

**ARISTOTLE**  
**384-322 B.C.**  
**AND**  
**AL GHAZALI**  
**1058-1111 A.D.**

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*Dedicated  
to  
the new generation  
which  
is unlikely to find a  
more sympathetic and  
helpful guide than  
Al-Ghazali.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Aristotle and Imam Ghazali are two immortals of history who put their seal on European and Muslim philosophical scholarship through succeeding generations. The generations disappeared in the fold of time but their teachings continue to attract mankind. Still they remain difficult and controversial as in their own times.

I confess to some boldness in tackling them. Since their death—Aristotle's and Al-Ghazali's — (one died in 322 B.C. and the other in 1111 A.D.) there have been, without interruption until the present, schools and scholars who have studied, expounded, adopted and re-adapted their doctrines and methods, approved or condemned them. But their light still shines.

I throw some light on their influence from an entirely different angle. With some daring, I defend the early Muslim philosophers, influenced by Aristotle, against Al-Ghazali and defend Al-Ghazali against the charge of snuffing Aristotelianism and thus stagnating Muslim thought over centuries.

The general theme of such accusation is that in his enthusiastic defence of religion, Al-Ghazali, unintentionally, shut the door to scientific enquiry. "The mystic way of the Sufi prescribed is incompatible with rational methods of science," and the accusation takes another form that "the Muslims, unfortunately, followed Al-Ghazali, and neglected, little by little, the study of sciences. Their once great civilization faded. on the other hand Ibn Rushd defended sciences and medieval Europe followed the way prescribed by him to attain it. This is the true spirit of Latin Averroism<sup>1</sup> which led to the rise of European Science."

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1. *el-Hardly the whole truth. See inside. The quotation is from Ahmad Fouad el-Ehwany's article on Ibn Rushd in "A History of Muslim Philosophy," Edited by Prof. M.M. Sharif, Vol: I p. 556.*



This calumny first propagated in the West has, unfortunately, been taken up as a refrain by Muslim scholars of the present<sup>2</sup> day as well.

I have, in all humility, attempted putting him in his correct historical perspective to defend Al-Ghazali against this persistent Calumny.

Though Averroism became a symbol of intellectual revolt in the 13th-14th Century Europe, Al-Ghazali's own<sup>3</sup> influence can not be ignored or belittled.

Influence of Muslim thought on the West is an engrossing subject as it played a significant part in sparking both the humanist and scientific movements. The later Reformation and the earlier Renaissance owed much to the borrowings from the East.

The Muslim East continued to outshine Europe upto early 19th Century, when the Industrial Revolution led to colonial imperialism. The diversion of international trade to new Atlantic and Indian Ocean routes spelt economic ruin to the Mediterranean and the Adriatic Coastal countries including the Ottoman Turks.

Necessity is the mother of invention and Industrial rivalry between European countries on the Atlantic Coast gave a new urgency to it. Soon they became rival claimants<sup>4</sup> to the glorious East which was predominantly Muslim. Their victims included the old China and the unexplored Africa as well.

So poor Al-Ghazali's flight to Sufism was not the turning point in history. It was the discovery of America and the Cape of Good Hope sea route to India.

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2. See Sayyed Hossein Nasr's "Science and Civilization in Islam," 1968, reprinted in Pakistan 1983, pp. 307-308.

3. (See Appendix III,) "Al-Ghazali's Influence on the West."

4. See elaboration of the theme in my book "Voyage Through History." (1911-1971), Vol: I.

## CHAPTER ONE.

### ARISTOTLE: HIS INFLUENCE ON MUSLIM PHILOSOPHY.

Aristotle was born in 384 B.C. at a place called Stagira in Macedon: His father, Nichomachus, was the Court Physician to Amyntas II, King of Macedon and father of Philip and grand-father of Alexander the Great. He was still a child when his father died and was brought up by his father's friend — Proxenus — whose son later became Aristotle's son-in-law.

At the age of 17 in 368 B.C. he moved to Athens and joined Plato's famous Academy and remained there for nearly 20 years studying Mathematics, Physics, Ethics, Politics, Metaphysics, Rhetoric and Poetics. He stayed on at the Academy as a teacher (but still a learner) till the death of his teacher and patron, Plato, in 346 B.C. Not only the death of Plato but his natural disappointment in not succeeding him as the Head of the Academy induced him to leave Athens, otherwise too, the Academy was narrowing his own steadily growing and expanding intellectual interests.

He along with a few friends — devoted students and sympathising colleagues — decided to move to Assos in Asia Minor to visit his former fellow student and member of Plato's Academy Hermias, who was then ruling there. He was not only welcomed but encouraged to settle down at Assos and establish a new Academy. It was his ambition too and a natural resultant to his growing encyclopaedic knowledge. He was unhappy with the new trends the old Academy was embarking upon Plato's nephew and successor — Spensippus, who, Aristotle suspected, was reducing metaphysics to mathematics. I do not support the other version that it was Spensippus himself who sent Aristotle and his friend Xenocrates to open a branch of the Athenian Academy in Asia Minor. The possibility is remote because there is no trace of any subsequent relationship and there was sharp widening different approach of the two in the field of academic liberalisation. Hermias was more pliable. Aristotle began teaching at Assos. He even married Hermias's niece, Pythias, and had every intention to settle down there permanently. Asia Minor was also a part enshrining the cultural Greek heritage. Homer was born in Symrna — now Izmir, and sang of Helen of Troy which is on the Turkish coast of Bosphorus, Socrates visited the area and preached at Bergama. Plato travelled a lot and must have surely visited this culturally rich area.

Aristotle's stay at the newly founded Academy at Assos was cut short on a tempting offer from the Court of King Philips to return to Athens and become a tutor to his son — Alexander, to be externally the Great.

Socrates,<sup>1</sup> Plato and Aristotle — the Trinity of friends and lineal teachers — shaped the whole intellectual tradition of the West — and laid the philosophical foundations of Western Culture and Islamic scholasticism.

1. Socrates 470-399 B.C., Plato 427-347 B.C., Aristotle 384-322 B.C.  
The Quranic verse meaning the same: "Lord give me what is good in this world and the here after."

All the three sought a cure for the ills of the society not in politics but in philosophy and, as preached by Plato, these ills would not cease until philosophers became rulers or rulers became philosophers. Though Aristotle does show his debt to his philosopher — teacher, Plato, in so many things, his own intellect being so shining that whatever he touched he transformed and he, in his own metaphysical way, tried to put it to a test. Like Plato, who responded to his friend Dion's call to become tutor to Dionysius II of Syracuse in Sicily and risked the task of planning the training of Dionysius in severe sciences to fit him for the position of a constitutional king — a philosopher king, Aristotle accepted the request of his father's patron and friend to become tutor to his son.

Both attempts came to naught. Dionysius became tough with his Regent, exiled and later executed him. Plato left him soon. It is not known what Aristotle taught Alexander during the two years that he was with him and what Alexander learned from him. The relationship may have been intimate as both had a sharp intellect but there is no evidence that Aristotle had any direct influence on his moral or political ideals and ambitions except indirectly through his nephew, Callisthenes, who became a friend and admirer of Alexander and accompanied him as an official historian on his glorious campaigns. It is asserted that it was Callisthenes whose flattery had encouraged Alexander to see himself in the role of a god and when at Bactra, Alexander attempted to impose the Persian court ceremonial, including prostration before the King, on the Greeks and the Macedonians as well, even Callisthenes refused to abase himself. Though Alexander was forced to give up the attempt, Callisthenes paid the price as shortly afterwards he was held privy to another conspiracy and executed. This also led to suspicion by Alexander that even Aristotle may have had a hand in the conspiracy. But Alexander never returned to Athens and only a year later Aristotle too died.

We have to go back to the two of this trio — Socrates and Plato — before dilating upon or understanding Aristotle.

Socrates was clearly a man of deep piety with the temperament of a mystic, though it is historical irony, that he was indicted, convicted of impiety, the form of irony that he himself perfected in his dialogues.

He had strong belief in one God – His universality as exhibited in Nature's orderliness and in His Divine guidance through revelations given in dreams, signs and oracles (the last being a concession to the order of the day, though he had a healthy contempt for it). The two contemporary sources we have about him are Xenophon and Plato. Xenophon depicts Socrates as regular in prayer, praying to God who alone knew what was good for him and so emphasised that his prayer should be "Lord, give me what is good." As Plato argues in "Phaedo," Socrates believed that soul of the man partakes of the divine and has immortality. Plato also gives abundant testimony that Socrates had a distinctly mystical temperament and tells of his "rapt in one of which he remained standing for 24 hours spell-bound in a trance." Plato speaks of the 'Divine Voice' often heard by Socrates from childhood and according to F.M. Cornford in "Before and After Socrates" "it was neither an intuitive conscience nor a symptom of mental disorder but an interior psychic audition."

Socrates mission, as he assumed, was from God to convict the "god of falsehood" by making his fellowmen aware of their ignorance and of the supreme importance of knowledge of what is good for their soul. He admitted he was wiser than others because he alone was aware of his own ignorance.

It has been correctly said that "unfortunately no complete separation of the Socratic and the Platonic stands is possible." The main source of Socrates is Plato. Socrates left not a scrap of paper in writing. We have of Socrates what Plato has left behind. The modern scholars have, however, held that Socrates and his historical contemporaries Parmenides of Elea (who held that all is static) and the Pythagorean Timaeus were alive when Plato circulated earlier portions of his dialogues and must be taken to enshrine the philosophy expounded by Socrates and in the latter group Plato's own stands begin to colour the passage of Socrates' ideas through his own mind. The truth can be that he advanced Socrates' basic metaphysical approach and with his own advanced acute intellect gave it a form and new dimension. He securely laid the foundation of Socratic moral and political doctrine that man should concern himself with the development of a rational and moral

personality and that this development is the key to man's felicity. Success in this depends on rational insight into the true scale of good. Men miss felicity when they accept apparent good for real. If he could ever know with assurance what absolute good<sup>2</sup> is he would in practice never pursue anything else.

The contribution of Plato, through "Phaedo," is to give metaphysical basis to justify faith in the immortality of the soul. He takes Socratic approach to a newer field – to give a rational clue to the structure of the universe in his theory of ideas or the doctrine of form. Plato adumbrates a passionate belief in "personal immortality" – maintaining the divinity of the soul and to him its survival of death is a consequence of the divinity. So the whole life has to be spent in trying to liberate the soul from the body, "whose appetites and passions interrupt and distort the pursuit of wisdom and goodness." The way for vision of the good must be prepared by an intellectual discipline in hard thinking that leads through study of the exact sciences.

By his cross-examining technique, Socrates tried to ascertain what did the people mean when they talked of common ethical qualities like self-control or Justice or Courage or Morality. He found that he was wiser than they because he was conscious of his ignorance while they were not. The cure of ignorance is knowledge. Till one realised the importance of morals in knowledge, the confusion and contradictions would continue. Socrates argued that if only we knew what Justice was, the problems of being just would be simple and in search of that knowledge he never ceased, nor in his constant examination of himself and of others.

"Life<sup>3</sup> without self criticism is not worth living." But in real life Socrates was hardly an orthodox character. In the mind of most of the politicians he was linked with the scepticism and questioning of the

2. *This absolute assurance is given to a Momin through the Qur'an and the Sunnah.*

3. *Plato*

accepted beliefs, which they blamed for their many misfortunes, what was needed, they felt, was a greater respect for the principles of conventional morality, not a questioning of them.<sup>4</sup>

To Socrates and Plato moral excellence has to be achieved through sound education and not with the control of political institutions. In "the Republic" his main concern is ethical. Plato held that each man has the capacity to make some contribution to a rational, moral and just society. To live otherwise is not only spiritually diseased, it leads to degeneration in personal and national character.

How contemporary he sounds, in his seventh<sup>5</sup> letter, written when he was an old man: Plato said, "I had much the same experience as many other young men. I expected, when I came of age, to go into politics. The political situation gave me an opportunity. The existing constitution was overthrown and a Committee of Thirty was set up and given supreme power. (Mind you he is talking of 404 B.C.). As it happened some of them were friends and relations of mine and they at once invited me to join them . . . . . I thought they were going to reform society and rule justly; so I watched their proceedings with deep interest. I found that they soon made the earlier regime look like a (golden) age. Among other things they tried to implicate my old friend Socrates in a criminal case. Not long after-wards the Thirty fell and the Constitution was changed again. Those were troublous times and many things were done to which one could object. Though for a time, they behaved moderately. Some of those in power, however, brought my friend Socrates to trial on a monstrous charge (of impiety), the last that could be made against him, and he was condemned and executed."

"When<sup>6</sup> I considered all this, the more closely I studied the politicians and the laws and customs of the day; and the older I grew, the

4. *As today in Pakistan.*

5. *Plato's letter on politics.*

6. *Plato's 7th Letter: Translation of Plato's Republic by Sir Desmond Lee: Penguin Books: Second Edition (Revised 1974).*



*Aristotle: (384-322 B.C.). The portrait is after a painting by Raphael: done by Pakistani artist — Meraj.*

more difficult it seemed to me to govern rightly . . . . . At the same time law and morality were deteriorating at an alarming rate, I postponed action, waiting for a favourable opportunity. Finally, I came to the conclusion that all the existing States were badly governed and that their constitutions were incapable of reform without drastic treatment and a good deal of good luck. I was forced, in fact, to the belief that the only hope of finding justice for society or, for the individual, lay in true philosophy, and that mankind will, have no respite from trouble until either real philosophers gain political power or politicians become, by some miracle, true philosophers."

Plato founded the Academy in 386 B.C. as a School for statesmen — where the would be politician might learn to be a philosopher-ruler. This was Plato's aim and hope. He wrote "the Republic" round about 375 B.C. and Part VIII on Education gives the substance what he thought should be the courses and the methods. The type of study required was meant to be one that should provoke the mind to think. The courses were (1) Arithmetic; (2) Plane Geometry (As with Arithmetic) the emphasis was on intellectual training, not practical usefulness, with the vision of the form of Good as the ultimate objective; (3) Solid Geometry; (4) Astronomy — again his purpose was not to advance physical science but to train the mind to think abstractly; (5) Harmonics; (6) Dialectics — the exercise of pure thought.

It culminates in coherent knowledge.

Knowledge — Pure Thought + Reason

Opinion — Belief + Illusion.

It is interesting to recount the Courses in the Academy.<sup>7</sup>

I Stage : Till 18, General education.

II Stage : 2 years of Military Training and Service.

III Stage : Between 20—30: selection and study of mathematical studies.

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7. (*The Republic: Translated by Sir Desmond Lee — '74 Edition*).

IV Stage : Selection and later 5 years dialectic training.

V Stage : 35-40: Practical Experience in subordinate Offices.

VI Stage : After selection, those survive, are fully qualified Philosopher-Rulers and divide their time between philosophy (which they prefer) and ruling.

In the ethical scheme of "the Republic" three distinct spheres of activity are treated. the philosopher, who yearns for wisdom; the votary of enjoyment, a slave to his appetites and the man of action trying for practical distinction. These combine in varying degrees in any man and competing claims can be harnessed into an integrated personality through intellectual discipline and hard thinking and study both of the exact sciences and of metaphysics and dialectics. Degeneration both personal and moral national character is arrested further by reaffirmation of the immorality of the soul.

The philosophy derived from Plato's Dialogues has been given the name of Platonism and Neoplatonism. The influence of Plato<sup>8</sup> can be traced through-out human culture from Aristotle, who influenced subsequent philosophic thought down the centuries, in the direction of semiitic culture through Jewish Philosopher Philo of Alexandria—who made a bold attempt to create a philosophical system on the basis of the old Testament, later to Christian Philosophy in the teaching of St. Augustine who was firmly Platonist and insisted on the Soul's superiority to and independence of mind, and finally the necessity of divine grace to illumine mind and intellect was stressed in Islamic re-statement of the revealed religion by early Muslim Philosophers through (Aristotelian) influence.

8. And as whitehead pithily remarks — "the safest general characterisation of the European Philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of foot notes to Plato" and if I may add with due humility — to Aristotle.

The fame of Plato's "Republic" quite outshone that of Aristotle's "Politics" during classical antiquity. It was then generally believed antiquity that Aristotle's main source was unpublished lectures of Plato delivered during his last years. His works in fact became well-known through Latin translations of Boethius in the 6th Century A.D. — translated into Syriac and after the Syrian and the Egyptian Muslim conquests into Arabic — between (800-1000 A.D.).

