specific place in space.[225]

[64.10] The Muʿtazilites have no way out of this. We know of necessity that if

a person had never seen himself or known what a mirror was, and he were told,

"You can see yourself in a mirror," he would think that was impossible and

would say, "That could not happen except I myself see myself being inside the

mirror, which is impossible; or I see something like my form that is inside the

body of the mirror, which is [also] impossible; or [65] I see a resemblance to my

image in the body of the mirror—that is, in the body [of the mirror] while I am

looking at it, which is [also] impossible. [This is] because the mirror in and of

itself has a form, and bodies that are around it [A 116] have [other] forms, and it

cannot be that the two forms combine in one body. For it is impossible that the

forms of man, iron, and wall should exist in one body.[226] That I should see myself

as myself is absurd. For, if I am not in front of myself, how can I see myself,

since there must be an opposing relation between the viewer and what is seen?"

[65.5] Now, this is a correct analysis according to the Muʿtazilites, and yet it is

well known that it is false. Its falsity comes, in our opinion, when he says, "If I

am not in front of myself, I cannot see myself."[227] Except for this point of the

foregoing analysis, the rest of the arguments are accurate. In this way is shown

the ease with which those [Muʿtazilites] are prone to assent to the truth of facts to

which they are not accustomed and which their senses have not discerned.

[65.8] The second method [for showing that God is visible][228] is the open

vision. It consists in saying that if the opponent refuses to admit the visibility of

God, it is only because he does not understand what is meant by "vision," nor

has he been able to penetrate what it really signifies. He thinks that by "vision"

we mean a state equivalent to the state that occurs with an observer when he

looks at bodies and colors. But it is no such thing. For we know the impossibility

of that with respect to the essence of God most high. So we must analyze the

meaning of the word "vision" in relation to the context to which it is being

applied, to [A 117] formulate it [properly], and then discard from it those

[meanings] that are incompatible with the essence of God most high. If there

should remain of those meanings one that is not incompatible with the essence of

God most high and that can be called "vision" in all truth, then we shall affirm it

[66] with respect to God most high and we shall conclude that he is truly visible.

On the other hand, if it is not possible to use the name "vision" except in a

metaphorical sense, then we shall use that word when revelation enjoins us to,

but understanding it in the sense that reason indicates to us that it should be

understood.[229]

[66.2] An analysis [of the process of vision] shows that it basically consists of

a locus,[230] which is the eye, and an object, which is color, extension, body, and

other visible things. Let us consider, then, the reality of its meaning—of its locus

and of its object—and let us determine which of all those elements might be true

for the word ["vision" with respect to God].

[66.6] Now, as for the locus [of vision], we say that that is not where the true

meaning of the word lies, for if the phenomena that we see with the eye through

sight were [instead] perceived by us with the heart or the forehead,[231] for example, we would also certainly say that we had "seen" the thing and "beheld" it, and we would have spoken accurately, because the eye—locus and organ of vision—has no meaningful value in itself except that the phenomenon of vision takes place in it. As long as the phenomenon [of vision] takes place [whether in the eye or in another subject,] the reality of that condition is fulfilled and that word ["vision"] can rightly be applied to it.

[66.10] Since we say that we know with our heart [A 118] or with our mind when we perceive something through the heart or through the mind; so likewise we can "see" with the heart, or with the forehead, or with the eyes.

[66.12] As for the object[232] [of sight] in its essence,[233] here [also] there is no support for the use of the word ["vision,"] nor any real certainty about it. For, if vision were vision [just] because its object was black, then it would not be vision when its object were white. If [67] [vision were vision only insofar as] its object were color [in general], then whatever had movement as its object would not be vision. If its object was accident, then whatever had body as its object would not be vision. This demonstrates that the particular qualities of the object [of vision]

are not the essence upon which this actual phenomenon rests, or the basis for the use of the word ["vision"]. Rather, there is a basis for it insofar as it has as its object any quality that has actual existence, whatever it be, or any essence, whatever it be. Thus, the basis upon which the word "vision" depends will be the third element—that is, the reality of the meaning without any relation to its subject or its object.

[67.6] Let us consider, then, this reality. What is it? There is no reality to it except a kind of perception that is more complete and lucid than imagination. If we see a friend, for example, and then close our eyes, the image of the friend is there in our mind in an imaginative and representative way. But if we then open our eyes again, we will note well the difference. [A 119] This difference, however, does not consist in that now we see a completely different figure than what we had before in imagination; on the contrary, the image seen with the eyes exactly corresponds to the imagined one without any difference. There are no differences between the two other than that the second is like the perfection of the imaginative state and a clarification of it. The image of the friend is renewed in clarity within us upon opening our eyes and is more complete and perfect [than

before]. But this image that reappears upon [opening] the eyes coincides with the

image that existed in the imagination. Therefore, imagination is a kind of

perception, [but] to a degree beyond which there exists another degree of

perception more perfect in terms of clarity and lucidity and which is like its

completion. This completion [68] of perception with respect to the imagination is

sight and vision.

[68.2] So it is [also] with things we know and do not just imagine—and

[among such] is the being of God most high, his attributes, and anything that has

no form, neither color, nor extension—such as, for example, power, knowledge,

love, sight, and imagination. We know all of these things—we do not imagine

them—and the knowledge that we have of them is a kind of perception. We now

see, then, that if reason has its limits, it may have a completing mode of

perception that is to it what sight is to imagination. If this is so, then we might

call that perception that is lucid and perfect in relation to knowledge "vision,"

just as we use the word [A 120] "vision" in relation to imagination.

[68.7] Now then, it is known that this idea of the existence of a degree of

greater perfection in clarity and lucidity than simple knowledge has nothing

absurd in it with respect to cognizable existents that cannot be imaged, such as

knowledge, power, and so forth, and likewise with respect to the being of God

most high and his attributes. Indeed, it might be said that human nature itself

instinctively seeks to achieve that greater clarity about the essence of God and his

attributes and about the essence of all of those ideal realities.

[68.11] And we affirm that such [clarity] is not impossible, not only because

there is nothing incompatible with it, but because reason demonstrates its

possibility—indeed, insists on it. It is just that such knowledge most perfect and

clear is not granted in this world because the soul, preoccupied in the

governance of the body, its native purity and cleanliness tainted by the

impurities of the world, is hindered as though by a veil from having such

perception. For just as it is not absurd [69] that the eyelid or the veil or darkness

over the eye are causes that ordinarily hinder vision of imaginable objects,

neither is it going too far [to say] that for the soul the accumulation of

preoccupations are like veils that ordinarily hinder the sight of intelligible objects

and that, when the dead return from the graves and what was in the breasts of

men [A 121] is brought forth and hearts are cleansed by drinking the water of

purification and are purged with many kinds of cleansing and expurgation,[234]

then there will be no more burden preventing them from achieving that greater

perception and clarity concerning the essence of God most high, or of the rest of

intelligible things. And that elevation to a superior degree [of intellect] will be

comparable to the way sight [perfects] imagination. And let it be referred to as

"the encounter with God most high," or "the witness of him," or "the vision of

him," "the sight of him," or whatever you like, for there is no need to argue over

terms once the intended meanings are understood.[235] And if all this is possible,

and if [God] were to create within the human eye [the ability to see him], then

the word "vision," would be the most preferable when the obvious meaning of

the language is considered. Now, it is not impossible for him to [thus] create in

the eye, just as it is not impossible for him to create in the heart. And thus, if it is

understood what the orthodox[236] mean when they use the word "vision" [with

respect to God], it will be known that reason does not reject it, but indeed

requires it, and that revelation bears witness to it. No reason remains, then, to

reject this view except for the sake of disputation or to cast doubt on the

appropriateness of the word "vision" or because of the inability of [A 122] the

opponent to perceive the nuanced ideas that we have mentioned. So, in this

compendium we will limit ourselves to this.