Aristotle had little use of mathematical metaphysics expounded by Plato's two immediate successors at his Academy — Spensippus and Xenocrates and rejected his doctrine of transcendental, eternal forms altogether: he retained in his system that (a) the reality of anything lay in a changeless, though immanent, Form or Essence comprehensible and definable by reason and (b) the highest realities were eternal, immaterial, changeless, self-thinking Intellect that caused ordered movement of the universe and to which man's intellect at its highest was akin.

Recent scholarship of Randall and Werner Jaeger has made clear that Aristotle's aim is to understand, to find out way things as they are. In the Arab world much greater interest was shown in the metaphysical, political and social side of Aristotelian tradition and an attempt to reinterpret and adapt them to the conditions of contemporary Muslim world. As Randall says Aristotle sought intelligibility rather than power. Or "we can say that for Aristotle the highest Apex (Power) a man can have over the world is to understand it — to do, because he sees, why it must be done, what others do because they cannot help themselves." Aristotle wrote on every subject then known: Metaphysics, Logic, Psychology, Ethics, Politics; and his scientific interests in Sciences, Physics, Biology and Mathematics, Poetry and Art found fresh expression.

Aristotle was really the founder of Logic though his predecessors employed the principles of correct reasoning, it was he who classified, clarified, systematised it and made it a vehicle of judgment and proof. This had tremendous influence on Muslim philosophers. Both the (processes) of deduction and induction propounded by Aristotle were adopted by the Muslim thinkers and held sway both in the East and the West for nearly two thousand years since his times.

Aristotle also gave scientific content to metaphysics. He went beyond Plato in this respect and held that every object of experience embodies two factors — a substratum (matter) and its form or essence. Here too he goes beyond his — Teacher and Master — Plato's Form theory and expounds that there are four fundamentals which are common to all spheres of the World. — (a) Matter or substratum (b) Form or Essence (c) Efficient Cause and (d) the End or the Final Cause.

Matter is the initial imperfection. It is not non-existent as Plato thought but exists as potentiality. Form consists of essential elements common to all individual objects of the same type and is the actualization of the material potentiality. All movement is change from potentiality to actuality and for every thing in existence there is a moving or efficient cause. The Essence is shape; it shapes and its own completion is the End.

Inorganic things, the Essence, the Efficient Cause and the End are one sequence. The Soul is both the form of the body and its moving final cause.

There are things in existence that both move and are unmoved. Therefore there must be a third something which moves but is itself not moved. This something — the "unmoved mover" is God Himself.

He is the Pure Eternal Form without any alloy of matter, the Absolutely Perfect Actuality. He is the Absolute Spirit identical with Reason, loved by everything and sought as the Perfect Ideal by everything. He Produces Motion by being loved and so is the final Cause of all Activity. In Him the distinction of the Individual and the Universal completely disappears and He is the One Unified and Unifier Absolute. But the Greek Pantheism peeps in and in the end Aristotle stumbles into believing through astronomical considerations — to postulate that different spheres should have an Unmoved Mover Spirit and there are 47 or 52 such Spirits in all — or was it his final subterfuge to escape the charge of impiety which condemned Socrates to death. In fact, like Socrates, he was indicted on the capital charge of impiety in 323 B.C. after the death of Alexander the Great — the pretext being the dedicatory poem written on the execution of his friend, and helper King Hermias by the Persians, nearly 20 years earlier which was interpreted as deification of him. But he was "wiser" than Socrates and he hurriedly

withdrew from Athens across the Strait of Evripos to Chalcis where he died at the age of 62 or 63.

Aristotle also raises the question of the good for man. To him the highest realisation of the Essence of Man consists in the active exercise of the faculty which is so distinctive of him — namely the faculty of Reason. Man's supreme excellence, therefore, consists in proper performance of his functions as a rational being throughout the whole of his life. This will enable him to attain happiness which is possible only in habitual sub-ordination of the animal side of man's nature: his appetites, desires, passions to the rational rule and consistent exercise of Reason in search of knowledge and pursuit of truth and virtue. Virtue is the direction of the will towards the golden mean<sup>9</sup> — the balance between excess and defect, like difference between liberality and prodigality, between meanness and courage, between foolhardiness and cowardice.

In his views on "Kingship" he departed from Plato's "Philosopher — King" idea by asserting that "it was not merely unnecessary for a King to be philosopher, but even a disadvantage. Rather a King should take the advice of true philosophers. Then he would fill his reign with good deeds, not with good words."

Since Aristotle's death there have been, without interruption until the present, Schools and Scholars who have studied, expounded, adopted and adapted his doctrines and methods, approved or condemned them. He has been studied in Greek, Latin, Syriac, and now in every known language.

The Romans received the Aristotelian thought through Boethius, a Roman Scholar and Statesman in early 6th Century, when he translated Greek texts available to him into Latin. Christianity was then the official religion. But new religious movements arose earlier such as Nestorianism after Nestorius, a monk of Antioch, who became Bishop of Constantinople, in 438 A.D. and who in 431 was condemned as heretic in the Assembly of Ephesus. The resulting persecution led to their flight to Syria and Persia. The Nestorian preachers adopted Syriac as the common man's language for preaching. They translated into Syriac Greek

9. *The Qur'an upholds the same virtue of "the golden mean."*

authorities, such as Aristotle and his commentators, because some knowledge of these gave them philosophic basis to expound their theology. It was a group of Nestorian translators, who, by making Arabic versions from the Syriac, first brought Hellenistic philosophy to the Arab world.

While the Alexandrian School kept alive interest in medical and allied sciences, the Nestorian Churches in Syria and Persia were more interested in logic and speculative philosophy.

And they were Syrian translations which came into the hands of Arab Scholars. And among the very first Arab Scholars was Al-Kindi (185/801-260/873) who mastered the Syriac language from which he himself translated several works. He probably learnt the Greek language as well.

Al-Qifti,<sup>10</sup> the renowned chronicler, says that "Al-Kindi translated many philosophical books, clarified their difficulties and summarised their deep theories." Al-Kindi's full name was Abu Yusuf Yaqub-Ibn-Ishaq-Ibn-Al-Sabbah-Ibn-Al-Ashaz-Ibn-Qais-Al-Kindi. Just at the advent of Islam Kindah was one of the major well-known tribes to which he belonged, hence his prefix Al-Kindi. His grand-father, Al-Ashaz-Ibn-Qais, was reputed to be a companion of the Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) at whose hand he became a Muslim. When Kufa and Basra were founded Al-Ashaz was amongst the first immigrants to Kufa. Al-Kindi's father Ishaq-Ibn-Sabah later became so prominent that caliph Al-Mahdi appointed him Governor of Kufa.

Kufa and Basra within a century of their foundation had become centres of Islamic learning and controversial theology. Kufa was more inclined to rational studies. It was in this atmosphere of intellectual erudition that he was brought up. Like every young Muslim, he learnt Quran by heart, studied Arabic Grammar and Hadith. Knowledge and learning was for all and had become a passion with the whole community. The sum total of knowledge that a cultured man in the hey day of Islamic glory was supposed to acquire included Mathematics, Astronomy, Music, Medicine, Ethics, Philosophy, Poetry besides Quran and

Hadith and Jurisprudence based on them. The concept of knowledge was its totality—Religious, Social, Economic, Ethical, Dialectical and Al-Kindi was no exception. As he gradually became more interested in sciences and philosophy, he could not ignore the Greeks and learnt their language and acquired proficiency in Syriac again following the injunction of the Holy Prophet when after learning three R's after the Battle of Badr — Zaid bin Sait was asked to learn Hebrew, which even Hazrat Umar learnt later.

It is truly said that there would be no philosophy without the Greeks, and particularly Aristotle, as whoever ventures to cut himself off from the collective experience of the past centuries will never achieve anything as a philosopher or scientist; since the span of one individual life is much too short. "It is fitting to acknowledge the utmost gratitude to those who have contributed even a little to truth, not to speak of those who have done much . . . . . we should not be ashamed to acknowledge truth and to assimilate it from whatever sources it comes to us, even if it is brought to us by former generations and foreign peoples. For them who seeks the truth, there is nothing of higher value than the truth itself; it never cheapens him or abases him who searches for it, but ennobles him and honours him." These are the words of Al-Kindi found in the preface of the earliest metaphysical work in Arabic dedicated by him to the reigning Caliph Al-Mustasim-billah. Al-Kindi's main contribution was his attempt to bring philosophy in accord with religion.

He puts forward the following reasoning to postulate accord between philosophy and religion — Theology is part of philosophy — the prophets' revelation and philosophical truth are in accord with each other and that the pursuit of theology is logically ordained. He emphasised that "the totality of every useful science and the way to attain it is the getting away from anything harmful and taking care against it — the acquisition of all this is what the true prophets have proclaimed [in the name of God.] The Prophets have proclaimed the unique divinity of God, the practice of virtues ordained and accepted by Him and the avoidance of vices, which are contrary to virtues in themselves.

When he was accused of "Kufr" he lashed out against those who

10. Al-Qifti in "Tarihemi Hukama": Cairo Ed: p. 241.



trade religion for a living, but in fact he did make some concessions to orthodoxy. In his treatise on "The Number of the works of Aristotle" he does give higher place to revealed religion over philosophy but there too makes a neat distinction between Prophets who receive knowledge direct from God and it is received without research, effort, study and industry and they postulate Truths through God's illumination, inspiration, support and direction and the ordinary human beings who have only one way of attaining knowledge, (enjoined by God and Holy Prophets) with research and industry; through logic, mathematics, philosophic discourses and learning.

Aristotle's "the Great Mover of the Moved" is reinterpreted by Al-Kindi who wrote "God, great is His Praise, is the reason and agent of motion being Eternal. He can not be seen and does not move, but in fact causes motion without himself moving. He is simple in that he can not be dissolved into something simpler and He is indivisible because he is not composed and composition has no hold on Him. But in fact He is separate from the visible bodies since He is — the reason of the motion of the visible bodies." The originality of Al-Kindi lies in his reconciliation of the Islamic concept of God with the philosophical ideas which were current in later Neo-Platonism in the Middle East. Keeping in mind the attributes of God in Islam, as given in the Quran, Al-Kindi sharpens them in subtler language. "God is the True one. He is transcendent and can be qualified by only negative attributes. He has no matter, no form, no quantity, no relation. He has no genus, no differentia, no species, no accident. He is immutable . . . . . He is, therefore, absolute oneness nothing but oneness ( *وحدت* ). Everything else is multiple."

The world in Aristotle's system is finite in Space but infinite in Time, because the movement of the world is coeternal with the Unmovable Mover. This is against not only Islamic thought but against the main idea of all revealed religions that God created world out of nothing. So there was a time when there was Nothing but the Mover. He is ( *قائم السموات والأرضين* )<sup>11</sup> Muslim philosophers faced this problem. Ibn Rushd and Ibn Sina were accused of atheism because of their pro-Aristotle conception of the world being co-eternal. In fact this remained a controversial point in Islamic philosophy and Al-Ghazali takes this

11. *The Qur'anic appellation — "the cleaver of the Earth and the Heavens."*

as the first point against the philosophers. Al-Kindi, however, maintained that the world is not eternal. Apart from giving mathematical theories on motion of infinity, he argued that physical bodies are composed of matter and form and move in space and time. Matter, form, space, movement and time are the five substances in every physical body. And according to Quran they move in their own orbits. Being so connected with corporeal bodies, time and space are finite, given that corporeal bodies are finite and they are finite because they can not exist and move except within definite limits. Time is not Movement: it is the number which measures the motion. Being composed of matter and form, limited in space and moving in Time, every body is finite, even if it is the body of the world. And being finite it is not eternal. God alone is Eternal. Walzer, one of the noted translator and commentator of Al-Kindi, sums up his contribution as "Revealed Truth takes the place of Plato's myth in Al-Kindi's attempt to build up, for the first time, not an Arabic Republic of Greek Philosophy but a Greek Philosophy for Muslims," which is hardly the truth.

Abu Bakr Mohammad-bin-Zakarya-bin-Yahya better known as Al Razi (865-925 A.D.) was a Persian by birth and was in his times more famous as a practising doctor of medicine than a doctor of philosophy. As his teacher and master in medicine was Ibn-Rabban-al-Tabari whose father Rabban was well versed in Scriptures and Greek philosophy, his interest in philosophy was aroused. At the same time, Al Razi was a pure rationalist. He believed in reason and in reason alone. In medicine his Clinical studies reveal a very solid method of investigation based on observation and experimentation and in philosophy, though familiar with Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates and Galen he never failed to assert his own opinions based on reason. On the very first page of his "al-Tibb-al-Ruhani" he exalts reason. "God, glorious is His name, has given us reason in order to obtain through it, from the present and future the utmost benefits that we can obtain. It is God's best gift to us. . . . . we should refer to it everything and judge all matters by it. We should do according to it as it commands us to do "

Al-Razi is against prophecy, against revelation against all irrational thought. To him God is Perfect and Pure Intelligence. From the Soul, Life flows. He argues since we have admitted the wisdom of the

Creator, we must admit that the world was created. If one asks why was it created at a given moment we say that it was because Soul attached itself to matter in that moment. God knew that this attachment was cause of evil, but after it had been brought about, God directed it to the best possible way. But some evils remained, being the source of all evil, this composition of soul and matter could not be completely purified. This could explain creation of Adam and his Fall.

Al-Razi does not believe in the eternity of the world but claims to be a Platonist, though following Galen teaches that the world came into being in time whereas matter alone is eternal. Although he denies the creation from nothingness, he gives reason for creation which is nearer to Islamic conception: God is Omniscient, Absolute knowledge, Justice and Mercy. Man should, according to Plato make himself like God, in the greatest degree possible for man. Hence the creature nearest to God's favour is the wise, the most just, the most merciful and the most compassionate. He believed in God and in his best Creation the Man because of endowment of reason; in progress through reason he had no use for Intermediaries — Prophets and their revelations. Though Abdur Rahman Badawi, Prof. of Philosophy, Cairo, calls him an atheist, I think this is not justified because of his strong reasons establishing the existence and unity of a Super Being.

Ar-Razi, Kindi and Farabi all wrote on Ethics and Philosophy, drawing extensively on the Greek material, but giving it new colouring. Abu-Nasr Al-Farabi (870-950 A.D.) has been given the name of "the Second Teacher," that is, Aristotle, the second. Since his day, the number and order of the works left behind by Aristotle or at least attributed to him which have been commented upon by Farabi, or after his example, by others, remain almost fixed. The so-called "Theology of Aristotle" was considered by Farabi, to be a genuine work. Farabi's main attempt at first was to demonstrate that Philosophic stands of Plato and Aristotle were not too different and he attempted to harmonise them with each another. He held that Plato and Aristotle differ from each other only in phraseology and that in relation to practical life, their doctrine of wisdom is the same. To him, they were the two "Imams" of Philosophy.

His second attempt was to reconcile philosophy and religion both of which he held to be objectively propagating the (one) basic Truth. He gave Platonic Philosophy a phraseology and form, without changing the content, to make it more consonant with Islamic teachings, which, he, in turn, interpreted more rationally. Dr. Ibrahim Madkour, Prof. of Philosophy, Cairo University, rightly stresses that Farabi expounds Philosophy in a religious way and philosophizes religion, pushing them in two converging directions so that they may come to an understanding and co-exist. He goes on to say that "Farabi has undoubtedly been the first scholar to raise a new edifice of philosophy on the basis of this accord: later philosophers have followed the lines chalked out by him: Ibn Sina has been to a certain extent occupied in the exposition and delineation of its Platonic and Aristotelian aspects; while Ibn Rushd has been busy indicating the accord between Aristotelian Philosophy and Religion."