[69.14] The second part[237] of [this proof] is established by revelation.

Revelation has demonstrated that the vision of God does occur. Many are the

revealed texts that attest this. [70] Their great number is an indication of the

unanimity with which those first believers of Islam humbly asked of God most

gracious that he would grant them the pleasure of beholding his beautiful face.

We verily know from their declarations of faith that they were seeking as much,

that they understood that it was permissible to seek for it, and that they asked it

of God most high according to the recitation[238] of the foremost messenger of God

(may the blessings and peace of God be upon him). [We know this, further, by]

an [almost] innumerable collection of his very clear sayings and a consensus that

demonstrates [this fact] beyond the limitations of sense perception.[239] One of the

most powerful [witnesses] that demonstrates this [possibility of seeing God] is

Moses' saying (peace be upon him), "Show yourself to me, that I might behold

you."[240] It [seems] impossible that one of the prophets of God most high—a

prophet whose station was such that God (to him be glory) would speak directly

to him—would be ignorant about something with respect to the divine essence

that the Muʿtazilites are not. This "knowledge" [on the part of the Muʿtazilites]

is necessarily [A 123] a vanity on their part, because, according to them, for their

opponents not to know that in his being [God] cannot be seen must be called

heresy and error since it is ignorance of an attribute of God. For, the impossibility

[of the vision of God] proceeds, according to [the Muʿtazilites], from the divine

essence in that he is not in any place. But then, how is it possible that Moses

(peace be upon him) could know that [God] does not occupy place and yet not

know that a vision of a being that does not occupy place is impossible? What is it

that the opponent would prefer to suppose escaped the notice of Moses [peace be

upon him]? [71] Would he prefer to suppose that he sincerely believed that [God]

is a physical body, endowed with color and occupying a place? To do so would

be to accuse the prophets of heresy, since such an accusation against the prophet

(peace be upon him) would itself be blatant heresy. To say that God most high

has a body is the same thing as to worship idols or the sun.

[71.3] On the other hand, perhaps [the opponent] would say that [Moses]

knew that it was absurd that God should occupy space, but that he did not know

that what does not occupy space cannot be seen. This would make the prophet

(peace upon him) as one ignorant, since the opponent considers that this premise

is based on immediate evidences, not on theoretical reflections. Now then, O

seeker of truth, it is up to you to decide. Either you are inclined to call a prophet

ignorant, or you would prefer to call the Muʿtazilites ignorant. Chose for

yourself what you think is most appropriate and be settled!

[71.7] If it is said, "If these [words of Moses] argue in your favor they may

also argue against you, because [A 124] he asks if he might see [God] *in this*

world. Also arguing against you are when the Most High says, "You shall not see

me."[241] Likewise, his words (may he be praised), "No vision can apprehend

him"[242] also argue [against you].

[71.9] We say: [Moses'] asking to see [God] in this world is proof that he did

not know when the vision should take place but that it was a possible act as far

as he was concerned. Prophets (upon them be peace) do not know about future

events except the ones that they are informed of [by God], which are few in

number. How, then, would it be incongruent that the prophet should seek the

revelation of a mystery or relief from distress, hoping for it in a time that was not

appointed for it to be revealed in the knowledge of God most high? As for God's saying, "You shall not see me," this was a denial to the request of Moses in that he asked for [the vision] in the here and now, not the hereafter. If [Moses] had said, "Show yourself unto me that I might behold you in the hereafter," and [God] had said, "You shall not see me," then this would indeed have been an evidence against the visibility [of God]. But even in this case it would have only been with respect to Moses in particular and not in general with respect to all other people. Therefore, not even that would have been proof of the impossibility of the vision. And how much less could it be [A 125] if [that response] were in answer to a request [to see him] in the present moment?

[72.6] As for the other text that says, "No vision can apprehend him," it means that they do not comprehend him or embrace him from all sides, like [ocular] vision comprehends or embraces bodies, and this is true. Or it might well mean generally to know [him] in this world, and this is also true, as it is precisely the same as the meaning of his saying (exalted be he), "You shall not see me,"—that is, in this world. But let us curtail this study of the problem of the visibility [of God], only let the careful reader note how the different theological

sects are divided by this question into parties for one excess and another.

[72.11] The Ḥashwiyya[243] cannot comprehend a being that does not exist in a

place, so they affirm that God exists in a place, which obligates them to predicate

corporeality, extension, and the [other] specificities of temporal beings [of him].

[72.13] The Muʿtazilites, on the other hand, deny [that God is in] a place, but

being incapable of comprehending the vision of a being that has none, they

openly contradict the revealed doctrine on this point, believing that by allowing

[the vision of God], they would have to also allow that God has a place. These

last, then, in order to avoid the danger of falling into anthropomorphism, commit

themselves to the *via negativa*[244] but fall into excess [therein]. On the other hand,

the [A 126] Ḥashwiyya affirm that [God is in] a place in order to avoid the

danger of denying the divine attributes[245] and so fall into anthropomorphism.

Only unto the *ahl al-sunna*, has God most high granted [grace] in order to

establish the true doctrine and to discern the just balance [in belief] in order to do

so. They know that [being in] a place should be denied of God because it is a

consequence and complement of corporeality. [On the other hand, they maintain]

that the vision of God is something real because it is a kind of knowledge,

coming afterwards [in the next world], being the perfection [of knowledge].

Now, denying corporeality of God impels them to deny place [with respect to

God, which is one of the inseparable characteristics of [corporeality]. But to

affirm the cognoscibility [of God] impels them to affirm his visibility, which is a

consequence and the perfection of [cognoscibility], partaking of its basic nature

in that it does not imply any change in the essence of the thing seen, but rather

relates to it only in that the result is like knowledge. There can be no doubt to

someone with intelligence that this is moderation in belief.[246]

The Tenth Proposition

[73.9] We propose that God most high is one and that his being one pertains

positively to his essence and is excluded from any other. It is not to be

considered as an attribute that is superadded to the essence [of God], so mention

of it should occur in this [first] part [of the treatise].

[73.10] We say that [the word] "one" can be taken and understood in the

sense of that which does not admit of division—that is to say, it has no quantity,

no perimeter,[247] and no extension. Thus, the Creator most high is one, meaning

that he is not quantifiable, meaning that quantification denies something's

wholeness by dividing it. But [God] is not divisible, since divisibility pertains to

things that are quantifiable.[248] Quantification results in division into parts,

becoming smaller. [74] But that which is not quantifiable cannot be described as

divisible. Furthermore, ["one"] can be understood as that which has no equal in

its rank, such as when we say that the sun is one [A 128]. In this sense also the

Creator most high is one, since he has no peer. And that he has no complement[249]

is also clear, since what is understood by complement is that which follows

another in the same substrate without joining to it; and a being that has no

substrate also has no complement. The Creator most high has no substrate;

therefore, he has no complement.