I will refer to only two aspects of his quite abstruse but coordinated re-interpretations both of Aristotle's philosophy and the revealed religion. He classifies Intellect into (a) practical intellect which deduces what should be done and (b) theoretical intellect which helps the Soul to attain its perfection. The intellect is capable of rising gradually from intellect-in-potency to intellect-in-action and finally to acquired-intellect. The acquired-intellect rises to the level of communion, ecstasy and inspiration which is the highest form attainable by the chosen few. And the One who Chooses, is Himself beyond Comprehension, but illuminates the intelligence to reach the apex, leading to inspiration and heavenly vision. The theory of Intelligence put forward by him is based on Aristotle and Farabi himself says that his theory depends upon the third part of "De Anima" of Aristotle and/but the mystic addition is his own, introduced by him to be the link between human knowledge and revelation. He provided prophecy with a rational but higher stand and in the Middle Ages had tremendous influence — Jews & Christians also accepted it. Following his Greek Imams — Farabi wrote several treatises on "Politics," the best known one of which is his "Model City." Plato's Philosopher King and Aristotle's King helped by the Philosophers, are again merged and given a new pedestal. The Chief must be brave, Intelligent, lover of Knowledge, upholder of Justice and be capable of rising to the level of the Agent Intelligence thus getting inspira-

tion and revelation. The agent intelligence is the source of the divine laws and guidance. He borrowed the concept from Aristotle's theory of dreams but gave it a revealing Prophetic content denied by his Master.

Al-Farabi accepted reward and punishment in a future world and pleaded that the conduct of the common man could be improved and that's why there is so much insistence on it in the Holy Quran. As a Philosopher having drunk deep at the Greek fountain, but being a Muslim he again equated it with the Muslim injunctions that only the souls of the good, who have lived a life resembling that of God, as far as human beings can, loose their individuality and then become part of the "Active Intellect" of the Kingdom of Heaven and the bad souls survive as Individuality and remain in utter wretchedness.

Ibn Sina (980-1037 A.D.) is one of the brightest Intellects of the world. Though influenced both by Al-Kindi and Al-Farabi he tried to reconcile religion and philosophy through allegorical interpretation. Ibn Sina was, however, a greater systematic thinker of the higher order. As his clear, exhaustive and well classified "Qanun" remained a sought out text book for medicine for centuries in the whole civilised world, the same genius manifests itself in his great, philosophical encyclopaedia 'Ash-Shifa' in which he deals at length with all the philosophical, mathematical and natural Sciences.

It is significant how widespread and common were the Aristotelian teachings when Ibn Sina was still a young man living with his father at Bukhara when a guest named Al-Natali arrived. Al-Natali earned his living as a roving teacher of Aristotelian doctrine and introduced him to the teachings of the Master which was then preached like a religion. He learned logic, studied Euclid and attempted to study Aristotle's metaphysics and, as he himself says, found himself utterly incapable of understanding its meaning, until one day, he casually purchased one of Al-Farabi's books and with its help he was able to comprehend it. Al Ghazali brackets him with Farabi as the two leading interpreters of Aristotle.

When he was appointed personal physician to Nuh-bin-Mansur, the Samanid Governor of Khorassan, he found in the Prince's library many works of Aristotle, hitherto unknown to his contemporaries and

he became the sole transmitter of the doctrines contained there in, particularly when the whole library perished later in those turbulent times. Ibn Sina was living at the Court of Emir of Khawarazam when Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna invited the scholars of his Court but Ibn Sina decided against it and went to Isfahan to the Court of Alaud Daula Muhammad.

It is impossible to deal here with all or even one aspect fully of his immensely rich philosophy. Very briefly his basic concepts were based on Aristotle's 'De Anima' but modified in the treatment. He accepted Aristotle's definition of soul but at the same time put it as an incorporeal substance. He gives a very elaborate and unique discussion of Inner Senses, Internal Perception but differs again from the Aristotle's concept of imagination and splits it up into five different faculties. Ibn Sina did not consider Prophecy like Farabi as the highest kind of imagination. He identified it through intellect with sagacity, a power of "hitting at the Truth in an imperceptible time" Wazel is of the view that he derived this from Aristotle's "Posterior Analytics" as inspiration coming from "Active Intelligence;" to my mind more of Farabi than of Aristotle's. According to most modern authorities Ibn Sina is so deeply steeped in Aristotelianism that he became the Aristotle for the whole world for centuries. The influence of Ibn Sina's thought has been enormous. And his millenium anniversary observed is again the indication of revivalism of his thought.

Abu-Al-Walid Mohammad-Ibn-Ahmad-Ibn-Mohammad-Ibn Rushd was born in Cordova in 1126<sup>12</sup> AD. His father Mohammad and his grandfather Ahmad first [Ibn-Rushd] both held the high office of Chief Justice of Andalus. With that family background he naturally studied the Quran, the Traditions, Jurisprudence, Arabic Poetry and Literature and as Cordova rivalled Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo as the great seat of Islamic learning, he pursued studies in Mathematics, Physics, Astronomy, Logic, Philosophy and Medicine.

The works of Farabi and Ibn Sina had also reached the Western corner of the Muslim world and Ibn Rushd was familiar with them all. Ibn Rushd deserves a place of honour in the long series of commen-

12. (1126-1198 A.D.)

tators on Aristotle, upholding his important tradition. Most of his works are lost in Arabic original but a great number of his commentaries were translated into Hebrew and Latin and were held to be of great importance for mediaeval Jewish and Western Latin Aristotelian scholars. For more than three hundred years they read Aristotle mainly with the help of the commentaries of Averroes as he came to be known in the West and of Avicenna who was Ibn Sina. The widespread interest in Aristotle taken in the Muslim world is best illustrated by the story how Ibn Rushd was induced to start writing his famous commentaries. Ibn Tufail, one of the two Maghrib philosophers (the other being Ibn Bajjah), and author of the famous story "Hayy-bin-YaQzan" "one day summoned Ibn Rushd and told him that Amir Abu-Yaqub" has complained to him of the difficulty of the expression of Aristotle and his translators and it would be easier for people to grasp them if some one would tackle these books, summarize them, expound their aims after understanding them thoroughly." Ibn Tufail excused himself on the plea of old age and of his work as a Minister and asked Ibn Rushd to take up the work. For over 25 years (between 1169-1195 A.D.) Ibn Rushd wrote a series of commentaries on most of the Aristotle's extant works e.s. the Organon, De Anima, Physica, Metaphysica Rhetorica, Poetica and Ethics. Aristotle's "Politica" was not available to him and therefore he wrote a commentary on Plato's "Republic." [Ibn Rushd's] commentaries were translated in Europe. They were literally incorporated in the Latin version of Aristotle's work. He and Ibn Sina, as Averroes and Avicenna, ruled the classical and religious thought of Europe for Centuries. Even Dante in his "Divine Comedy" mentions Averroes "the Great Commentator" and Avicenna alongwith Euclid, Ptolemy, Hippocrates, and Galen as great benefactors and prodigies of human intellect. Their influence on religious thought of Thomas Aquinas, [St. Augustine] and St. Francis of Assisi is openly acknowledged. Ibn Rushd in his books "the Fasli" and the Kasifi" and the "Al-Ithasali" embodies his bold views that it is the metaphysician alone, employing certain proof, competent to interpret revealed Shariah law. To him, to establish the true inner meaning of religious beliefs and revelations is the aim of philosophy in its quest for truth. He applied Aristotle's three arguments — demonstrative, dialectical and persuasive. In his defence of philosophers against Al-Ghazali's reasoned outburst

branding them as "Kafirs," Ibn Rushd mainly based his defence on Quranic Injunctions where men of Intellect are ordained to think, study and ponder deeply on the Creator and his Creations to get inner light and add to it. The objective of religion, as defined by him, is to attain the truth, the true theory and true practice (Al-ilm al Haq, Wal-amal al Haqq). True knowledge is the knowledge of God. To my mind, learning and knowledge have to be combined to reach the Truth. The first Kalma is only a Statement — The Second is Shahada which you can't give unless you have advanced and progressed to the state where-in you can affirm definitely that you know and stand witness to God and His revelations through His Messenger.

Ibn Rushd says that "the way of acquiring knowledge is of two kinds: apprehension and assent. Assent is either demonstrative, dialectical or rhetorical — for the philosopher, for the religious teacher and for the masses, and is possible only through comprehension."

It is interesting to note, and may be valid even today, that Ibn Rushd advocates that masses should be given only orthodox explanations of the Scriptures and the rest of speculative study is for the intellectual few, hankering after the truth. To him philosophers are those who follow the way of speculation and are eager for knowledge of the truth and those who wish to attain this knowledge they should apply demonstrative arguments to the interpretation of theological teaching of Shariah — a term which he uses to include both the text of the Quran and its injunctions in practice, which we now associate with the person of the Holy Prophet (Peace be on him).

While he carried on the long tradition of attempted synthesis between religious law and Greek philosophy, he went a step further. He made Plato's political philosophy, modified by Aristotle, his own and held it as valid for the Islamic State as well. If Plato's philosopher Kings are not available to rule, there should at least be Aristotle's philosophers on hand to advise and influence the King. For him Plato's ideal State is the best after the ideal State of Islam. But he looks at Plato's "Republic" through the eyes of Ibn Sina and in his attempt at synthesis of religion and philosophy, he takes to the Aristotelian theory of Intellect and of the Unmoved Mover as modified by Farabi. To all this he gives his ethical and political philosophy a distinctly Islamic Character and tone and hence his significance as a religious-Philosopher for us too.

With Ibn Rushd we come to end of the reign of Philosopher Ulema or Imams. That he was forced to write a refutation to Al-Ghazali's attack on philosophers shows the way the wind was blowing, soon to turn into a thunder storm of orthodox scholasticism. The right wing of the Mutazallites and inspite of the Ismailia movement, the majority of Muslims retained their orthodoxy and regarded as 'bidat' any innovation.

The latter innovations and quibblings of the Mutazallites got mixed up with Plato and Aristotle's commentaries as dangerous to orthodoxy culminating into heresies. And coup de grace was given by the Hujjat-il-Islam—Abu Hamid Mohammad Al-Ghazali (1058-1111 A.D.); and later the meekly loving Sufism, represented by Maulana Rumi and others, beaoned to other luminary lights and the flame of Aristotlianism was finally snuffed. The fall of Baghdad to the Mongol hordes was the death knell — the tolling of the bells. But that's another tale and let us tell it in the next chapter.

## AL-GHAZALI: HIS TIMES AND LEGACY.

The last chapter ended with Ibn Rushd and I had said that "with him we come to the end of the reign of Philosopher ulema or Imams." The majority of Muslims retained their orthodoxy and in the welter of confusion then prevailing their philosophical reasoning somehow got mixed up, in the orthodox mind, with the latter innovations (bidat) of the Mutazallites and both got labelled as heresies...

It is time that the final coup de grace to the reign of philosopher—Imams was given by Abu Hamid Mohammad Al-Ghazali (1058-1111 A.D.) but he too was the product of his times. So let us have a quick look at his period.

The glory of the Abbasids began to fade within a century after Harun-al-Rashid (786-809 A.D.) with a weakened centre, the provincial Governors began to assert themselves. They had large locally recruited armies and perforce began to exercise wide powers. The caliphs had to acquiesce and legalise those powers.

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13. As in the case of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi.

The administrative necessity was in decentralized authority. But strong ambition of the Provincial Governors with a weakened centre could lead to only one result – disintegration. While in the West, the Umayyads of Spain never accepted the over all suzerainty of Baghdad, the Fatimids of Egypt repudiated and challenged it. In the East the all powerful Governors carved for themselves kingdoms as large as their arms could make them. They in fact founded autonomous dynasties wherein even succession was not in the hands of the Caliph but they maintained the myth of legal suzerainty and to claim legality formal recognition was sought and gladly granted. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, (997-1030 A.D.) acknowledged the nominal suzerainty of Caliph Al-Qadir-Billah (991-1031) from whom he got the title of Yamin-al-Dawlah and even Sultan of Delhi Altamash (1211-1227 A.D.) sought similar recognition from the Caliph Al-Nasir-Billah (1180-1225) even when the twilight had set in and only seventeen years intervened between Al-Nasir-Billah and the last Abbasid Caliph Al-Mustasim Billah (1242-1258).

The first to found a semi-independent autonomous state in the Eastern areas of the Empire was T'ahir-Ibn-Al-Husaini of Khurasan, who had helped Al-M'amun against his brother Al-Amin and was awarded by a grateful M'amun with the governorship of all the lands east of Baghdad. T'ahir established his Capital at Merve. The dynasty came to be known as T'ahirids and for four generations ruled Khurasan till 872 A.D. when they were supplanted by Saffarids, a dynasty founded by another General Yaqub Ibn-al-Layth-al-Saffar; starting in Sijistan – almost Southern Afghanistan, extended their rule to whole of Southern and Eastern Persia upto Oxus in the North.

The dynasty lasted till 903 A.D. though the nibbling by the Sam'andis started much earlier. Sam'andis were descendants of one Saman, a Zoroastrian noble of Balkh. Ismail Ibn Ahmad (892-907), a great-grand-son of Saman wrested Khurasan from Saffarids and another brother Nasr-Ibn-Ahmad (913-943) A.D. extended the boundaries of their kingdom. The Caliph recognised them as Amirs but they were virtually independent of him. Following the general Muslim pattern, their Capital Bukhara and its twin Samarqand, outshone Baghdad as centres of art and learning. It was a Sam'anid Prince, Abu S'alih Man-

sur-Ibn-Ishaq, to whom Al-Ra'zi dedicated his famous book on medicine and entitled its Al-Mansuri' in his honour. And it was a Sam'anid Prince Nuh, the second, (976-97) that invited Ibn-Sina to Bukhara and gave him free access to his rich and vast library.

A well established and well run state, the Sam'anids had to face a new threat internally from the Turkish nomads to the North who later had a rejuvenating role to play but to begin with it was a highly disturbing one. Among the Turkish slaves, whom the Caliphs and the Sultans and the Amirs of the day, everywhere, honoured with high Government posts, was one Alptigin, a member of the body-guard who rose high and fast and was promoted to the Governorship of Khurasan. His slave and son-in-law was Subaktigin (976-997) A.D. who was father of the brilliant Sultan Mahmud "the But-Shikan" who opened the northern gates of India to Islam.

Though the Ghaznavides (976-1186 A.D.) heralded the first victory of the Turks against Iranian predominance in the Eastern part of the Empire, it soon fell apart. The Western Provinces, the remnants of the Saffarids and Sam'anids, were taken over by the Buw'ahids – a Shiaite dynasty founded by a Shia General, Ahmad-Ibn-Buwayh, who planted themselves even in Baghdad, made and unmade Puppet Caliphs, who were completely under their control, even had the Khutba read in the joint name of the Caliph and the Amir-ul-Umara "Muiz-al-Dawlah." They were supreme for over a century (945-1055 A.D.). The Eastern and Southern Persia fell to Seljuk Turks. In 1037 they took over Merve and Nishapur from the Ghaznavids and in course of a few years they occupied and ruled Bukhara, Balkh, Sijistan, Jurgan, Tabaristan, Khawarizm, Hamadan, Ray and Isfahan. At Hamadan they were sitting at the door steps of Baghdad where the internecine wars were rampant. The Shiat overlordship over a Sunni Caliph and a wholly Sunni population was widely resented and led to open riots. The Fa'timids, the challengers, were Ismaili Shias and deepened the confusion. The Seljuks under Tughril Beg were waiting for an opportunity. And on December 18, 1055 at the head of his Turkoman tribes marched into Baghdad. Al-Basasiri, the Turkish Commander and military Governor of Baghdad withdrew from Baghdad and the Caliph Al-Qaim-Billah (1031-1075 A.D.) welcomed the Seljuk invader as a deliverer and bestowed on him

the title of Sultan. Al-Basasiri did not give up hope and was in correspondence with the Fat'imids in Syria. Taking advantage of temporary absence of Tughril from Baghdad on an expedition, he re-entered Baghdad in 1058 and forced the supine Caliph Al-Qaim-Billah to sign a decree renouncing his rights and rights of all Abbasids as a Caliph in favour of the rival Fatimid Al-Mustansir (1035-1094) in Cairo. For forty Fridays the Khutba was read in the name of the Ismaili Imam in Baghdad itself. In 1060 A.D. the Seljuks re-entered Baghdad, killed Basasiri and restored the Abbasid Caliphate and Tughril began his reign in the name of the Caliph as a Sultan over the realm which in the East extended beyond the boundaries over which Harun-al-Rashid had ruled. How real and near the danger of the Fatimide take over was could not be forgotten by the Seljuks.