[74.5] As for our saying that [God] has no peer, we mean that he is the creator

of that which is other than he, none other. The demonstration for this is that if an

associate [to God] is posited, [the associate] would either be like him in all

aspects, superior to him, or inferior to him. But all of this is impossible, and so is

the hypothesis that leads to the impossibility. The impossibility that another

should be like him in every respect consists in that each of the two beings is

distinct from the other. For if there were no distinction between the two beings

then they could not be conceived of as being two. For we do not think of two

black colors unless they are in two [different] substrates, or in one substrate at

two different times. Thus, one of the two must be distinguished, differentiated,

and diversified from the other—whether by substrate or whether by time. The

two things may also be distinguished from each other by differences in definition

and essence,[250] such as differences in movement and color. For, though

combining in one substrate at one time, they are nevertheless two, since one of

them is distinguished from the other in its essence. But if two things coincide in

their essence and definition, such as black, then the distinction [75] between [A

129] them would have to be in the substrate or in the time [of their occurrence].

For if we were to suppose two instances of black in a single substance and

circumstance, it would be absurd, since their duality would not be

distinguishable. If it were possible to say that they were two and yet not

different, then it would also be possible to point to one man and say that he was

two or even ten men, only that they were all alike and equal in quality, place, in

all of their accidents and accessory properties, without any distinction, which is

necessarily absurd. Now then, if the supposed peer of God most high were the

same as him in essence and in attributes, his existence would become absurd,

because he would be indistinguishable in space (since [God is] devoid of place)

and time (since [God] is timeless and eternal). Thus, there would be no

distinction between either of them. And with every distinction erased, then

number necessarily is erased and singularity follows per force.[251]

[75.7] It is also absurd to say that [God's supposed peer] is distinguished from

him in that he is superior or of a more elevated status, since that being who is

higher [than God] would then be God, since "God" indicates the most noble and

sublime of all beings. Therefore, the other [of the two] would necessarily be

imperfect and, therefore, not God. For, if we negate number with respect to God

it is because God is the being [A 130] who is affirmed in absolute [terms] to be

the most noble and excellent of all beings that are.

[75.10} Furthermore, if [God's supposed peer] were inferior to him, [the

hypothesis] would also be absurd because he would be imperfect, and as we

understand God to be the most noble of all beings that exist, there cannot be save

one being that is most noble, and that is God. It cannot be conceived that there

are two which are equals in the attributes of this highest excellence, since in that

case the distinctions between the two would be eliminated, thus, the number

would be done away, as we previously said.

[76.2] If it is said, "Why do you reject someone who does not dispute the

existence of a being to which the name God applies (understanding by "God" the

most excellent of existent beings) but who nevertheless says that the world, taken

as a whole, is not the creation of just one creator, but rather the work of two

creators of which one might be, for example, the creator of the sky, and the other

the creator of the earth; or perhaps, one the creator of inanimate beings and the

other the creator of the animals and plants? Where is the impossibility in this?

For if there is nothing that proves the impossibility of this hypothesis, then what

does it help you to say that the name of God does not apply to those beings? For

such an opponent understands "god" to mean "creator." Or he says that one of

those two is the creator of good and the other of evil, or one the creator of

substances and the other of accidents. It is, therefore, indispensable that you

demonstrate the impossibility of this hypothesis.

[76.10] We say: The proof of its impossibility is this: All of these divisions of

creatures between two [A 131} creators posited [by the opponent] can be reduced

to two options. Either the creation of the totality of substances and accidents is

divided between the two of them, so that one of them creates some bodies and

accidents without the other, or all bodies are said to be [the creation] of one and

all accidents [the creation] of the other.

[76.13] But it would be an error to say that some bodies were created by [just]

one of them, such as the sky, for example, without the earth. [77] For, we ask: Is

the creator of the sky capable of creating the earth or not? If he is as capable of

doing the one thing as he is the other, then there would be no difference between

the one agent with power and the other, and no difference between one act of

power and another. Both agents would be capable of the same act, and there

could be no relationship between them in which one was preeminent over the

other. And so the same absurdity that we discussed earlier comes about by

positing the simultaneous existence of two beings that are like one another

without any difference. This is absurd.

[77.4] Now, if [the creator of the heaven] is not capable [of creating the earth],

then the hypothesis is also absurd since corporeal substances are in themselves

all the same in terms of the mode of existing that is proper to them for their

particular relations. So someone who is capable of creating such things must also be able to create their like, since his power is eternal in the sense that he can have various created things as his object. Now then, the power of both of these two [creators] pertains to a certain number of bodies and substances, so it is not limited to one object. Therefore, if the relation [A 132] between [that power] and one object of power is be applied to other temporal objects, then there is no reason to limit its reach to one set of possible objects rather than another; rather, it must be concluded that the number of its possible objects has no limit or is infinite—that is to say, that all substances may come about through his power.[252]

[77.10] The second part [of the objection], saying that one of the two [creators] has power to create substances and the other to create accidents and that the power of the one is necessarily different from that of the other is also absurd. For, accident cannot exist without substance, nor can substance exist without accident.[253] The actualization of each one of them is dependent on the other. If the creator of accidents desires to create one, how will he be able to create it? Perhaps the creator of substance does not want to help the creator of accident, and when he wants to create the accident, the other might refuse to create the substance

and the other would be incapacitated [78] and foiled—that is to say, powerless. Likewise, if the creator of substance desired to create it, the creator of the accident could oppose him and keep him from doing so resulting in a mutual hindrance.[254]

[78.3] If it is said, "Perhaps one of them [A 133] wanted to create substance, and the other assisted him by creating accident, or vice versa." We would say: Is such help so necessary and mandatory that human reason cannot conceive its nonexistence or not? Because if you claim it to be necessary, that is how you want to resolve the problem. But it also denies the power [of both creators], because the creation of substance that is brought about by one would require the other to create the accident, and visa versa. So [neither] would have power to refrain, and therefore, there is no real power under such conditions. In summary, if the help can be withheld, then it is contingent, and the act will be unlikely, which annuls the meaning of power. And if the help is necessary,[255] then the agent that cannot do without it would be a compelled agent devoid, therefore, of power.

[78.10] It might be said, "Let there be, then, one creator of good and another

creator of evil."

[78.11] We say: This is foolishness because evil is not evil essentially. Rather,

in terms of essence evil is equivalent to good and is like it.[256] The power to bring

something about is [also] the power to bring something that is like it about. The

cremation of a Muslim's body is an evil; the cremation of the body of an

unbeliever is a good and an avoidance of an evil. So, according to this, if a person

pronounces the profession of faith,[257] [79] then cremation in his case [A 134]

becomes an evil. But it is the same power to burn flesh in fire that exists whether

the subject has not uttered or has uttered the profession of faith. The sound of

[the voice uttering] the formula does not change the essence of the flesh, the fire,

or cremation and does not transform genera. Thus, cremations being all alike, the

power to cause all of them must also be the same.

[79.4] [Furthermore, if true, the opponent's proposal] would lead to the same

mutual hindrance and reciprocal impediment [between the two creators that we

spoke of before]. Thus, in summary, however the matter is cast it will always

backfire and engender [its own] destruction, which is what God most high

means when he says, "If there were in both [the heavens and earth] other gods

besides God, [surely both] would be destroyed."[258] Nothing exceeds the Qurʾān in clarity.

[79.6] And with this tenth proposition we close this first part; for of the subjects that belong to it none remain to be discussed except the impossibility that [God] is subject to temporal things. But to this problem we will allude in the course of the treatise on the divine attributes as we refute those who affirm the temporality of knowledge, will, and other [attributes of God].

Notes

[141] *Al-ʿalam:* This could also be translated as "cosmos." The whole created order is intended.

[142] *Aṣl:* I usually translate this term as premise, but in this context "basis" or "principiality" is more apt.

[143] *Jawharan fardan:* This could also be rendered as "atom," however, unless the context demands otherwise, my preference is to translate *jawhar* as "substance." See my discussion of this in the introductory essay.

[144] Here I adopt the singular rather than the plural form of this term, following the alternate reading given in the critical apparatus of the Arabic editon.

[145] Ghazālī is having a bit of fun here at his opponent's expense by pointing out that his very protests against the existence of accidents—and all of the other actions he mentions—are themselves accidents by definition.

[146] *Murajjih:* An alternative gloss of this term would be "that which gives preponderance."

[147] In *Creation and the Cosmic System,* 28–29, Richard Frank discusses this passage. He is working to show how Ghazālī varied in the language and concepts he used when discussing causality in different contexts. He suggests that Ghazālī's use of *murajjih* (which we translate here as "deciding factor") is a borrowing from Avicenna (see in particular his note 44, loc. cit.). But this is rather beside the point. No one disputes that Ghazālī borrowed terminology from the *falasifah,* but this is not to say he adopted their cosmology or theories of causation. In other writings, Ghazālī uses this term to refer to God, a reading that is not at all inconsistent with his less explicit usage here.

[148] Referring to the premise that the interlocutor first chose to have

investigated, to wit: "every temporal thing has a cause," at 25.6, above.

[149] Ghazālī has not yet addressed this hypothetical objection, let alone rejected it. The question posed here simply allows him to examine in greater detail the second of the two premises mentioned earlier—the one that was initially passed over for discussion.

[150] By this usage Ghazālī presumably means single atoms—that is, single substances—the irreducible constituents of bodies.

[151] This is not exactly a precise restatement of the premise as just presented. In particular the identification of "spatial being" with "body" is notable. This would be based, presumably, on the acceptance by the opponent of the definition of body offered earlier (at 24.13) as that which occupies space and is differentiated (having parts).

[152] This argument is an example of a proclivity Ghazālī will demonstrate throughout this work—that is, to cut to the chase. He is here arguing from a pragmatic perspective. He does not want to get bogged down trying to prove something that he seems to feel nearly any reasonable person would concede as true on its face anyway. He wants to get to the more interesting, substantive questions.

Al-Ghazālī's pragmatic brevity in the *Iqtiṣāḍ*, which contains his first account of physical theory from a kalam point of view, sometimes means that we are left with not enough information to determine what he actually believe on certain points. For an example, Aloor Dhanani notes that "Al-Ghazālī's pragmatic view of *kalām* is far from the convictions of al-Juwaynī and other *mutakallimūn* who hold that the discussions of *kalām* are about the way things really are" rather than about "guiding some errant souls to right practice and belief." Thus, he says, "the text [of *Iqtiṣāḍ*] does not allow us to draw conclusions about Ghazālī's endorsement of theories of discrete space, time, and motion, nor about his

acceptance of void" ("Al-Ghazālī's Attitude," 18–21).

[153] Al-Ghazālī uses *al-anāṣir al-ārbaʿah* here rather than the *al-usṭaquss* (of Greek or Syriac derivation?), the preferred term among the *falāsifah*. Thus, even when discussing their doctrines he avoids their technical terms. See the notes to 19.7 above, and cf. Walzer, *On the Perfect State*, 136–137, and 564, s.v. "element."

[154] Thus, though they are temporal, they nevertheless have the appearance of something everlasting, like the heavenly spheres alluded to just before.

[155] The notion of four elements from which all things are composed has its roots in the earliest traces of Greek philosophy. Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes all proffered theories of underlying element or elements from which all the varieties of nature arise. And the cosmology of Plato and the physics of Aristotle both offer accounts for earth, water, fire, and air as basic forms of matter.

[156] *Bi'l-ḍarūra:* Throughout his oeuvre, Ghazalī uses this term both in the usual kalam way—when logical necessity that is beyond any further need for proof is meant—and more idiosyncratically "when he talks of empirical or emotional phenomena, and when he puts forward theories based on assumptions or feelings only" (Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies*, 60–61).

[157] *Kāna hādithan:* The term I usually translate as "temporal" here needs to be given its specific connotation of originating in time.

[158] In other words, movement or rest occur *to* substances without altering their basic essence or being, so movement and rest must be something in addition to substance. Asín translates this passage rather differently and confusedly.

[159] Presumably, in other works of kalam.

[160] *ʿIkhtiṣāṣ:* The idea is of something that particularizes substance,

differentiating it from other substance. Here, the substance's location distinguishes it from other substance, adding specificity to it.

[161] This is a difficult passage and I have tried to retain some of its vagueness in the translation. Nevertheless, I have added interpolations that give a reading that I believe to be borne out by the rest of Ghazālī's discussion.

[162] The result is an infinite regress of accidents subsisting in accidents, a consequence that was generally considered impossible by the *mutakalimūn*.

[163] As I follow this argument, Ghazālī means that the specification of accident by substrate is essential while the specification of substance by (a given) place is something superadded to its essence (and therefore, not essential). This analysis of his argument informs some of the interpolations I make in the passages that follow, particularly in supplying referents in place of pronouns that would otherwise be ambiguous.

[164] Presumably *thabit* here should be regarded in its fully nuanced sense of something that is fixed not only with respect to position, but also—and more importantly—with respect to its ontological status as something real rather than *mawhūm*, imaginary.

[165] *Al-ḥayyiz al-muᶜayin:* This is an important point that helps us to understand Ghazālī's meaning. In speaking of substance being specified by place *nonessentially*, Ghazālī means that the essence of substance does not depend on its being in any one particular place or another. Its specificity there is something superadded to the essence. The argument might go rather differently if Ghazālī were speaking of place in general—i.e., if he were addressing the question as to whether substance is essentially spatial (always existing in *some* place or not at all). On that count Ghazālī has a very different point to make, for which, see his definition of substance earlier in this section.

[166] This description of motion as being a transfer of substance from one place to the next is pertinent to the occasionalism to which Ghazālī subscribed as an Ashʿarite. Ghazālī discusses occasionalist motion in greater detail below (37.5 ff.).

[167] More literally, "its essence;" the intent is that the height is annihilated in its essence.

[168] Recall that Ghazālī has indicated that by "transfer" he means "the transit of substance from place to place" (29.6).

[169] These interpolations represent my understanding of what is admittedly a very terse passage. My thanks to Michael E. Marmura for his efforts to help me decode it, though I remain responsible for this reading.