The Fatimids in Egypt and the Umayyads in Spain were in complete independent control of all Muslim lands West of Syria. The Fatimids asserted politically the religious differences that divided the Ummah into two separate religious sects and established a claim to be the genuine Caliph. Their active rivalry began soon after their disillusionment when the Abbasids who had professed that they were in fact out to restore the descendants of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) to their rightful place, occupied the throne for themselves. The minor revolts may be ignored but in 785 A.D., Idris-Ibn-Abdullah-Ibn Hasan Ibn Hazrat Imam Hasan (R.A.) after failure of one revolt in Medina, according to Ibn Khaldun, fled to Maghrib and in 788 founded a dynasty of the Idrisis in Morocco with the Capital at Fez, which lasted for nearly two centuries (788-974). The revolts against Abbasids were legitimately led by the descendants of Hazrat Imam Hasan rather than Hazrat Imam Husain. The Idrisi dynasty was the first Shia dynasty in Muslim history. The descendants of Hazrat Imam Husain remained quiet but were recognised as the real Imams till Hazrat J'afar Sa'diq, the sixth Imam. Hazrat J'afar disinherited his eldest son Ismail and appointed Hazrat Musa, the second son as the next Imam. Ismail's disinheritance became a point of dispute, Hazrat J'afar's very right to disinherit the eldest son was questioned and though the majority accepted the decision, the Ismaili Sect was born. As Ismail predeceased his father in Medina he was subsequently hailed as the hidden Imam till the

appearance of the Mahdi and this occurred in the person of the founder of the Fatimide dynasty Ubayd-ullah-Al-Mahdi in 909 A.D. According to Fatimide geneology Ubaydullah was the son of Hussain-bin-Ahmad-bin-Abod-Allah-bin-Mohammad-bin-Isma'il-bin Imam J'afar Sadiq. But before him a series of Imam Satr (concealed Imams) emerged teaching the faithfuls through agents (Dai's) but never directly.

As the Ismaili's posed the greatest threat to orthodoxy at the time when Al-Ghazali lived they deserve some attention. The birth of the sect due to an act of the sixth Imam J'afar Sadiq has been mentioned. The Ismaili's really shook the foundations of the Muslim world. Even in the time of Imam J'afar the extremists were led by one Abdullah-bin-Maimun. Both the father and the son were disciples of one Khattab's who was a dai or a missionary agent of Imam S'adiq who held and propagated the view that the Quran has to be understood in an inward or Batin symbolically rather than in a literal sense and the Divine Light is transmitted through successive Imams. They are divinely guided and they alone could correctly interpret the Quran and the guide the faithful. Hazrat Imam S'adiq repudiated him. He was tried as a heretic and in 755 A.D. was executed by the first Abbasid Caliph Al-Mansur.

Abdullah bin Maimun took up his teachings (minus the reincarnation theory). His dai's spread themselves throughout the Abbasid Caliphate whom now they hated as usurpers. Each one of them carried on a profession — as a merchant, artisan or tabib—and ingratiated themselves into various strata of the society, preached secretly and initiated the converts into secret doctrines and ritual. The strong rule of the early Abbasids and stabilisation of conditions under them forced them under-ground, working from various cells spread from Morocco to the Punjab.

A century later about 875 A.D. they suddenly surfaced up and one Hamdan Karamat won over the whole Yemen, the one place, which, up to the present day, has been continuously espousing every heretical cause that might bring them some political independence. The followers of Karamat, known as karamathians, successfully enlisted the support of Berbers who were, like them, endowed with an independent spirit, and

in 909 A.D. produced the hidden Imam and proclaimed him Caliph and the Mahdi at Rakkada near Kairawan. Thus the Fatimide anti-Abbasid Caliphate began with Ubaidullah, Al Mahdi. He was claimed to be son of Husain-bin-Ahmad-bin-Abdullah-bin Mohammad Ismail bin Imam J'afar S'adiq. It was the fourth Fatimide Caliph Al-Muiz (953-975 A.D.) who conquered Egypt in 969 A.D. and made it the seat of the Fatimide Dynasty. It was his General and Governor Jawahar who founded — Cairo — and laid the foundation stone of Al-Azhar in April 970 A.D. So Al-Azhar started as a seat of Shia learning. Under the next two Caliphs Al-Aziz and Al-Hakim the boundaries of the Empire were extended to Palestine, Yemen even Hijaz and their suzerainty recognised from the Atlantic to the Red Sea. Syria remained in turmoil and there were internecine wars between the Fatimides and the Buwayhids who controlled the Abbasid Caliph at Baghdad. Both were Shia dynasties but could not come together. It is strange that Buwayhids did not dethrone the Abbasids and replace them by a new Alid line. But they were orthodox Shia's and on religious and political grounds opposed to Ismailis. Their twelfth Imam was still to appear and they could not produce an interim one. They could not bring in Fatimids who would be the real rulers and not the puppet ones in whose name they exercised full authority and they also could not afford to antagonize the entire population who were all Sunnis.

On the other side the Fatimides conquered Muslim Africa but failed in their attempts to capture Muslim Asia. They were denied the ultimate prize of a universal Muslim Empire ruled by a descendant of Hazrat Ali. Three factors were responsible for this denial — (1) the Buwayhids effectively ruled Iraq and Persia and contested their claim to Syria; (2) these two major contenders encouraged the third one the Byzantines who took over Crete and Sicily tried to control the Mediterranean trade and rekindled the hope of recapturing Syria and the Holy Land which subsequently led to the crusades and (3) the open breach between the Fatimides and the Karmathians, who were called Al d'awa-al-B'atiniya. This was an extreme militant group which offered a real threat to the Abbasid Empire. They established a State in Bahrain, from where they led forays into Basra, which they looted; threatened Baghdad itself and then turned south marched into Hejaz, pillaged the Kaaba and took away even the Holiest Prize, the Black Stone, to Bah-

rain, their incursions into Syria were common and they marched even into Egypt.

Such was the political conditions when the Seljuks marched into Baghdad. The three Caliphs were at the head of the three independent Caliphates — the Umayyads in Spain, who just ignored the Abbasids, the Fatimids in Egypt, who challenged the right of the Abbasids to rule in the name of Islam, the Karmathians, who were a constant threat to both the Fatimids and the Abbasids.

Al-Ghazali was born in 1058 A.D., three years after the Seljuk occupation of Baghdad, (1055) in not too poor a family as is commonly believed. Like most of the Muslims of the middle class his father must have been an educated man well versed in Quran and Muslim theology. His love of learning is also evidenced by the story that on his death the father left all the money he had with a S'ufi friend charging him to see that his two sons Mohammad and Ahmed were well educated. How well his S'ufi friend looked after the two boys is proved by the subsequent fame of both of them. Mohammad, the elder and the better known as Al-Ghazali, and not the so well known but distinguished enough in his own time as a scholar, poet and mystic, who even officiated as Head of the Nizamiya college at Baghdad when the elder brother left it abruptly. (I was lucky to have been present when the tomb stone of the grave of Ahmad Ghazali was accidentally found buried in a room within the precincts of a mosque, which was being renovated by the Archaeology Deptt., of Iran in a village near Tus. Probably the mosque, which was definitely of the Seljuk period, was at Ghazala, where both the brothers, in their native village Ghazala, were educated. The village has since disappeared completely).

As studying, learning and teaching the Quran was incumbent on every Muslim, mosques were the earliest centres of formal education. Free lectures were given on the Holy Quran and Sunnah; later a Jurisprudence, Logic, Ethics, Philosophy were also included gradually. However, standard educational institutions were later set up and handsomely endowed not only providing free education but also free board and lodging. Throughout the Muslim world education was free at all levels and illiteracy was almost unknown.



## ARISTOTLE AND AL-GHAZALI

The first known Madrasa or College was established in Nishapur around 950 A.D. though a Baitul-Hakama had been founded in 830 A.D. by Al-Mamun but that was an Academy rather than a School and to it were attached a translation Bureau, a Library and an Observatory but formal educational institutions were founded by Samanids. Many more were founded during the rest of the century besides the one in Nishapur.

Nizamul-Mulk Tusi gave great encouragement to the movement and founded nine or ten Nizamiah Colleges from Baghdad to Herat.

When Al-Ghazali went to Nishapur for advanced studies in 1077 A.D. Nishapur and the neighbouring areas had been for nearly over a century in the forefront of educational development owing to the comparative peaceful calm of the Samanids and their great open patronage of arts and learning while Baghdad had an uneasy time torn by strife and threatened on all sides.

The most prominent teacher of his times — Abdul Ma'ali Al-Juwayni, Imam-al-Haramayn was then heading the school to which Ghazali now went for further study.

Al-Juwayni's father had founded a School of Jurisprudence and related subjects at Nishapur in 1016 A.D. and on his death in 1046 A.D., the young Juwayni at the age of only 20 took it over. Soon he was the leading light — Zia-al-Din, Sheikhu-l-Islam and Imam-al-Haramayn. Fame of his vast learning, his erudite scholarship spread to the whole Muslim world and his fatwaaz were the final word for the learned.

Al-Ghazali was not in the habit of acknowledging his debt to others and never mentions Al-Juwayni's role in shaping his mind but he was in fact what Al-Juwayni made him. Al-Ghazali was not the first to take up cudgels against the philosophers and refute their "blasphemies." The movement was as old as Al-Ghazali himself. The reaction was against the Mutazallites, whose free, rational, liberal thinking crystallised in the common public mind was epitomised in their preaching of the createdness of the Quran and total indeterminism. Though the Muslim historians and others call them the Mutazallites — the seceders; they called themselves "Ahl-al-Tauhid-wa-al-Adl," 'People of unity and justice.' They admit that Allah is all knowing, all powerful, all seeing



*Al-Ghazali (1058 - 1111 AD.) after an imaginary sketch done by Khalil Gibran.*

but these divine attributes are one with the Divine Essence. If their separateness is accepted then there will be plurality of "Eternals" which would be against the basic belief in His unity and would amount to "Kufr." Similarly His Justice demands that man should be totally free to choose his path of good and evil and then alone can he deserve reward and punishment in the hereafter. If man is not the free untrammelled creator of his own acts and if these acts are the creation of God, how can he go against His will. Would it not be injustice on the part of God that, after creating man helpless he should call him to account for his sins and send him to hell. As Al-Shahrastani in his - "Kitab al-Millat-wa-al-Nihal" - mentions "the Mutazallites unanimously maintain that man decides upon and creates his own acts, both good and evil; that he deserves reward or punishment in the next world for what he does. In this way God is safe-guarded from association with any evil or wrong or any act of unbelief and transgression. For if he created the wrong, He would be wrong and if he created injustice, He would not be just." To them, the evil and goodness of things are "inherent in man and obvious to the intellect and require no ordinance or proof from Shariah."

Shameful and unjust deeds are evil in themselves and therefore, God has forbidden indulgence in them. His decree forbidding them did not make the acts shameful and unjust.

"They held that God was Omnipresent, Timeless, Directionless. His Arsh was "Samawati-wal-Ard" His beatific vision was not possible in this world<sup>15</sup> or thereafter."

The most embittered theory was that Quran was not in "Lohi-Mahfuz" but it originated or was created with the Prophet-hood of the Holy Prophet. Illogically they took their stand on Verse 101 of Surah 5 of the Holy Quran ignoring the warning given in the very succeeding verse 102, forgetting that in His Timelessness there is no past and future. The artificial barriers are for us and not for Him. The Mutazallites

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15. *They based it on Surah 7, V.143 of the Holy Q'uran wherein Moses says: My Lord, show me Thyself, that I may gaze upon Thee. He said: Thou will not see Me, but gaze upon the mountain. If it stands still in its place, then, thou will see Me. And when his Lord revealed (His) glory to the mountain it went crashing down & Moses fell down in a swoon And when he recovered he said: Glory unto thee I return to thee repentant."* Pickthall's translation; compare the Exodus 33, v.19-23.

denied (1) Munkir Nakir and punishment and reward in the grave; (2) Kir'amun-K'atibin as useless as God knows all that happens; (3) coming of Yajuj and Majuj and of Dajjal and (4) Prayers for the dead. The benefit of prayers goes to the one, who prays and benefits him, and to no others

These view became commonly current due to the patronage extended by the Abbasids particularly, Al-Mamum (813-833 A.D.) who accepted the doctrines of theirs and made them the official creed. Imam Hanbal's treatment is well known to be repeated. The hey-day of the intellectuals came with the availability of Arabic translations of the Greek Philosophers. The Mutazallites took them over and in their rationality made reason the sole basis of Truth and Reality and therefore, were active in interpreting Faith in terms of Pure Reason. The philosophers attempted to bring about a synthesis between Greek philosophy and precepts of Islam.

The orthodox section reacted against the Mutazallites and their extreme rationalistic attitude towards commonly held beliefs had to produce a reaction. Along with the Mutazallism Caliph, Al-Mamun, the free thinker, extended his patronage to the B'atineyah movement which was Shiaite in its complexion. They were the seekers after the inner or spiritual interpretation of the revelation. They believed and propagated that every thing Zahir (evident) had a B'atin (inner or allegorical, secret meaning) As the Greek philosophy was so much in fashion they also used it as a tool to their B'atini interpretations.

Al-Mamum befriended them and went so far as to don their colour green and as they were Shias, he even proclaimed the eighth Imam Hazrat Ali Rida (died 818 and buried in Meshhad) as his heir-apparent.

Politics, combined with orthodoxy, led to national outburst of the majority Sunni section, nurtured in the traditions of Medina, Mamun's two successors Mustasim (833) and Wasiq (842) tried to contain the reaction but the dams burst when Al-Mutawakkil (847-861) restarted the persecution of Shias and culminated in Al-Qadir (991-1031) who drove the B'atiniyas out in 1029 from the mosques and madrasahs. The reaction to B'atiniya gave birth to movements Al-Mazhab-al-Z'ahiri or Dawoodi School founded by Dawood-bin-Ali Khalaf: They repudiated all philosophical or allegorical interpretations and recognised only the Quran and the Hadith as the only sources of Jurisprudence and the

interpretation would be Z'ahiri-open, literal and the obvious. They accepted Ijma later but denied the validity of Qiyas (analogy) Rai (opinion) and Taqlid (Decision based on older judgments).

The Z'ahiri School enjoyed its widest acceptance in the tenth century and the most famous Jurist of the Century was Abdullah-bin-Ahmad-ibn-Al-Mughallis (d.936) through whom the Fiqah of Dawood-ibn-Ali became extensively known and popular with the masses. But its strongholds were Syria, had deep roots in Mamluke Egypt and spread to Muslim Spain where the Chief exponent was the famous Ibn-Hazm (994-1063). Ibn-Hazm was a prolific writer and is believed to have written 400 books comprising 80,000 folios of some twenty million words.

The genius within him could not be confined to the obvious of the Z'ahirids and he branched off into speculative and rationalist theology. He even tackled abstruse theories of Time and Space and seems to have forestalled Kant (d.1804), seven and half centuries earlier. It's elaboration, however, would be a lengthy digression. It may, however, be noted that Ibn-Hazm enlarged a Z'ahirite system on an intellectual dogma and revised Muslim law from that point of view. His views enjoyed only a limited acceptance. In fact he and his philosophy both remained persecuted in Spain. Ibn Rushd naturally mentions him with disdain in his "Tahafut-al-Tahafut," the rejoinder to Al-Ghazali's "Tahafut-al-Falasfa."

The keener minds had to find other outlets from the barren, brazen through bold Zahirite literal interpretations and two fresh stirrings occurred. Al-Kindi, the philosopher of Arabs, dominated the 9th century and ushered in the glorious reign of the philosophers. The swing of the pendulum took them to the other extreme of Z'ahirite doctrines. All was speculation, Pure Reason, Pure Essence. The Islamic philosophy was refined, linked and synthesised with the Greeks and Plato and Aristotle became the philosopher Imams.

Al-Kindi died in 873 A.D. And the same year was born Abul-Hasan Ali-Ibn-Ismail-Al-Ashari (873-941). He was an ardent Mutazallite because of the influence of his teacher, the great Mutazallite scholar and preacher Abu Ali Mohammad-bin-Abdul-Wahab Al-Jubbai. A sudden revolt and change occurred some say due to a dream and others to

his intellectual differences with his teacher and after due deliberation he publicly announced his recantation. He went to the Juma Mosque at Basra and declared: "He who knows me, knows who I am, and he who does not know me, let him know that I am Abdul Hasan Ali Al-Ashari, that I used to maintain that the Quran is created, that the eyes of men shall not see God and that the creatures create their actions. Lo, I repent that I have been Mutazallite, I renounce these opinions and I take the engagement to refute the Mutazallites and expose their infamy and turpitude."

After the change he wrote voluminously. Ibn Furak counts them to be 300 and Ibn Askir Damashqi lists the titles of 93. Amongst the extant ones the most important is (discourses on Islam and differences amongst the Muslims), edited and published in Istanbul in 1929.

As could be expected, he had to face opposition both from the Mutazallites who at last came to question revelation on the criteria of Reason alone and from the extreme orthodox Zahirist (traditionalists) and the Jurists who would regard innovation as heresy if any one went behind the literal meaning or to explain or establish its truth on a rational basis. For them there was God and His word revealed to the Holy Prophet and that was enough. He makes it plain by saying. "A section of the people — Zahirites and others — make capital out of their own ignorance; discussions and rational thinking about matters of faith became a heavy burden for them and therefore they became inclined to blind faith and blind following (Taqlid)." They condemned those who tried to rationalise the principles of religion as innovators. They considered discussion about Harkat (motion) Sukut (rest) Body, Space, Atom, the leaping of atoms and attributes of God to be a sin. They said that had such discussions been the right thing, the Holy Prophet and his Companions would have definitely done so; they further pointed out that the Prophet before his death discussed and fully explained all those matters which were necessary from the religious point of view, leaving none of them to be discussed by his followers; and since he did not discuss them, it was evident that to discuss them must be regarded as innovation.

This was briefly their objections to what came to be known as Kal'am in matters of faith.

Al-Ashari met these objections in three ways. He pointed out that the Prophet had nowhere laid a ban on such rational discussion or said that he who would attempt to discuss them was to be condemned as an innovator. Hence charging or condemning such men as innovators was itself an innovation.

Secondly, he contended that the Prophet was not unaware of body, motion, rest, atom etc., and the general usul (principles) were mentioned in the Quran and Hadith.

Thirdly, the elaboration is not there because the problems about them did not arise during his life time. Had these questions been raised then, he would have definitely explained them as he did in so many matters raised, when even raised by his enemies.

The companions of the Holy Prophet discussed so many new problems which faced them during the expansion period and in the absence of direct verdict (Naas) from the Prophet they even differed amongst themselves. The famous case is whether land in conquered lands could be divided as booty amongst those who took part in the campaign leading to the conquest. Even the Ashrai Mubasshara were divided on the issue. And Hazrat Umar decided by taking a rational view of the verse<sup>16</sup> of the Quran.

Al-Ashari asserted that Islam is not opposed to the use of Reason and in fact rationalisation of faith is a necessity in Islam.

But he had renounced the extremes of the Mutazallites. There was great controversy over the question whether the Quran was created or un-created and eternal. This question was bound up with another question whether speech is one of the attributes of God or not. The Mutazallites denied all attributes of God including that of speech. They argued that if speech is an attribute of God then speech would be eternal too and God would continue to speak and there would be multiplicity of eternals and not only one Quran which would be contrary to the very basis of the Quran. As it was revealed in twenty three years life time of the Holy Prophet, it should be regarded as created and created for him.

16. Surah 59, Verses 7-10.

Against this Asharites argued that the Quran in its meanings is uncreated and eternal because it is "Knowledge from God" and is therefore inseparable from God's attribute of knowledge which is eternal and uncreated. Hence Quran is also uncreated and eternal. Further, Quran makes a distinction between creation ( *خلق* ) and command ( *أمر* ) when it says "Are not the creation and command alone." Hence God's Command, His word ( *كلمة* ) or Kalam is different from created things ( *مخلوق* ) and so his Kalam must be uncreated and eternal.

The Asharism revolted against their extreme view of raising Reason above Revelation. To them revelation merely confirmed what is accepted by Reason and if there is a conflict between the two, Reason is to be preferred and revelation may be so interpreted as to be in conformity with the dictates of Reason. The Asharites held that revelation, and not Reason, is the real authority to determine what is good or bad. Actions in themselves are not good or bad. Divine Law and Shariah makes them so. What is commanded by Shariah is good, what is prohibited is bad. But kalam can find the reason behind the command or the prohibition. Reason has to be subordinated to Revelation. Its function is to rationalise the faith and not to question the validity or truth of the principles, revealed in the Quran, and incorporated in Shariah.

The third most controversial issue — not yet resolved is determination versus free will. The orthodox firmly held that every thing is predetermined by God, who has absolute power over everything including human will and human actions. The predestination leaves no man-uovering ground to any human, who can not create any thing including his own action. The Mutazallites swung to other extreme and argued that reward and punishment is related to man's free will to choose the path and mould his own actions. This power to choose was created by God and given to man, reward and punishment according to Shariah is due to following the right path ordained or going away from it. Al-Sharastani explains: "God creates, in man, the power, ability, choice and will to perform an act; and man endowed with this derived power, chooses freely one of the alternatives and wills an action—and corresponding to this intention, God creates and completes the action. It is this intention on the part of the man which makes him responsible for his deeds and misdeeds."

My own view is some-what different. It is correct to state that God has given man the power, ability and to choose his course. But He has not left him rudderless. The Quran very clearly lays down the guidelines and in unambiguous language tells him that his destiny here and in the hereafter lies in his own hand.

In the Quran the message is centered at God, the Creator and man, His sublime creation. He gave him intellect to acquire knowledge and free will to choose his course in life but made it clear and absolute that there is only one God, the supreme Creator. His was the sovereignty and He was sending the man down to this tiny earth as Khalifa. The short period of life was to be a period of preparation for the eternal life to follow when he would give an account of life spent and the work done. To help him to pass the final test, He would tell him the guidelines — the straight path. The man's prayer shall be: "Show us the straight path; the path of those whom thou: hast favoured; not of those who have incurred Thy wrath, nor of those who have gone astray." The freedom of choice of the path endowed was in no way restricted but in fairness, the result and the consequences were spelled out in no uncertain terms. If you follow the directions given from time to time you would have contentment, bliss and success and when you return He would bestow eternal peace and happiness in a place which is named 'Jannat' and if you ignore the guiding lines and became a prey to your own passions and desires, you would lead an unsatisfied life and when you return to Him, you would fail in the final test, deserve punishment in eternal agony, shame and degradation, consigned to their flames in the abode called 'Douzakh.'

So the Quran is called 'Al-Furqan,' the criterion of Right and Wrong and says: "Beautiful for mankind is love of the joys that come from women and offsprings, and stored up heaps of gold and silver and horses branded with their mark and cattle and land. This is comfort of the life of the world. Allah, With Him is a more excellent abode" (Surah 3, Al Imran, Verse 14). The righteous shall inherit the world and the hereafter. He Himself defines what righteousness is: "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the East and the West; but the righteous is he who believeth in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Scripture and the prophets; and giveth his wealth, for love of

Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free; and observes proper worship and pays the poor-due. And those who keep their treaty when they make one, and the patient in tribulation and adversity and in times of stress. Such are they who are sincere (and truthfull). Such are the God-fearing (who keep their duty)." (Surah 2, Al-Baqarah, Verse 177).

Al-Ashari had tremendous, continuous and deep influence not in his own times but in subsequent ages too. Ibn Taimiyah said in his 'Minhaj-al-Sunnah' that "the most comprehensive of the books he went through on views of different people on the basic principles of Islam was Al-Ashari's "Al-Maqalati-al-Islamiyyin" and that he discussed many of such views in detail as were not ever mentioned by others." His pupils further developed his doctrines and dogma. Amongst the older Asharites were the famous theologians Hafiz Abu Bakr Jarjani, Abu Qaffal, Abdul Hasan Bahili and the famous historian Sh: Abu Mohammad Tabari. The next generation of Asharites were even more learned and more influential and amongst them were Qazi Abu Bakr Baqillani, Abu Bakr-bin-Furak and Abu Ishaq Isfraini<sup>17</sup> and above all Abu Al-Maa'ali-Al-Juwaini, known through out the Muslim world as Imamul-Harmayn under whom Al-Ghazali did all his learning for full eight years till the death of the Imam in 1085 A.D.

Al-Juwayni's main contribution was "usual-i-fikh" and his principal treatises. "Al-warakat-fi-usuli-alfikhi" continued to be studied and commented upon till the 17th Century. He is important because he took Al-Ashari's method of rational justification of faith deeper in Fikha too and his methodology was taken up and perfected by Al-Ghazali: his unique way of presentation of the problems, the conduct of discussions, selection of subjects for discussions and importance of conclusions through rational reasoning – borrowed from Mutazallities and the Greek philosophers reflected in Muslim thought but moulded in an orthodox tinge- the essence of Ilm-Kalam was taken up by Al-Ghazali, who mastered it. It is also important to note his swaying away to metaphorical interpretation (Ta'wil) of anthropomorphic terms applied

17. Wasn't Isfraini Sindhi convert who died in Iran in 321 A.H. and his son was an authority on Ah'adith in Baghdad?

to God. For example Al-Ashari had held that "hand as applied to God was to be understood as hand without explaining precisely how," Al Juwayni argued the corporeal meaning was impossible and that it must be understood as "Power." Al-Juwayni's interest in philosophy was also transmitted to Al-Ghazali.

To sum up; when Ghazali came of age the Muslim world was in sheer turmoil, politically and spiritually. The decadent Abbasid Caliphs were captives and tools of the warlords, the Shia creed was triumphing every where. The Buwayids ruled at Baghdad, in the name of the Caliph; and their effective rule extended throughout the Eastern parts of the Empire. The Arabs had lost even Sind which had been parcelled and three independent principalities came into existence – Makran, Mansoura, and Multan. In Multan the Khutba was read in the name of the Caliph jointly with the real ruler the Buwayid, Aizud-Dawlah.

The Karmathians and the Ismailis were threat to orthodox Sunni Islam both politically and doctorinally. The emergence of the Fatimide Caliphate was a major disturbing event. For the first time a large part of Darul-Islam had passed under the control of a sect which not only rejected the spiritual claims of the Abbasids but actively worked openly and through sabotage to replace them by universalist Imamate. Muqqaddasi, the early Arab Geographer who visited Sind stated in his book 'Ahsan-al-Maqaseem-Fi-Marafat-i-Al-Aqlim' abridged and translated by Abdul Halim Sharar, quoted in his "Tarikh-i-Sind (History of Sind)" that "people of Multan were Shias and the current coinage is that of Fatimids of Egypt whose suzerainty is acknowledged by the Ruler who has to obtain sanction of the Fatimide ruler before issuing any order. There is almost a courier service between Multan and Cairo whose control is so great that a new Ruler can not assume powers without their affirmation and approval."

The Karmathian Shia missionaries were active in Sind, Gujrat and lower in Bombay from their bases in Bahrain and Yemen where they were in effective control. Khojas and Bohras are their converts. In Mansourah, Z'ahirids had the upper hand Muqqaddasi mentions having met Qazi Abu Mohammad-Mansouri, who was the Imam of Dawood Z'ahiri sect.

The Muslim world was in real turmoil, the different forces were pulling it apart and the pieces were turning into a patchy pattern. The glory that was Islam was fading into a multitude of facets and beliefs. The Karmathians, the Fatimids, the Ismailis, the B'atiniyas, were digging in to root out the orthodox Islam as understood, held and felt by the majority even in the territories under their political control. The reaction that was setting in was typified by the Z'ahirids and Imam Hanbal, who led an undaunted fight against the free lancers of the Mutazallites, patronised so openly by Al-Mamun. He was scourged but didn't give up courage. He patiently submitted to corporal punishment and imprisonment under three successive Caliphs — Mamun, Mustasim, Wasiq — but would not accept that the Quran was created. The Hanablis erred in the complete swing to the rightist reaction. Any discussion of tenets of Islam was an innovation and "Bidat" and so frowned upon. Al-Muhasibi and other contemporaries of Imam Abul Hanbal incurred his displeasure for defending the faith with arguments on a rational basis. The Mutazallite doctrines could be contraversed only through developing a rival science of reasoning based on material from the Quran and Sunnah. It was first a drift but developed into a powerful wave sweeping in Iraq through Al-Ashari, in Egypt through Al-Tahawi and in Samarkand through Abu Mansur Al-Maturide.

In this flux world was Al-Ghazali. It has been said that Al-Ghazali had supreme intellectual courage — courage to doubt and courage to know — his autobiographical "Al-Munqidh-min-ad-Dalal" — "Deliverance from Error" — is unique in self-revelation and gives an intellectual analysis of his spiritual growth. He says — and it is worth requoteing — "From my early youth, since I attained the age of puberty before I was twenty, until the present time when I am over fifty, I have ever recklessly launched out into the midst of ocean depths. I have ever bravely embarked upon the open sea, throwing aside all craven caution, I have poked into every dark recess. I have made an assault on every problem, I have plunged into every abyss, I have scrutinized the creed of every sect, I have tried to lay bare the inmost doctrines of every community. All this I have done that I might distinguish between true and false, between sound tradition and heretical innovation. Whenever I meet one of the B'atiniyah, I like to study his creed; whenever I

meet one of the Zahirryah, I want to know the essentials of his belief. If it is a philosopher, I try to become acquainted with the essence of his philosophy; if a scholastic theologian I busy myself in examining his theological reasoning; if a sufi, I yearn to fathom the secret of his mysticism; if an ascetic, I investigate the basis of his ascetic practices; if one of Zandiq or Mutazillah, I look beneath the surface to discover the reasons for his bold adoption of such a creed."

This thirst after comprehension of things as they really are was God given, a part of his nature and temperament and not of his choice or contrivance. He frankly states that as "I drew near the age of adolescence the bonds of mere authority tradition ( **تقليد** ) ceased to have any hold on me and inherited beliefs lost their grip upon me. I, therefore, said to myself: To begin with, what I am looking for is knowledge of what things really are, so I must undoubtedly try to find what knowledge really is" And this knowledge has to be certain knowledge. He is fond of giving an example of turning a rod into serpent and says "Let us suppose that some one says to me: "Three is more than ten and in proof of that I shall change this rod into a serpent and let us suppose that he actually changes the rod into a serpent and I see him doing so." This does not lead him to accept that three is more than ten but the only result was that "I wonder precisely how is he able to produce the change of rod into a serpent but my knowledge that ten is more than three is certain and infallible."

Let us now trace his journey through the chartered seas of doubts and truths. He tells the story himself and let us hear him say it "Now that despair has come over me, there is no point in taking problems except in the sphere of what is self-evident, namely, necessary truths and the affirmation of the senses. I, therefore, proceeded with extreme earnestness to reflect and to see whether I could make myself doubt them." The outcome of this protracted effort was that he began to find proof that sense — perception was open to doubt and to grave unreality. He gives two examples: saying that "the most powerful sense is that of sight yet when it looks at the shadow of a stick or on a sundial, the eye sees it still and judges that there is no motion. But even after an hour's observance it is clear that it is moving and moving steadily by infinitely small distances in such away that it is never in a state of rest. Again the

eye sees the heavenly bodies and sees the Sun is a small object though the mathematical calculation show that in size it is greater than the Earth." His reliance on self-perception is destroyed, he turns to Intellect but doubts again emerge. He argued with himself. "Perhaps behind the intellectual apprehension there is another Judge who, if He manifests himself will show the falsity of intellect in its judging, just as when intellect manifested itself it showed the falsity of sense in its judging." But before the next stage of doubt gets a grip upon him he goes about dissecting the intellectual truths of those who in his days claimed to be the re-pository of the Infallible Truth.

He classifies the seekers of Truth as forming four different groups: And he lists them in his *Al-Munqidh* – as

- (1) Mutakallamun (the theologians) who claim that they are exponents of thought and intellectual speculation.
- (2) The B'atiniyah – though divided into groups of Taqlidi Shias, the Karmathians, the Ismailis and later the Assassins – generally agreed upon the principle of T'awil (i.e. material interpretation of the Quran and allegorical explanations of the literal text – the inner meaning) and held that the final authoritative instructions deriving Truth from an Infallible Imam, heavenly incarnated in Divine Light was essential. The Natiq Imams gave Divine guidance and their teachings were maintained in the intervals by silent (S'amt) Imams.
- (3) The philisophers, who were exponents of logic and demonstration and
- (4) The Sufis who claimed that they alone enter into the presence of God and posses vision and intuitive understanding.