[170] Again, more literally, "the essence."

[171] I disagree with Frank's reading of this passage, which he cites to show that Ghazālī's intention here "might well have been to eliminate the occupation of space from the conception and definition of the *jawhar* as such" (Frank, *Al-Ghazālī and the Ashʿarite School*, 49). On Frank's reading, it would seem, Ghazālī intends to say (contrary to Ghazālī's own claim early in this same section) that substance is not spatial. This seems to do violence to the integrity of Ghazālī's discussion solely for the purpose of establishing a claim that remains as yet unpersuasive—that Ghazālī was, at least in part, a crypto-Aristotelian.

[172] This is admittedly a rather curious ploy. Ghazālī, rather than using a more precise example (involving something that squarely fits the definition of accident), has opted to use an approximation. Several questions pertaining to his choice might be raised. For instance, how might the example of color rather than height (as accident) have affected (weakened) his claim that accidents inhere essentially in their substrates and that as one is annihilated, so must the other be?

[173] I read this as meaning that the explanations of other theologians have been unsatisfactory and that Ghazālī is therefore pausing to answer a desideratum, not that his own admittedly labored explanation has been found wanting.

[174] This premise is first stated in [16.11].

[175] Ghazālī's use of so many synonyms here is somewhat unusual, especially since they are cognates of one another and, as he himself admits, make no difference in the argument of his point. Perhaps he is using them precisely to make the point that it is the concepts that matter, not the terms used to express them.

[176] I count four options, based on Ghazālī's own syntax. (He sets each phrase off with *wa ʿammā*). The options are: even, odd, neither, or both. Perhaps key to the way Ghazālī has numbered them is in the word *aqsām*, "divisions," which you could read as meaning "odd or even" as one, "neither" as two, and "both" as three.

[177] The manuscript followed by Asín (given in the critical apparatus of the Ankara edition) read "nine" as the example here.

[178] Asín seems not to have translated this sentence fully. Rendered into English, his translation at this point reads: Now as for [the number of these revolutions] being divisible into two equal parts or not, it is absurd and false that it is even [A 71] because even misses being odd for the lack of just one unit.

[179] The examples that follow of counting the revolutions of the spheres are restatements of the same argument Ghazālī makes in *Tahāfut*. See Marmura, *Incoherence*, 18. See also my comments on the argument against the infinite motion of the spheres in the introduction, the section on Ghazālī's fourth introduction, where this issue first arises.

[180] In other words, the items in this list are known to God, but not within his

power, resulting in one infinite set (things known by God) that logically must be greater than the other infinite set (things within God's power), an apparent example of the logical misstep Ghazālī has just charged the *falāsifah* with committing. Ghazālī's response (34.5 ff.) is an impressive display of this critical style.

[181] A note by the Arabic editors here refers to *Iḥyāʾ,* 5.1 (p. 106).

[182] See, again, the same passage as the previous note.

[183] Or "originate due to"? *(yuṣadara ʿan al-qadra)*, 36.4

[184] This is the second of the possible sources of annihilation that Ghazālī lists for investigation at 36.3

[185] Ghazālī offers no further explanation for this assertion. Presumably it would be that two eternals would have infinite extension in both time and space and so would have been in contact with one another from eternity. The possibility that two exact opposites might make contact at a point in time and mutually annihilate one another is not entertained at all here.

[186] This is the third of the possible sources of annihilation listed for investigation at 36.3.

[187] God was the being understood in all the previous discussion of "the eternal [being]."

[188] Ghazālī obviously intends "single substances"—that is, atoms—here.

[189] Ghazālī uses both *jism* and *jawhar* in this discussion. The first is translated as "body" (or "corporeal" in its adjectival form), the second as substance; but later in the treatise Ghazālī shifts to using just *jawhar*, and seems to intend it to indicate basic corporeality. Accordingly, hereafter I translate the term as

"corporeal substance." See 40.2 and passim.

[190] In this and the following passages, "essence" *(dhāt)* might best be understood as referring to "being." I here translate *jawhar* as "atom" rather than "substance," since it is juxtaposed with body (which is defined as compound, rather than single substance).

[191] More literally: "is not by way of attribute."

[192] A note by the Arabic editors is given here to *Iḥyaʾ* 5.1 (p. 107).

[193] Here and in previous utterances we have an indication of the place lexicology had in Islamic society, since it was linked to the interpretation of the divine word revealed in Arabic.

[194] This phrase translates *bi-jahah*, which is basically the same phrase that is rendered as "on a side" at previous points in the discussion. The change is to accommodate Ghazālī's own effort to discuss possible variations of meaning for the same term.

[195] Here the root word is *wajh*, cognate with *jiha* and also meaning face, facet, side, or aspect.

[196] The language here becomes obscure. Asín has glosses that deal with quantity and other matters that seem to be the result of confusion on his own part. As I read the passage, the interlocutor is advancing a syllogism with an unstated conclusion. The completed argument would be: Things on a side require a factor that determines their position; accidents make determinations; *therefore, spatial position is (or at least could be) a kind of accident*. The implication here is that that sort of accident would entail an essential spatial position that is ontologically distinct from the substrate of matter. Otherwise it could not come to be applied *to* material substances. Thus, for example, there would be accidents of being up or being down, just as there are for being green and being cold. The

argument suggests that if directional accidents can exist separate from material substrates, why could it not be the case that God is *essentially* "up," without any basis of spatial relation? He could posses the characteristic essentially (not as an accident in himself). It is to this implied argument that Ghazālī next responds.

[197] *Tabaʿiyyatihi,* given here as "inherence," also implies subordination to and dependence on.

[198] Qurʾān 51.22, Pickthall's version.

[199] These last two sentences were not translated by Asín.

[200] Ghazālī seems to be saying that if something *can* be spatial, then it *must* be spatial and does require dimension.

[201] *Jamād* means "inanimate" but also "inorganic" or "mineral." It is the latter meaning that Asín adopts.

[202] Here is a strong claim of having made irrefutable proofs with respect to the existence and nature of God.

[203] Here Ghazālī uses *al-wahm* instead of *al-khayāl* for "imagination," interchanging terms presumably to reinforce the point he made earlier that it is the concept that matters, not the language in which it is couched.

[204] This is an ambiguous phrase. It is not clear whether Ghazālī was referring to the image of a being of sound, or to the imagination's ability to have an image generally, or something else.

[205] Qurʾān 20:4, modified from Pickthall's version.

[206] Qurʾān 42:11. My translation.

[207] See further comments on this passage in the translator's introduction.

[208] This term is intended in the sense of things understood or apprehended only by the mind.

[209] Asín's note at this point reads: Many chapters begin with various Arabic letters (*alif, lam, mim; alif, lam, sad; alif, lam, ra*, etc.) whose meaning is not known.

[210] In citing "common expressions," Ghazālī is in the Aristotelian tradition of using *logemena*, "things people say," as evidence from which to derive his arguments.

[211] Asín notes: This is not a Qurʾānic text but rather one of those from the traditions of the mystical Muslims which was supposedly communicated directly by God to Muḥammad, many of which have an origin in the Christian gospel. Thus, this is inspired by the epistle of the apostle James (4:8): "Appropinquate Deo et appropinquabit vobis." Asín was often faulted by his critics for positing a Christian source for most of what was substantive in Islam. This note may be read as an example of that ideology at work. See Monroe, "Islam and the Arabs in Spanish Scholarship," 191–92.