Imam Ghazali had a life span of only 53 years (1058-1111 A.D.) he left behind 192 books and most of them were so popular that he was quoted as an authority by most of the teachers. Confining myself to the four subjects which he himself selected for elaborate treatment to convince himself of the under-lying truth, the list may be abridged to:

On-I Kalam Al-Iqtizad-Fil-Itiqad, Isr'ar-i-Ittibaa-i-Sunnah, Israr-i-Maam-l'ate-al-Din, Israri-al Anw'ar-i-Ilahiya, Hujjat-ul-Haq, Haqiqat-ul-Ruh, Tanbihul-Ghalibin, Kimia-i-Saad'at, Kashful-ulum-i-Akhira,

- On-II – The Mutazallites and Batiniya, Taliqi-Faroghi-al Madhhab, Tafaraqi-bainul-Islam-wa-Al-Zindiqa, Khulasai-al-Res'a'il-il-ulumul Mas'a'il-fi-Madhhab, Aqidatul Masbiha, Mustazhri-Fil-Ard-alil-Batiniya, Mufadalil-Khalafi-Qaisal-Batiniya,
- On-III – Philosophy and Logic, Maqasid-al-Falasafa, Tahutul-Felasafah, Al-Munqad-ul-Min-aldal'al, Mairai-Ilm, Mahak-al-Nazr, Mizain-ul-Amal.
- On-IV – Sufis and Sufism, Ihya-ul-Ulum, Akhla'qi-al-Abrai, Mishkawat-al-Anwar, Minhajul Abidin, Mairaji-S'alikin, Hid'ayatul-Hidayah.

In addition he was an authority on Fiqh and his famous books are: Wasit, Basit, Biyanul Qaulin-al-Shafai, Taliqihi Farogh-i-Madhhab, Khula'asatul Rasol, Shifai-al-Alil, Tahsinul Maahad, Mufasssal Khilaf-Fi-Usul-al-Qiyas.

This brief list comes to 35 books.

His "*Ihya-ul-Ulum*" written when he had left Nizamiya and had begun his wandering in search of Truth is in fact quintessence of his learning and personality. It is surprising and astonishing how this book was in circulation in his own life time through out Muslim world as were his books on philosophy. Zain-uddin Iraqi (the Traditionalist) –thought that *Ihya-ul-ulum* was the finest product of Islamic learning. Abdul Ghafar Farsi – his contemporary and fellow student of Imam al-Harmayin has gone on record "no book like it was ever written earlier." Imam Nawī – the commentator of (Sahih Muslim) opined that the book may be regarded as corollary to the Quran. Sheikh Abdullah Idroos – a famous Sufi of his time had committed it to memory.

Let us then go back to his book *Al-Munqidh ad-Dalal* for enlightenment on the four Schools he has chosen for discussion: let him speak on the science of Theology: "I read the books of sound theologians and myself wrote some books on the subject. I found that its aim was merely to preserve the orthodox creed and defend it against the heretics. Their weapon was systematic and laying bare the confused doctrines invented by heretics at variance with traditional orthodoxy. All credit to them for preserving the purity of the Quran and Sunnah but for the most part their efforts were devoted to exposing the contradictions of



the heretics and their logical inconsistencies." This was not enough for him and he says that it was no cure for the malady he complained of.

Allama Shibli has dealt with it at some length and is worth referring to. According to him the majority group amongst the Muslim public held the view that there are no hidden meanings behind what is stated in Shariah and any attempt to go behind the obvious is not permissible and those Ulema who attempt to find other explanation in fact deviate from Shariah and should be condemned. Even Imam-ul-Harmayin, the teacher of Imam Ghazali, had to utter in despair "I wish I had the firm beliefs of an old woman." The other group differed on the basis of the Quranic injunctions and the call to think, ponder and find the mysteries as they are for his (تسخير) conquest. But they also held in response to Hazrat Ali's directive quoted in "Sahih Bukhari:" "Explain things which the people can grasp and leave out those which they can not understand." Imam Ghazali belonged to the group that wished to go deeper and satisfy the inner cravings of an intellectual Muslim. In the Preface to "Ihya-ul-Ulum" he has fully discussed these two attitudes and stated that no intelligent person can deny that there are plain and hidden meanings: only those can deny this truth who still cling to the things they learnt in their childhood; such men can not advance to any higher learning. In "Jawaharul-Quran," while discussing existence of God and the Last Day Judgment, he says that one group is satisfied with the plain assertions as part of the ultimate faith but the other group of intellectuals will like to probe deeper and find hidden secrets and their reality but concedes that common man should not be initiated into these mysteries. Ibn Rushd has also confirmed this view and stated that Shariah has both plain and inner meaning and the one who is incapable of understanding the inner should not be given that instruction. Imam Ghazali was well versed and his books cover all—for the common men, for the intelligent ones who wish to study a bit further and for the intellectuals who to use his own words, "wish to knock at the door behind which the mysteries are shrouded."

The Theologians were, therefore, disappointing to him, though he does not deny that results of their efforts have been sufficient for others. He pithily remarks that the healing drugs vary with disease. His disease was different.

So he turned to the Philosophers.

As was his ingrained aptitude he made a special study of the Greek philosophy and their Muslim commentators of whom he concentrated on two: the most prominent ones — Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina (Avicenna) who were still in vogue — Ibn Sina having died only 11 years before Al-Ghazali was born. "I was convinced" he writes, "that a man can not grasp what is defective in any of the sciences unless he has so complete a grasp of the science in question that he equals its most learned exponents in the appreciation of its fundamentals and even goes beyond and surpasses them, probing into some of the tangles and profundities which the very professors of the science have neglected. I, therefore, set out in all earnestness to acquire a knowledge of philosophy from books, by private study without the help of a teacher."

To the diligent reader it is obvious that Al-Ghazali had a sneaking respect for the Philosophers' learning and their scientific rational approach and exposition of the fundamentals of nature and man's response, of God, His Attributes and His Creation and he set out to surpass them in their own branch of learning. He was then heading the Nizamiya College at Baghdad and the temptation to out-do them was irresistible. It was also an important part of his quest for the ultimate Truth. To clarify his own ideas he first wrote (مقاصد الفلاسفة) "The Aims of the Philosophers." It is an irony that this book became a classic for the West and Al-Ghazali for his clear thinking and clearer exposition was hailed as a great Aristotelian!

Having satisfied himself and others that he had fully acquired their knowledge and was competent enough to settle scores with them on their own plane, he wrote: تهافت الفلاسفة (The In-Coherence of the Philosophers). In his introduction of the book he states: "I have observed that there is a class of men who believe in their superiority to others because of their greater intelligence and insight. They have abandoned all the religious duties Islam enjoins."

"The heretics in our times have heard the awe-inspiring names of people like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle. They have been deceived by the followers of these philosophers — exaggerations to the effect that these ancient masters possessed extraordinary intellectual powers; that the

principles they have discovered are unquestionable, that the mathematical, logical, physical and metaphysical sciences developed by them are the most profound, that their excellent intelligence justifies their bold attempts to discover the hidden things by deductive methods." How contemporary he sounds when he laments that "the younger generation of heretics who thought that emulation of the example of the learned philosophers held out to them the promise of an elevated status far above the general level of common men. They refuse to be content with the religion followed by their ancestors. They flatter themselves with the idea that it would do them an honour not to accept even the revealed Truth uncritically and actually began to accept falsehood uncritically."

He further affirmed that his book was going to demonstrate that the ancient philosophers, whose followers the athiest of his day claimed to be, were really untainted with what was imputed to them. But sometime they faltered and went astray and caused others to go astray.

At the same time he was not opposed to demonstrable and provable exact sciences—Mathematics and Physics and says in his "Deliverance From Error" — "A grievous crime indeed against religion has been committed by men who are loyal to Islam but ignorant of sciences. Disagreement with the philosophers can not be taken to mathematical sciences as there is nothing in these sciences opposed to the truths of the religion. They even reject the theory of the eclipse of the Sun and the Moon saying that it is contrary to revelation. The young, already doubtful of the validity of revelation, hearing of the denial of eclipses etc., condemns the religion as based on ignorance."

Similarly with Logic, which he defined as the study of the methods of demonstration, laying down premises of proofs and the manner of ordering it, there is "Tasawwur," (the concept) and the "Tasdiq" (assertion or proof). According to him there was nothing therein which was against tenets of religion and this method could with advantage be adopted by the theologians and the speculative thinkers. If it is denied or rejected the only effect upon the logicians is to impair their belief either in the intelligence of the man, making the denial, or in his religion which he may hold to be resting on such absurd denials. Just as it is not a condition of religion to reject Medical Scien-

ces so likewise their rejection is not one of its conditions. Nature in fact is in subjection to God, not acting of itself but serving as an instrument in the hands of the creator. Sun, Moon, Stars, all elements in Heaven and on Earth are in subjection to His Command. Al-Ghazali takes up cudgels with them only when they argue that God having created them let them follow their movement or activity through their own essence, independent of further control.

To him the truth matters, not the man. He disapproves of the tendency amongst the majority of educated persons in his own times that where-ever one ascribes a statement to an author of whom they approve they accept it, even although it is false, and when one ascribes it to an author of whom they disapprove, they reject it even though it is true. He commends Hazrat Ali's dictum "Do not know the truth by the men, but know the truth and then you will know who are truthful." He gives a very interesting illustration. A Christian is heard giving a discourse starting with a statement "There is one God and Jesus is the Messenger of God." The man may not be condemned for this, though it may sound unfamiliar, if he stops there and does not continue to argue that others are not. Similarly his other assertions — metaphysical, ethical and logical if correct and true in themselves they have to be accepted.

The attraction of philosophy in Al-Ghazali's time and half a century preceding it has been compared to that of science at present. But there was one difference. Science in Islamic world was closely associated with the philosophical system. An integrated system required that to be really accomplished one learnt Qur'an, Hadith, Jurisprudence, Ethics, Logic, Mathematics, Physics, Natural Sciences, Astronomy, Astrology and Poetry. Through the chain of Nizamiya Colleges the emphasis had shifted to theology and the philosophers were dubbed as Greek atheists, a danger to Islamic polity.

That's why Al-Ghazali had to write one full well reasoned and well argued book against the philosophers and their approach to the fundamentals of Shariah. He was of the view that though Aristotle criticised Socrates and his teacher Plato yet he retained a residue of their unbelief and heresy and we must therefore, reckon as unbelievers their followers amongst Islamic philosophers such as Al-Farabi, Ibn-Sina and others.

In his famous book "Tahafut Al Falasifah" "Inconherence of the Philosophers" he gives a list of twenty problems under which he discussed them and, as he put it, "exposed the contradictions involved in the philosophers' theories," but of the twenty heads, he reckoned them to be infidels on three counts only and heretics on the remaining seventeen. The three points in which they differed from the orthodox Muslims were:

- (1) Their denial of the resurrection of bodies, followed by feelings of pleasure and pain produced by physical causes of these feelings in Paradise and Hell. They asserted that the rewards and punishments were spiritual and not bodily. He says that they certainly speak truth in affirming the spiritual ones since there do they exist as well; but they speak falsely in denying the bodily ones and in their pronouncements, disbelieve the revelation.

As this controversy has never been finally resolved let us go into it in some detail. The Philosophers believed in the eternity of the soul. After the death of the body, the soul continues to have an everlasting existence: The eternal pleasure is for the pure and perfect souls; the eternal pain is for the imperfect and impure souls; transient pain is for the impure but good souls.

And the soul can attain absolute bliss only by means of perfection and purity. Perfection is derived, from knowledge and purity from virtuous action.

Knowledge is required because the rational faculty derives nourishment and pleasure from the recognition of the intelligibles. It is the body, the physical pre-occupations and the physical senses which prevent the rational faculty from discovering the intelligibles. But the soul's pre-occupation with the body makes it forgetful of itself. So if the imperfections of the ignorant soul remain till the severance of the connection with the body it will remain imperfect and impure soul after bodily death. When death puts an end to physical pre-occupations, the souls perfected by knowledge have blissful feeling of liberation.

Virtuous conduct and worship are required in order to purify the soul. If the soul in this life is pre-occupied with carnal desires and pleasurable causes of pleasure, even after the death of the body such a soul

would be credibly distressed and in pain. And that is Hell.

Deliverance from such psychic proclivities is not possible unless the soul abstains from carnal desires; turns away from the world and struggles for attainment of knowledge and piety. This will weaken its connection with the world and its connection with the things of the hereafter will grow stronger. So when death comes, the soul will experience the same relief as a prisoner does when he is set free. And then it will find every thing it could have possibly asked for. That is its Paradise.

The utter negation of physical qualities not being possible for all, religion enjoins upon us the choice of the mean between all opposite extremes in morals and actions. One should neither hoard wealth nor squander it away — thus avoiding avarice and being a spend-thrift. One ought to aim at generosity which is the mean between miserliness and extravagance. Reform of the moral character is not possible unless there is regard in conduct for the sacred law.

One who combines moral and intellectual greatness is the devout sage and his reward will be absolute bliss. He who lacks knowledge and virtue is damned. Says Allah, "He is indeed successful who causeth it grow and he is indeed a failure who stunteth it." He who has intellectual, but not moral, greatness will be awarded punishment but that will not be everlasting because physical accidents had tainted him with impurity, this impurity can be effaced in course of time as the causes of impurity will not be renewed. He who has virtue but no knowledge will yet be saved and will experience no pain. But he will not attain perfect bliss. Moreover as soon as one dies, dooms-day begins for him.

The philosophers, according to him, denied the return of the soul to the body, the existence of a physical Paradise and Hell, the "Hoors" with large eyes and lovely arms. These things were described through symbols and as an allegory for man's understanding. In fact he fails to grasp these pleasures and pains.

Imam Ghazali's objections are not so accusing as he sounds. Let us quote him, "Most of these things," he says, "are not opposed to religion. We do not deny that the pleasures in the Hereafter are superior to sensuous pleasures. Nor do we deny the immortality of the soul separated from the body. No doubt resurrection will not be comprehens-

ible, if the immortality of the soul is not taken for granted. But what is there to prevent one from assenting to the possibility of the combination of physical and spiritual pains or pleasures? The Qur'anic verse. "No soul knows what lies concealed in store for them" only means that no soul knows all these things. Similarly, from the verse. "I have reserved for my virtuous worshippers what no eye ever saw." The existence of things of supreme worth can be inferred; but their negation does not necessarily follow. Rather, the combination of the two will be conducive to greater perfection. And that which has been promised to us is the most perfect thing. Hence it follows that the combination of the two is possible and it is necessary to assent to this possibility in accordance with religion.<sup>18</sup>

His Second serious charge against the philosophers is that they say that the world is ever lasting, without any beginning, it-co-existed with God. It is inconceivable that some thing which has a beginning in time should proceed from the Eternal without there being an intermediate period. If we suppose the eternal was at a stage when the world had not yet originated from Him, then the question is "why did He not originate the world before its origination." It is not possible to say, "Because of His inability to bring the world into existence" nor could one say, "Because of the impossibility of the world's coming into Being." For this would mean that He changed from inability to Power and changed the impossibility into possibility. And both statements are absurd. Then they go to say that the nearest thing to imagine is to say that He had not willed the world's existence before. This means that he became a Willer of its existence after not having been a willer. So if the origin of the world is ascribed to God's action, the question remains "Why now, and why not before." Was it due to the absence of means, or power, or purpose, or nature?

The nearest to the truth is that God did have the power, before the creation of the world. His powers is infinite and the power and will to create includes the power and the will not to create. He held Himself in patience and did not create it. He had the power but did not exercise it. And He created it when He willed it.

18. Q.E.D.

Then the discussion between Al-Ghazali and the Philosophers becomes discursive and logical e.g. Are we to call the period of not creating finite or infinite, the attributes of will, dissimilarity in nature among the parts of the primary round body which is Heaven, planets and stars. Time and beginning of Time, Matter and Time and time of their origins, non-existence or unawareness of intellect and priority when there was no Time, no dimensions and the Divine knowledge existed and so on and on. It runs over 50 pages. He is conscious of the fact and finally he says "If it is said: In all your objections you have tried to meet difficulties by raising other difficulties; you have not tried to solve the difficulties which had been raised by the Philosophers; We will answer: after all, this method has exposed the invalidity of the Philosopher's theories and their incoherence. In this book we have undertaken only an attack on their doctrines and a refutation of their arguments. It is not our purpose to support a particular point of view: for the only thing we intended to do was to refute the philosopher's claim that its (the world's) eternity is definitely known and established."

It would have gladdened the heart of Imam Ghazali that the present day scientific advance has so conclusively disproved the Philosophers' claim that the Earth's Eternity was co-equal. It is now asserted and established that the creation was subsequent at a given time and supported the Qur'anic version:<sup>19</sup> "Then He directed Himself to the Heaven and it was a vapour so He said to it and to the Earth (already created vide V.9 & 10) come both willingly or unwillingly. They both said 'we come willingly' And the six days<sup>20</sup> mentioned are not the days of Time as counted by us but in space and refer to Six Stages of its development. The first stage is the throwing of the cosmic matter creating Earth, the second stage cooling of its surface, the third making of the mountains, the fourth blessing it with water and making in it rivers, the fifth growth of life at sea shores and the sixth ordaining of foods—plant, life, animal life. The Qur'anic Time relativity to our day is repeatedly asserted in the Holy Qur'an. "Our day is equal to your fifty thou-

19. Surah 41, V. 11.

20. The Q'uran repeatedly asserts that our day is not equivalent to the Time mentioned in creation and the hereafter. God says that My one day may be equal to your one thousand, twenty thousand, fifty thousand years and your life span in earthly existence might not appear even an hour in the hereafter.

sand years." And that too is relative.

It sounds strange and unbelievable but the scientists claim to have now recorded the microwave signals originating from the original cosmic mass of material that was thrown over 10,000 million years ago. The estimated mass must have weighed  $10 \times 46$  zero tons. These signals radiated the material of the universe was concerted and poised to fly apart into planets stars and galaxies.

The Director of the Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope, Sir Bernard Lovell, told the British Association for the Advancement of Science, London, in Aug: 78 that primeval explosion was found in sounds picked up 10 years ago by the instruments of the Bell laboratories; New Jersey, and since then confirmed by instruments sent aloft more recently by rockets and in high flying balloons.

"Apparently we observe today a radiation which is a relic of the high temperature phase of the universe, within a second or so of the beginning." One second after the Beginning came the critical period when the abundance of helium to hydrogen was determined in the universe. By this time (within a millionth of a second) the temperature had fallen to a few thousand million degrees.

"It was an astonishing reflection," said Sir Bernard, "that if the force of attraction between protons had been only a few percent stronger, "then all the hydrogen in the primeval condensate would have turned into helium in that stage of expansion and there would have been no galaxies, no stars, no life would have emerged." The Qur'an says that He said "Kun" and it became (Faya Kun)<sup>21</sup>. Sir Bernard said that our universe, our Earth in fact the entire creation were created in "a millionth of a second." It was also in these seconds that the conditions were set which paved the way for the Earth to be formed and for life to appear in it.

So the world was created and it was not in eternity and shall not remain eternal either. Sir Bernard also observed that it was possible that some day outward momentum, already slowing down, would stop and

21. "Kun Faya Kun" — He says — "Be and it is" — created in one millionth of a second.

the universe would collapse in on itself to become a single mass again. This again is confirmation of the end of the Earth and Heaven — when the heavens would be rolled up, mountains collapse into dust, sun would suck in the Moon and the Stars would be without light so vividly repeated several times in the Qur'an. He alone is Eternal.

The third and the last point on which Al-Ghazali reckons philosophers to be K'afir (non-Muslim) is that they say God knows universal but not particulars Al-Ghazali's exposition is as follows:-

Like the Mutazallites, the philosophers agree in rejecting as impossible the affirmation of knowledge, power and will of — The First Principle. They assert that these names have been used in sacred texts and their application is etymologically defensible. Nevertheless they mean the same thing i.e. The One Essence (God). It is not right to affirm attributes which are additional to Divine Essence, as our knowledge or Power is additional to our own essence. For if it were so, such a thing necessitates plurality. And He is one and the Perfect. He does not need anything. The attributes of Perfection and Power can not be separated from the Essence of the Perfect one. He who needs — even the attribute of perfection — is essentially imperfect. This, according to Philosophers, would be "Kufr."

The position that God knows what is other than Himself was adopted by Ibn Sina, (Avicenna) while others said that He knows Himself only. He said that God knows all the things in a universal manner which does not fall under Time. But he also argued that knowledge of particulars means change in the essence of the knower. Then in his Socratic style Al-Ghazali poses the Question and answers it himself. The question is God's knowledge of all the species and genera whose number is unlimited, identical with His Self-knowledge or not and answers 'If you say it is not identical, you will break the rule by admitting plurality. But if you say that it is identical why should you not have yourself classed with one who claims that man's knowledge of what is other than himself is identical with his self-knowledge and with his Essence: And passes judgment; "And He who makes this statement must be a fool!"

The real fact is that the question at issue between him and the Philosophers is whether the Being — the Essence, the First Principle, the God — is more adequately described by human analogy or by analogy from natural forces. The conception of God as pure, purest Essence — fits in well with the analogy of a natural force. He describes himself in Surah Noor as (نور الانوار)<sup>22</sup> Those of the rationalist turn of mind denied that such attributes as knowing, hearing, seeing, speaking, willing had any distinct existence within God's Essence. They don't deny them, they do not accept them as distinct, separate entity. It is just like what is in "O, Allah who hears with his Essence of hearing and hearing of all is due to this Essence of hearing, O who hears all (the prayers)." And this is what Al-Ghazali means by all his arguments and it was the religious experience of ordinary men that eventually triumphed.

To give away a secret, I have a sneaking feeling that Al-Ghazali's all chagrin against Ibn Sina was due to the fact, also admitted by him in his Testament, that he took wine. Ibn Sina says that "he swore to God that he would do various things, and in particular that he would practise what the sacred Law prescribed, that he would not be lax in taking part in the public worship of God, and that he would not drink for pleasure but only as a tonic or medicine."

Al-Ghazali sarcastically remarks that such is the faith of these philosophers who profess religious faith; and thus the net-result of Ibn Sina's purity of faith and observance of the obligations of worship was that "he made an exception of drinking wine for medical purposes." The rest, to my mind, is an intellectual exercise to meet the philosophers on their own ground and beat them down with their own arguments.

It may be mentioned in passing that his aim in writing this book was not to build up a new system but only to destroy the viewpoints on the main 20 points listed by him and criticise the two leading luminaries Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina — "For this reason," he says, "we have called this book 'The Destruction of the Philosophers,' not, 'An introduction to Truth' and therefore, 'we are not bound to reply to your

22. *Light upon Light.*

objections which you raise now."

On the remaining seventeen points he is of the opinion that their denial of the attributes of God, their doctrine that God knows by his Essence and not by a knowledge which is over and above. His Essence, and the like — their position approximates to that of the Mutazallites and the Mutazallites must not be accounted infidels because of such matters.

In distant Spain fifteen years after the death of Imam Ghazali was born Ibn Rushd who was destined to keep alight the torch lit by Al-Kindi and Farabi — and dominate thinking in awakening Europe. Imam Ghazali's fame had spread even to the distant Spain and Ibn Rushd felt honour bound to defend Philosophy and its Masters and refute Ghazali's "Incoherence of Philosophers" with "Incoherence of the incoherent."

Ibn Rushd met Ghazali on his own ground — the Revelation. While Ghazali condemned the Philosophers on several counts as either not fully understanding the revealed word, going against the injunctions and postulates of Qur'an and Sunnah, Ibn Rushd refuted the allegation that the Philosophers were irreligious merely because they tried to find hidden logical meanings behind some parts of the Qur'an and explain and prove them by demonstrative, dialectical, logical arguments. He took the position on the various Qur'anic texts where the wise, the learned are enjoined to think deeply and discover the truth. The objective of religion as defined by him is to attain the truth — The True Theory and True Practice (Al-Ilm-al-Haqq w'alaamat al-Haqq). He went over Ghazali's twenty points one by one and asserted that "the different degrees of assent and conviction attained by the assertions in 'Incoherence of Philosophers' has not reached the degree of evidence and of truth." He claimed that the "Divine ordinance itself requires us to look into the books of the ancients" and added that any man forbidding the study of the books to any one properly qualified to look into them debarb mankind from the very door whereby divine ordinance calls men to get to know God — the door of speculation leading to the true knowledge of Him "

However that may be, so the orthodoxy backed by the political power of the Seljuks, was in the ascendance and could not allow Ibn Sina or Ibn Rushd to have the last word.

Having satisfied himself that even philosophic reason had not the satisfying truth within it, his (Ghazali) quest was sharpened. "From the sciences I had laboured at," he says "and the paths I had traversed in my investigation of revelational and rational sciences, there had come to me a sure faith in God Most High, in Prophethood and in the Last Day. These three cardinal principles were firmly rooted in my being; but the truth was dawning on me that I had no hope of bliss in this world or thereafter."

As usual he is as unsparing of himself as of the philosophers and writes "I considered the circumstances of my life and realized that I was caught in veritable thicket of attachments. I considered my activities of which the best was my teaching and lecturing, and realized that in them I was dealing with sciences that were unimportant and contributed nothing to the attainment of eternal life."

He continues his own dissection — "After that I examined my motive in my work of teaching and realized that it was not a pure desire for the things of God, but that the impulse moving me was the desire for an influential position and public recognition. I saw for certain that I was on the brink of a crumbling bank of sand and in imminent danger of hell fire unless I set out to mend my ways."

This was the beginning of a new awakening to a new path — S'ufism—which he had so far left unexplored. The inner struggle was acute and severance of all wordly attachment and complete self-abnegation was no easy matter. He was then only 37 years old in the prime of his life, at the height of his acute and supple intellectual attainment, occupying the exalted office of the Head of the Nizamiah College at Baghdad, the Centre of all that was Muslim: its culture, its learning, its attainments.

For nearly six months he says, "I was continuously tossed about between the attractions of worldly desires and the impulses towards eternal life."

The inner struggle was so great that the anxiety complex affected his speech. "One particular day I would make an effort to lecture in order to gratify the hearts of my following, but my tongue would not utter a word." He became bed ridden and the Hakims told him that "the only method of treatment is that the anxiety complex should be allayed." So, as he puts it, "the matter ceased to be one of choice and became one of compulsion." And he took the plunge and took to the road — the road to S'ufism, salvation, solitude, and silent repose.

In his own times, and since then, the question has been asked "why did he do so?" He himself notes that "much confusion came into people's minds as they tried to account for my conduct. Those at a distance from Iraq supposed that it was due to some apprehension I had of action by the Government. On the other hand those who were close to the governing circle knew that there was no such thing and opined — this is a supernatural affair; it must be an evil influence which has befallen the people of Islam."

Two new theories have been put forward by the present day orientalists. Early this century Dunce Black MacDonald in his "Life of Ghazali" offered the explanation that the withdrawal from teaching might have some thing to do with the displeasure of Sultan Barkiyaruq due to Al-Ghazali's implication in recognition of his rival Tutush as Sultan in 1094 A.D. But this he himself discounted. MacDonald later has called it as a secondary cause, the chief being his genuine "conversion" to mystic life. Recently his French biographer, Farid Jabre, has argued that the dominant motive was fear of being assassinated by the B'atinis — Ismailis. Here too it is only a conjecture. His chief patron Nizamulmulk Tusi was assassinated in 1092 and Ghazali stayed on till Nov: 1095 in Baghdad and when he was persuaded to return to Baghdad in 1106 both by the Caliph and Vazier Fakhrul Mulk, who was son of Nizamulmulk, the Ismaili assassination spree was at height so much so that even Fakhrul Mulk was assassinated within two months of Al-Ghazali's arrival. As to the fear of assassination Ibn Asir, the main original source of information about the period — does not give even a hint of such a threat. Such a threat could be met in other ways too by making himself inconspicuous outside Baghdad. And there is no doubt

that he was a popular teacher and his decision to renounce the world and the worldly honours did surprise and shock his students, the Court circles and the scholars of the day.

Decisions of the kind, which Al-Ghazali took, had, to my mind, a beginning in his quest for certainty in his beliefs, which he tried to achieve through hard labour of scholarship. His extra-ordinary supple mind urged by a high degree of sincerity had learnt all there was to learn of religio-philosophical movements of the time and they left him dissatisfied and cold. There was only one more movement left to be explored. That was the Sufi way. His own worldly success and inner disquiet forced the need for a switch over to greater emphasis on the inner life and channelling of efforts in Sufi's direction. The spiritual vision which had so far guided him was itself pointing to greater concentration on the Inner Life.

This theory gets corroboration from himself. He writes in "Deliverance from Error," "when I had finished with these sciences, I next turned with set purpose to the method of Sufism. I knew that the complete mystic way includes both intellectual belief and practical activity..... The intellectual belief was easier to me and I began to acquaint myself with their belief by reading their books." This strikes the familiar tune when he set out to study the Mutakallimun, the Ba'tiniyah, Z'ahiri'as, Falasafiya, and only the S'ufis were left. He studied the works of Al-Haris Ibn-Asad Al-Mutasibi (died 857 A.D.) of Abu Talib — Al-Makki and the various details about Junaid, Shibli and Abu Yazid Bastami and other discourses of leading Sufis. His own famous teacher at Nishapur — Al-Juwayni, Imamul Haramayn, was sympathetic to S'ufism; another teacher of his at Nishapur was Al-Farmadhi, who was a pupil of Al-Qushayri who was a well recognised Sufi in Tus and Nishapur and highly respected by Nizamulmulk Tusi. They must have planted the seed which remained unfertilized because he went to other fields and pastures new. Through thorough study he grasped the fundamentals of their teachings. But it became clear to him that "what is most distinctive of mysticism is something which can not be apprehended by study, but only by immediate experience, by ecstasy and a complete moral change." And "what remained for me," he says, "was not to be attained by oral instructions and study but only by imme-

diately experience and by walking into the mystic way."

He took to the mystic road deliberately and cool calculatedly. He made provision for the children and this was not difficult as in addition to what he left in trust, the "wealth of Iraq was available for good works and nowhere in the world he had seen better financial arrangements to assist a scholar to provide for his children." He also took the worldly wise precaution to announce that he was going to Mecca, though privately he made all the arrangements to go to Damascus.

He slipped into Damascus and remained there for nearly two years. He would go to the top of the minaret of the Ummayed mosque of Damascus for the whole day shut himself in to have absolute solitude and to have no other aim than "cultivation of retirement and solitude, together with religious and ascetic exercises as I busied myself with, purifying my soul, improving my character and cleansing my heart from the constant recollection of God Most High, as I had learnt from my study of mysticism."

He had imbibed the truth that 'the Kingdom of Heaven is within you' and "seek and ye shall find;" "Knock and it shall be opened unto you."

He knocked and it opened — though at first slightly and as he says he experienced pure ecstasy only occasionally.

His presence in Damascus got known and his solitude was disturbed. He began to make public appearance and took to writing too. The mistake dawned on him and he fled and fled to the scene of Mair'aj — Jerusalem. He sought nearness of Abraham and proceeded to Al-Khalil (Hebron) and shut himself in the rock where Abraham and other prophets Issac and Jacob are buried. As he was still worried about his family and his own survival he took three oaths there making Abraham the witness that "he would never again take part in public discussions about the various sects and their beliefs, will never appear in Court again, keep temptations of a worldly life-full of honour and prestige — at arms length and thirdly shall never receive any remuneration and shall, therefore, never accept any office or any official patronage." From 'Al-Khalil' (Hebron) he proceeded to Mecca and Medina.



Before long the entreaties of his children and various concerns, which he does not care to explain, but may be "the necessities of my livelihood" which he hints to at one place — drew him back. He returned to his native place Tus and not to Baghdad.

He was a voracious reader and an indefatigable writer. Even the mystic path and the solitude exercises could not completely wean him away from either of them. His greatest work ' *احياء العلوم* ', "The Revival of Religious Learning," was, according to Ibnul-Asir, written during this period. It consists of four big volumes, divided into ten books each, and is full of quotations from the Holy Quran and Hadith and, therefore, some scholars have questioned the period of its composition during his travels.