[212] Asín notes that this text also is not found in the Qurʾān.

[213] The editors of the Arabic have a note here referring to *Iḥyaʾ* 1:108.

[214] Asín notes: "The throne of God is identified with the outermost celestial sphere according to Islamic theology." For a controversial reading of Ghazālī's cosmology, see Richard Frank, *Creation and the Cosmic System,* and *Ghazālī and the Ashʿarite School.* Frank's contention is that Ghazālī went beyond the cosmological ideas accepted from Neoplatonism by the Ashʿarites and tacitly revealed his acceptance of a version of nearly the entire cosmology á la Avicenna.

[215] Qurʾān 41:11.

[216] *Dhikr*: This is an important term in Sufi practice with which Ghazālī was

already well acquainted at the time he wrote this treatise and which he would eventually come to advocate with great persuasiveness. Its basic meaning is "to remember"—that is, to remember God worshipfully.

[217] As Asín mentions in a note at this point, Ghazālī's doctrine on the metaphorical interpretation of the revealed anthropomorphic texts can be seen more fully developed in his treatise *Iljām al-ʿawāmm,* a summary of which Asín gives in an appendix.

[218] This has reference to the geocentric cosmology that Ghazālī inherited from Aristotle and Plotinus, the broad outlines of which had long since been generally accepted. In that model, the cosmos was a nested series of concentric heavenly spheres revolving around a common center—the earth—which, though at the center of the cosmos, was also its basest member. The revolutions of the heavenly spheres were thought to condition events and outcomes in the sublunary world. The thrust of the question posed at this point, then, allows Ghazālī to clarify that though it was spatially at the center of the cosmos, in terms of ontological hierarchy, the sublunary world came very last.

[219] This saying employs a play on the Arabic words *tharān* and *al-thurayyā,* meaning the ground and the Pleiades, respectively. Thus, two ontological extremes—one base, the other heavenly—are indicated by close cognate terms. There is a sense, then, of bringing the two ends of a chain of being together or of bridging the distance between them and emphasizing the totality and wholeness of creation.

[220] In other words, the claim that God is visible has implications for the argument that God has no spatial relation—an ontological issue that is properly discussed in this first part of Ghazālī's treatise.

[221] The demonstration of logical possibility follows immediately. The discussion of evidence from revelation begins at 65.8.

[222] Here Ghazālī has in mind the five other attributes that were traditionally ascribed to God by the Muslim theologians (life, will, sight, hearing, and speech).

[223] At this point Asín sees a parallel between Ghazālī's argument and that of Thomas Aquinas. See *Summa theol:* p. 1a, q. 12, a. I: "Respondeo dicendum quod cum unumquodque sit cognoscibile, secundum quod est in actu, Deums, qui est actus purus…., quantum in se est, maxime cognoscibilis est."

[224] Reading *faṣl* instead of *faḍl* as given (without variants) in the text. If *faḍl* is correct, then the phrase might be rendered as, "And so there is no preferring you over those [anthropomorphists]." But the construction really seems to call for *faṣl*.

[225] At this point Asín notes:

It is not certain that this last observation is precisely attested in the Arabic text, which offers a great deal of obscurity, perhaps the result of changes made by copyists. More than on the letter of the text, then, we have relied on the context of the passage, which itself is none too clear in its organization. The main idea is nevertheless evident: To demonstrate that it is not an indispensable condition for the phenomenon of vision—even corporeal vision—that the object seen should be in front of the viewer, nor that it should be, therefore, on a specific side with respect to the viewer, since a person that looks at himself in a mirror will see himself without being in front of himself. Extrapolating this to the larger argument, then: It is possible for a person to see God without his being present in front of him or on one particular side of the viewer either.

[226] The iron here refers, of course, to the polished material from which mirrors were made prior to the modern period.

[227] Ghazālī phrases the opponent's question slightly differently than at 65.4,

but the meaning is the same.

228 The first method, just concluded, was to show the logical possibility of seeing God (see 61.8 for the beginning of the discussion). The second, which now follows, is to show from the evidence of revelation that God has in fact been "seen" in the attenuated sense Ghazālī elaborates below.

229 This is an important summary of Ghazālī's exegetical methodology. For further discussion of it see the translator's introduction.

230 *Maḥall* (elsewhere translated as *substrate*).

231 Presumably Ghazālī is alluding to the intellect here metonymically.

232 As noted at 66.2, the object of vision is typically thought to be something with color, extension, body, and other visible things and it is this common understanding that Ghazālī is now addressing.

233 Translating *bi-ʿainihi*, an interesting word choice by Ghazālī given that it derives from the word for eye.

234 Asín comments here that "Al-Ghazālī is alluding to the eschatological legend of the entrance of souls into Paradise, which is preceded by a double ablution: external and internal."

235 Here is a cogent statement of Ghazālī's belief in the supremacy and even independence of thought over language, as well as a description of the encounter with God that resonates with the Sufi teachings of *dhawq* and *kashf*.

236 The term here is *ahl al-haq,* or more literally translated, "the people of truth." By it Ghazālī would presumably have intended the Sunny branch of Islam in general and the Ashʿarite school of theological thought in particular.

237 The first part, though it was not explicitly enumerated, was to show the

possible range of meaning associated with "vision" and so on. Now the task is to show from revelation that, in at least one proper sense, God has been seen.

[238] The term here, of course, is *qurʾān.*

[239] Thus, the Qurʾan, the Hadith, and consensus *(ijmaʿa)* are all invoked as revelatory or canonical witnesses to the possibility and desirability of the vision of God.

[240] Qurʿan 7:143.

[241] Qurʿan 7:143.

[242] Qurʿan 6:103.

[243] See 2.4. Asín glosses this term as *los verbalistas.*

[244] The Arabic term is *tanzih.* Asín translates it as "via de la *eliminacion."* He notes that of the two scholastic approaches to speaking of the divine essence and attributes, Thomas Aquinas called the first *via remotionis* because it consists in distinguishing God from the other beings *por negativas differentias*, for example, "Deus non est accidens, corpus," etc.

[245] The word *taʿṭīl* was an established theological term for "denying God all attributes." Again this might be connected with the *via negativa.*

[246] *Al-iqtiṣād fī al-iʾtiqād*, the phrase that Ghazālī used for the title of his book.

[247] The term is *hudd.* There could be other ways to render this, including "no limit" or "no bound." Asín glossed it as "no parts," but this does not seem faithful enough to the original term. Abū Zayd translated this sentence and rendered *hudd* as "definition," which is correct in a literal sense, but seems too strong a claim here, unless one is prepared to argue that Ghazālī was referring here to the unknowability of God. (For Abū Zayd's translation, see his *Divine*

Predicates, x.)

[248] Unless I have misread it, this statement seems circular: God is not quantifiable because he cannot be divided; and he cannot be divided because he is not quantifiable.

[249] Translating *ḍidd,* meaning an opposite or contrast.

[250] The Arabic word here and in the discussion that follows is *haqīqa* rather than *dhāt.*

[251] Asín notes that "this same demonstration is used by St. Thomas in his Summa, c.f. 1.1, c. 42, 'Quod Deus est unus,' summarized thus: Praeterea ostensum est (c. 28) Deum esse omniono perfectum, cui nulla perfection desit; si ligitur sunt plures dii, oportet esse plura hujusmodi perfecta. Hoc autem est impossibile; nam si nulli eorum deest aliqua perfectio, nec aliqua imperfection ei admiscaeatur, quod requiritur ad hoc quod aliquid sit simpliciter perfectum, *non erit in quo ab invicem distinguantur*. Impossibile est igitur plures deos ponere."

[252] There may be a logical problem here. Just because a being has absolute power does not mean that he exercises it in an absolute way. If it is possible for a being, though all-powerful to nevertheless exercise power in a limited way (and it must be, if the agent is truly free), then can there be no reason why that limitless power is not used in its full possible extent?

[253] This might be a problematical statement. If substance cannot exist without accident, then why speak of them as essentially separate? The answer, presumably, is to distinguish between actual and possible existence. In this way, all forms and all accidents might exist separately, but only in potential. To become actual, they require each other. Ghazālī does not explicitly address this nuance in the passage at hand, but it is within the context of their "actualization" that he refers to their interdependence.

[254] Asín notes that this argument for the singularity of God and in opposition to dualism or polytheism was traditional in the dogmatic theology of Islam and was technically called *the method of mutual hindrance.* Asín also notes that Aquinas basically relies on the same principle when he says in *Summa* c.g. 1.1.c. 42, "Melius est per unum fieri quam per multa." It is not clear to me why, according to Ghazālī, substance could not be created or could not exist without accident, as he here asserts without any supporting logic.

[255] That is, obligatory.

[256] Presumably Ghazālī means by this that evil and good alike are moral qualities that depend upon the same absolute standard for their definition.

[257] The *shahadah.*

[258] Qurʾān 21:22.

GLOSSARY

This glossary follows the order of the Arabic alphabet. Root letters are given first, derivates after a slash. Multiple glosses for the same derived term are separated by colons. Notes on grammar or morphology are given within brackets next to the terms. Notes contain further discussion and references to other authorities. The numbers indicate page and line numbers of an occurrence in the Arabic text.

ʾBD / *abadan* : to eternity, 27.9. See also *azal* and *qadīmah*

ʾZL / *azal* : from eternity, 27.9. See also *abadan* and *qadīmah*

ʾṢL / *aṣl* (dual=*aṣlayn*) literally, "root," but usually translated here as "premise."

ʾNS / *anisa bi-* : is attuned to, 49.12

ʾWL / *awwali* : axiomatic, 26.7

BDD / *lā budd* : invariably, 29.8

BDL / *tabaddul* : change, 27.4

BḤTh / *baḥath* : investigation, 2.1 / *baḥatha* : argues, 38.8

BRHN / burhān : demonstration

BṬL / bāṭl : untrue, 32.14 : annihilate(d), 30.5

TBʿ / tābaʿan : (a) given (fact), 30.11 / *tabaʿīya* : inherence, 43.12

TQL / intaqāl : transfer, 30.2

ThBT / thabata : *(āthbāta)* to prove, 31.12 : to establish, 29.6 / *thabt* : fixed, 30.7 : correct, 32.5 : positive, 36.4 / *thubūt (thawābit)* : certainty, 24.13

JMD / jamād : inanimate body, 48.10; also means mineral or inorganic body.

JWZ / jūz : to be conceivable, 25.13 / *jāʾiz* : possible, 43.1 / *jawāz* : contingency, 42.9 / *ijāza* : compendium, 31.11

JWHR / jawhar : substance,[259] 24.10; corporeal substance, 40.2 and ff.

ḤDTh / ḥādith : temporal thing or event, 20.7 : existence (or existing) in time *and* temporal thing, 24.6 : having a beginning, 35.4

ḤRK / ḥaraka : motion

ḤSY / ḥasiyyāt (from *ḥass*) : sensations, 20.6

ḤQ / taḥqīq : verify / verification, 25.6; confirm, 26.5 / *haqiqa* : truth

ḤLL / maḥall : substrate, 29.8, 74,3; locus, 66.3 ff.

ḤWZ / hayyiz : place, 29.6; space, 41.4 / *mutaḥayyiz* : that which occupies space, 24.13 (*Taḥafut*, Arabic 5.9); spatial being, 26.11

ḤWṬ / taḥīṭ : to fully comprehend, 72.6

ḤWL / ḥāla : to change, 36.4 / *muḥāl* : impossible, 27.6 (see Hans Wehr, 255).

KhṢ /khaṣa : specify / *ikhtiṣāṣ* : specification,[260] 29.7, 10; 41.3; vt. *ikhtaṣa* ; single out, 42.11; occupy (a place in space), 48.2

KhṢM / khaṣm : opponent, 27.5 (and much earlier)

KhLF / khilāf : contrasting, 30.16

KhLW / khulūw ʿan : is devoid of, 26.9

KhYL / mutakhīl, conceivable, 49.9 / *al-khayāl,* (intellectual) conception, 49.10

DRK / daraka : perceive, 25.5 / *madārik/mudārik* : sources [of cognition][261], 20.3 : that which is perceived, 20.6; perceptible (adj.) 25.3

DʾM / dāʾima : continous, 27.8

DʿW / adaʿī [form 4, which Wehr does not list; but see form 6, "call each other forth"] : summon, 26.12

DL / dalīl (pl. *adillah*) : proof

DhHB / madhhab : school, but can also mean "doctrine" and some cases in the *Iqtisad* might warrant a revision to this effect.[262]

DhW / dhāt : essence

RTB / martaba, rutba : rank /See Walzer, *Perfect State,* 359.

RJḤ / murajjiḥ : deciding factor, 25.15

ZḤL / zuḥal : The planet Saturn, 33.8

ZWL / zāla : to end, 35.11

SB / sabab : [inferior] cause[263]; see also *ʿilla*

SR / sirr : secret 30.2

SLF / salaf[264] : forefathers[265], 52.4

SMʿ / samʿa (samʿiyyāt) : things that are heard (discussed in the translator's introduction), 22.6

ShBH / tashbih : anthropomorphism, 52.1 / *shabha* : to be anthropomorphist, 73.1

ShRḤ / sharḥ : (detailed) explanation, 24.6, 26.5

ShRṬ / sharaṭ : precondition 36.3

ShFʿ / shifʿa : even, 32.9

ShHD / mushāhidah : the witness

ShWF / tashūf : inquiry, 19.3

ShYʿ / shāʾiʿ : well-known, common

ṢDR / ṣadara : to proceed (from), 36.4

ṢF / ṣaffah[266] : attribute, 40.6

ṢNʿ / ṣānʿa : Maker (i.e., God), 34.15

ṢLḤ / iṣṭilāḥāt[267] : technical terms, 19.6

ṢNF / taṣānīf : (literary) works, 27.1

ḌD / ḍad : an opposite, 36.3 : complement, 74.3 / *maḍādah* : contrariety, 36.13

ḌL / ḍalāl : error

ṬLB / ṭalib : desired (or sought for), 18.6

ṬLQ / iṭlāq : absolute sense (meaning), 40.7

ṬYR / ṭār : to pass away, 35.14

ẒHR / ẓahīr : apparent meaning

ʿBR / ʿibāra : (verbal) expression, 29.6

ʿDM / ʿadam : nonexistence, 25.15, 30.12

ʿRF / maʿrifa : gnosis[268]

ʿṬL / taʿṭīl : "a theological concept denying God all attributes (as opposed to *tashbīh*)", 73.1

ʿQB / ʿaqīb : one who or that which succeeds or is subsequent, 37.14

ʿQL / ʿaql : intellect : intellectual reason, 40.9, 41.14 / *maʿqulāt* : intelligibles, 52.6 / *ʿāqul* : intellectual, 54.5

ʿLM / ʿilm : knowledge (wherever possible) : cognition (referring to each of the three parts of a syllogism), 15.12 / *muʿalūmāt* : cognizable things, 33.16

ʿLW / ʿilla : superior [cause][269]; see also *sabab*

ʿNṢR [quadriliteral] / ʿanāṣir : elements (the four), 27.9

ʿYN / muʿayin : specific, 30.9 / individual

GhRḌ / gharaḍ : objective 31.9

GhLṬ / ughlūṭah : captious question, 9.12

FṬN / faṭina : to understand, 18.5, 19.3

FQD / faqada : be deprived; privation

FK / infakka (form 7) : to be separated, 32. 14

FʿL / fāʿal : agent 36.6

QDR / qadar : extension,[270] 49.11 / qadara : to determine, 31.7 / qādir : possessing or having power, 36.5 / qudra : faculty : power, 36.3 / muqdār (?) : (having) extension, 50.5 / maqdūr : compassable, attainable[271]

QDM / qadīmah : eternal (in the generic), 27.10 / see also abadan and azal / aqdam : prior to[272]

QR / mustaqarra : abide (in or on s.th), 51.1

QʿR / muqaʿr falak al-qamr : the sublunary world, 27.9

QLD / taqlid[273] : blind following

QWM / quwām : basis, 30.12

QYS / qiyās : syllogism (in philos.), deduction

KNF / iktanafa : to embrace, encompass s.th., 72.6 (c.f. ḤWṬ)

KLM / *kalām* : I have prefered not to translate this term, but if it must be translated, I incline to "defensive apologetic" or perhaps "apologetic theology?"[274]

LZM / *lazim :* to follow necessarily, 24.7

LFẒ / *lafẓ* : word, 9.12

LHQ / *mutlaḥiqa* : a succession (of things or events), 27.8

MD / *māddah* : matter, 27.10

MS / *māssa* (form 3) : contact

MKN / *mumkinan* : contingent, 25.15 / *mutamakkin* : situated, 51.1

NZH / *munnazah* : have nothing to do with, 50.15 / *tanzih* : deanthropomorphism, 72.14

NẒR / *naẓar* : theoretical reflection, 1–18 (in general), 24 : rational speculation (change this to one or the other of the above), 19.2 / *naẓara*[275] to consider / *nāzir* theoretical inquiry (active participle of *naẓar*), 23.2

NQḌ / *naqaḍa* to be destroyed, 17.6

WTR / *watara* : odd (in number), 32.9 / *tawātur (mutawātir)* : corroborative reports 6.13, 21.6. (See Weiss's discussion of this in "Knowledge of the Past," esp. p. 100; also my translation note 36.)

WJD / *mawjūd* : existent : being, 49.4 / *wujūd* : existence

WJH / *jihah*[276] : *fī jihah waḥida* : in one repect, 31.9 : *fī jihah makhṣūṣah* : specified aspect, 41.2 (perhaps it should be "place", a good generic term) / *wajh* : of this term, Marmura (personal correspondence) writes that it translates in various

ways. In Muʿtazilite kalam, for example, it can translate at times as "aspect" or sometimes as "ground," such as what renders uttering a falsehood an evil. "In logic," he writes, "it refers to mode and hence to modal arguments, modal syllogisms." In the kalam context encountered in this work, Marmura has suggested "manner" as an appropriate translation, and I have tried to follow his suggestion.

WṢF / waṣf : characteristic, 50.15 (cf. *ṣaffah*) / *ittaṣaffa bi* (form 8) : to be characterzed by, 32.13

WḌʿ / waḍʿ : usage (of language), 38.8 / *wāḍiʿ* : originator (of language), 38.9

WFQ / tawfīq : success (granted by God), 19.14

WQF / tawaqqufa fī (form 5) : be undecided, 25.9

Notes

²⁵⁹ In both kalam and *falsafah;* see Lane, *Lexicon,* and Walzer, *Perfect State,* 337.

²⁶⁰ Based on context more than the Wehr definition of "jurisdiction, special province or domain." If the basic meaning of the form 8 verb is followed, this choice is defensible. Asín at 42.2–3 had "determination," but "specification" is, I think, more accurate.

²⁶¹ Following Weiss, "Knowledge of the Past," 86 (in the note).

²⁶² Based on McCarthy, *Deliverance,* 113 n. 134; see also Saflo, *Al-Juwaynī's Thought,* 120.

²⁶³ There is a useful note with references on this term in Walzer, *On the Perfect State,* 336–37 nn. 24, 25. He says "The notion of 'First Cause' [*sabab al-awal*] does not exist in… Kalām." And in Muʿtazilite theology, *sabab* means proximate or intermediate cause. See also the discussion in the glossary at *ʿilla (ʿLW).*

²⁶⁴ This is a collective noun that is commonly understood as a plural even when the grammatical form is singular. For example, the context at 52.4, "some of," makes it clear that such is the case with that passage. For *salaf* as a "quasi-plural," see both Lane and Wehr.

²⁶⁵ Meaning, the Companions of the Prophet and early believers. See Martin et al., *Defenders of Reason,* 15.

²⁶⁶ This is an interesting term. Lane says "an appurtenance of a house"; in particular a porch or other extended roof or awning, such as one attached to a mosque where people sometimes took shelter. In Ghazālī's context, "fixture" might be apt.

²⁶⁷ See also *lafẓ* and the note to 19.7

²⁶⁸ This gloss is not uncontroversial, but it serves to make the distinction

between rational knowledge *(ᶜilm),* and knowledge that is brought about through mystical perception or unveiling *(kashf).*

²⁶⁹ See Walzer, *On the Perfect State,* p. 337 and n. 33 there. "Al-Ghazzali. . . assigns different meanings to *ᶜilla* as a superior and *sabab* as an inferior cause."

²⁷⁰ Following Asín and based on context. Wehr has "measure, quantity, amount," etc.

²⁷¹ See L. E. Goodman, "Did al-Ghazālī Deny Causality?," 1

²⁷² Walzer adds, "often in the sense of 'eternal a parte ante'" (*Perfect State,* 337).

²⁷³ See Lazarus-Yafeh, "Some notes on the term 'taqlīd' in the writings of al-Ghazzalī," appendix B in *Studies in al-Ghazālī,* p. 488 ff.

²⁷⁴ For the argument for this gloss, see McCarthy, *Deliverance,* 100 n. 6.

²⁷⁵ This term is often associated with *baḥatha;* see 2.1 and 18.4.

²⁷⁶ Also, see the discussion of side and aspect as pertaining to God at [41 ff.], where this term is important.

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