Allama Shibli has mentioned that Allama As-Subki (d.1379 A.D.) in his 'Tabaq'at-As-Shafi'ya-al-Kubra' has dwelt at length that " *احياء العلوم* " is based on "Risala-i-Qushayria" of the famous mystic Abul Qasim Al-Qushayri (d.1072 A.D.) and "Tehzibul Akhla'q" of Ibn Miskawayah (d.1030 A.D.) and has given some verbatim quotations to show that some passages have been literally lifted from the earlier works. He must have read those works and with his stupendous retentive memory must have retained them. Al-Qushayri's famous "Epistle on Sufism" called Risala by Shibli covers only a part of the second half of the " *احياء العلوم* " and it does not discuss other matters dealt with Al-Ghazali. As to Miskawayah, Montgomery Watt has a remark that some of Al-Ghazali's arguments on nature of knowledge and certainty bear a close resemblance to those used by Miskawayah, it merely shows that such points were being generally discussed by philosophers, Sufis and intellectuals in the Islamic world in his lifetime and were the current topics of importance and discussion.

No book of his contemporaries, or in succeeding generations, had the tenets of orthodoxy of Sunni majority treated at greater length, greater rationality, greater explanation based on both Q'uran and Hadith and philosophical reasoning, greater lucidity and greater appeal to reason, orthodox authority and simple reasoning drawing on simple folk lore, lavened with popular sayings and stories of saints and Sufis. His appeal is therefore, to the learned steeped in knowledge and to the

common man who is also swept away with its readability and simplicity of language and arguments to explain his stand. He removed the obscurity of philosophers and their abstruse reasoning and explained even their stand in easily understandable language without any distortion and without giving any impression of labouring under strain. Hence the immediate acclaim it received and the popular acceptance that has been given to it since through the centuries. Though he made the religion his firm base, he consistently took a reasonable stand on what is beneficial for the whole Muslim community even though it may be an innovation. For him the only rule against adoption of innovation should be that it is forbidden definitely in the Q'uran, Shariah (or to a certain extent frowned upon by the closest Sahaba or opposed in actual practice by the Khulafai-Rashidin).

Two simple examples of behaviour may be illustrative of his approach. In the second Book of "Ihya'ul ulum" he deals with worldly usages and behaviour of a Muslim in social life. He dilates upon (1) rules of beating and drinking, (2) secrets of marriage-benefits and harms, divorce, duties of husband and wife, (3) earning a livelihood — trade and commerce, (4) duties to Muslims generally and to relatives, neighbours, servants and slaves, (5) benefits and harms of Hal'al and Har'am and of seclusion and society, (6) music and ecstasy, (7) love and brotherhood, (8) rules of journey.

Let us pick up the every day method and manner of eating. He maintains that the basic thing is what you eat should be lawful and not forbidden. Wash your hands before eating. The Holy Prophet used to do so and enjoined it on others. The reason is that food should not be contaminated with germs you carry. The food should be spread out on a piece of cloth on the ground. He has quoted a Hadith of Hazrat Uns that such was the custom of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) and then he quotes sayings of the old to the effect that four things are "Bidat which came into use after Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him)—the Dining Table, Soap and eating with relish to the full. Now note how in simple language and homely reason he explains his view point. Eating while sitting on the ground is good but to put the food on a table to raise it above the ground cannot be ( *مكروه وحرام* ) forbidden as there is no such direct prohibition. The fact that these things came into use

after the Prophet's time does not make them ipso facto Bidat. Bidat is what contradicts a sunnah or any definite prohibition; innocent innovations in keeping with the times may be claimed as pleasant departures. Eating with food spread on the table is easier and more comfortable and so should not be objected to. Similarly soap was not available in Prophet's time and the grass Ashnan from which soap was extracted also came to be known later. Now what's wrong with its use. Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) joined cleansing of hands both before and after meals. Ashnan and later soap make the hands cleaner and purer and so should be welcomed. then he dilates upon harms of eating to the full or over-eating from health point of view and advocates the middle course between over-eating and going hungry.

The manners which he details approvingly are what prevail today in the West and are forgotten by the Muslims. The Holy Prophet said "He who joins a feast without invitation is a transgressor." Invitation should not be accepted if you are not sure whether you can find time to join. Don't accept invitation where you know wine or unlawful food would be served, gold and silver plate used and dinner will be followed with lewd singing and dancing; He advises the host to receive and see off his guests at the door with a smile and thanks.

Further his advice is that food should be served on a white cloth and not coloured. Don't try to sit in the most conspicuous place or near the service door. Sit in the allotted seat or as the host requests. Different courses should be served at intervals. The first may be soup and the main dish should come next; after the meal serve sweets or fresh fruit and of his Seljuk times mentions that the courses to be served are written down and presented to the guests.<sup>23</sup> This is to help the guests in eating modestly. He also suggests that during the course of the meal you should also talk to the one who is sitting next to you; not to do so is bad manners and might indicate pride. The guests should never leave without saying good-bye to the host and thanking him for the hospitality.

So the west borrowed these customs and manners from the Muslims and wove them in their own social fabric so much so that if we

23. *So the menu cards were in common vogue in his times. He approves of them.*

follow them now we are accused of aping the west and going against Islamic simplicity!

He has the same rational and reasonable approach even to sports and singing; he holds sports to be an integral part of the children's education and physical exercise making coordination of mind and body better, making for a healthy society. Similarly he is in favour of relaxation even for the hermits. Those who go in for Nafal (optional prolonged prayers at night) are advised also to rest for a while so that a tired body may not dim the consciousness of prayer. His whole approach to social life is pragmatic and practical and if it leads to greater well-being and welfare and to better social relations and refinement, and do not encourage and create social distinctions, are not taboo.

There is still a controversy amongst the Sunnis whether Salam in Mil'adi-Nabi should be recited or not or whether one should stand up when it is recited. I only recently discovered it when attending a private Mil'ad-Nabi function. Here too Imam Ghazali has a fair-minded answer. He says: "To stand up for any one out of respect was not a prevalent Arab custom and so sometimes Sahaba did not get up when the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) entered the gathering as stated by Hazrat Uns. But there is no direction against so getting up and honouring a guest. In countries where such is done it should be maintained as the intention is to show respect and is therefore Praiseworthy. Give up only what is particularly contradicted. His book "revival of Religious Sciences"<sup>1</sup> is a treasure of worldly and other-worldly wisdom. He was equally dissatisfied with what he saw around him. He was a participant in the Court Life and moved in the highest circle, being a confident and companion of the great Nizamul-Mulk Tusi, the all powerful Prime Minister; as one of the most famous literary figures of his times, he came in contact with the keenest intellectuals and watched their behaviour; as a teacher he came in contact with the higher middle class and saw the springs of their public life; as a resident in the great metropolis of Baghdad he saw how the whole structure was rotten from inside and he took it to be his duty to record, analyse, dissect and prescribe the cure for the ills in simple, straightforward language spiced with Hadith, sayings of the saints, anecdotes of their lives. He explains the mainsprings of defects with arguments easy to grasp and draws

conclusions — which appeal and sound so reasonable as to awaken the dormant instinct to reform and turn a new leaf.

His favourite prescription is the “golden mean in belief and conduct” and took the Qur’anic verse for Muslims as guide “And we have created you the middle nation.”

For him Man has the body and the soul and both have to be nourished. As the body of each man has its own form and shape so does the soul. A man is called handsome if his body is well proportioned and pleasing to the eye. Similarly his soul has an inner shape of its own and according to its perfection or imperfection man is called noble, well meaning, well behaved near to God or derided as ignoble, haughty or coward, spend-thrift or miserly.

— In his third book of “Ihyaul-Ulum” besides dealing with soul and its attributes and how Ibadat and Riazat make for good conduct in the ways of Allah, he devotes no less than seven chapters on harms of greed and sexual passion, evils of loose talk, the evils of anger, hatred, envy, of wealth, power and show and of pride and self praise; and his panacea is “the golden mean.”

He is worth quoting on the point as illustrative of his reasoning approach to drive home the point he wishes to make and which can be grasped by every one with even an average intelligence.

“Body has been given to house the soul and is himself the house of knowledge. Divine knowledge is the human goal and its inspiration. A mule and a horse have similar body to carry loads, but the horse is superior as he is bodily more attractive and has the superior quality of running faster. Now take the man — if he uses his intelligence, his thoughts and actions to please God he becomes like an angel and the people begin to say he is like an angel in purity of his thought and action. But when he looks after his worldly comforts only he comes down to the level of an animal. He tries to be healthy like an ox, becomes greedy like a pig, biting like a dog, drinks like a fish, eats like a camel, revengeful like a leopard, cunning like a jackal and sinks to the level of the devil — the embodiment of all evils.”

According to him there are four natures of man — Passion, ani-

mal nature, devilish nature and the angelic.

If he gives free rein to his sexual passions he acquires the evils of impurity, meanness, selfishness and shamelessness.

Anger is the sign of beastly nature. If he obeys the dictates of anger he acquires the odious conduct such as haughtiness, pride, cruelty and love of power and self-praise. If the devilish nature gets the upper hand he becomes prone to lowly traits of deceit, deception, treachery, fraud etc., when he controls these evil tendencies and cultivates and nourishes his angelic qualities he is endowed with divine qualities such as wisdom, knowledge, faith and love for humanity.

Soul is like a mirror in which the evils and virtues mentioned are reflected. The virtues make the soul shining and the evils make it dark.

Man’s will and intellect give him the choice. Man’s good fortune lies in having God’s vision as the ultimate goal, this world as a temporary abode, the next one as permanent, using body as carrier of his pure soul and the limbs as obedient servants so as to live in this world but above the world.

In the fourth volume consisting of 10 different books each dealing with a separate distinct subject, he propounds his views on repentance, patience and gratefulness, fear and hope, poverty and renunciation, tauhid and tawakkul, love and attachment, will and intention, meditation and introspection, truths behind God’s creations, death and meaning of life and death, resurrection, Paradise and Hell and vision of God and God’s Mercy.

It is impossible to summarise and even deal briefly with his vast canvas of pronouncements running into forty books. It deserves to be studied in detail when men are baffled by modern inconsistencies “Ihya-ul-ulum” popularity and its acceptance was phenomenal in his own time and subsequent centuries. The commentaries written on it within half a century of Imam Ghazali’s death number about seventy. Other commentaries on his four books on Fiqah, Basit, Wasit, Wajiz, Biyan-il-Quolain As Shafai run into hundreds. Imam Abul Malqan Shafai’s commentary on Hadith mentioned in Basit run into seven volumes though the one of Imam Fakhruddin Razi who took Imam

Ghazali's teaching a step further towards orthodox Sunni tenets, is the most famous.

To make *Ihya-ul-ulum* more easily accessible its summaries were compiled, the one by his own brother, Ahmad Ghazali, known as "Summary of *Ihya*" gained immediate currency and several others under the name of "Abridged *Ihya*" were compiled by well-known scholars like Sheikh Abu-Zakarya-Yahya, Sheikh Abul-Abbas Ahmad-bin-Musa of Mosul and Ha'fiz Jalaluddin-Suyuti and have survived.

The movements which he thought struck at the root of the revealed religion and its commonly accepted interpreted beliefs were the Mutazallites and he made short shrift of them, the Ismailies who had become even a political threat through the Karmathian principalities of Yemen, Najd, Bahrain extending upto Multan; the dynasty of Fatimides in Egypt and the Maghrib and then nearer home "Alamut" headed by Hassan-bin-Sabbah; the philosophical dominance of Greek Imams whose brilliant exponent and interpreter Ibn Sina had died just a few years earlier than his own birth. He went through the illuminative process of mysticism whose luminaries Bayazid Bistami (d.874), Junaid Baghdadi (d.910) Shibli (d.945), the great Husain-Ibn Mansur Hallaj (d.922) had been alive only half a century or so earlier than him and how the memory of that great mystic of the same line Abu said Abul Khayr (d.1049) must have been so fresh as he died only 9 years before the birth of Ghazali. He had extracted the essence of the truths from each one of them.

So "*Ihya-ul-ulum*" is what he studied, what he thought was the Truth and the True way. His Faith in God, in Mohammad's (Peace Be Upon Him) Prophet-hood, the Last Day and the Resurrection was steady and unhesitant, unapologetic, strident and firm. He borrowed their own tools from those who were challenging and undermining the simple faith of the simple people. As an Asharia he used the Mutazallites logic to disprove what they held as proved – like the createdness of the Qur'an, from Hannabitis he fully accepted the superiority and assuredness of Revelation over Reason but unlike them – used the tool of reason to demolish opposition, from philosophers he learnt their philosophy and never discarded the philosophical approach where it suited him to further balance and support the Revelation, from the B'atinis

or the Ismailis he took up the fundamental concept of an infallible Imam and gave that central position to the most infallible Prophet Mohammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and from the mystic he took the inner illumination and mirrored it into perfect – "Tauhid" when God was alone and "Nurun Ala Nur" "The Essence of the First Absolute Light, God, gives constant illumination, whereby it is manifested and it brings all things into existence, giving life to them by His rays. Everything in the world is derived from the Light of His essence and all beauty and perfection are the gift of His bounty and to attain fully to this illumination is salvation." So said Shihabuddin Shuhrawardi, "Maqtul," born 42 years after Ghazali and executed at the age of 33 in 1191 A.D., by Al-Malik-Az-Zahir, the son and successor of the famous Salahuddin Ayyubi. His "Awazi Pari-Jibril" is echoed by Iqbal in his "Bali-Jibrail." But the starting point was Al-Ghazali's "Mishkat-al-Anwar" – "The Niche for Lights" taken from Surah Nur. He became the "Nur" – the guiding Light for Muslims – the greater part of the Muslim Ummah – and his seal of perfection is still unbroken.

But he had a supple mind which enabled him grasp the essentials quickly and absorb the fundamentals easily. He had a highly developed analytical mind and so had to dissect the fundamentals before accepting them: His fast roving mind coupled with erudition, his wide ranging scholarship and a sensitive soul could not accept anything on face-value.

When he looked around at the society he saw it beset with all sorts of evils. He looked at the markets and found that shop keepers told lies to the customers, concealed the defects of the articles for sale, reduced the weights and measures, asked for prices at their own whim; on the way to the markets he found encroachment on pathways by construction of shops or extensions of verandahs, to tie animals or sacrifice them, throw refuse and let water run from the houses to the street. Amongst the rich he found ostentatious living, huge houses, extravagance in living and entertainment. You will find all the details in Book of "*Ihya-ul-ulum*." He pondered over them and came to the conclusion that the society had come to this state because of faulty system of education and the wrong policies of the Sultans as checks on them had crumbled and the Ulema, who could check them under enjoining good and forbidding evil: the upholders of the Holy Quran, themselves

becoming corrupt and yielding, because of the temptations of power and wealth. The root cause of the loosening of the moral fibre he lays at the door of the Ulema. This lament runs throughout the "Ihya-ul-Ulum" and in the chapters he devoted to "Pride, Deceit, Love of office and Honour" he reserved his most scathing language for them. For the Muftis he says that this is the group which suffers from arrogance, is jealous of each other, is grasping in worldly wealth and back-bite, everyone is in this race for being near the seat of power, and lauding every action of the Sultan. They were not at all worried about improving conditions and gave no thought to it. A section of the religious group was ever busy in discussion of trivial religious issues and challenged each other to open discussions and insulting others was their pastime; the third learned set was of Mutakallamin whose main occupation was showing their opponents ill-informed, not well-versed in the finer points of law and fiqh and always on the look out to point their deficiencies and where they went wrong.

Imam Ghazali's verdict on them is that they created unnecessary splits in the religious fold and the Shahaba and the ancients always frowned upon and discouraged such discussions. Then there were the preachers who spent their energies on lecturing others on moral virtues of prayer, abstinence contentment, dedications and devotion to faith but themselves were bereft of them. They were good orators, but were themselves misled, misleading others. He says that "there may be a few solitary individuals who are otherwise, but it has not been my good fortune to have come across them."

As usual with him he gives their version also who cited the instances of stipends to men of their ilk in the times of the first four revered Caliphs and the practice became more common during the Umayyad, He opines that the fact of stipend, is correct as the stipends were given to every Arab citizen according to his needs by the Khulafai Rashidin initiated by Hazrat Umar. They were not in return for their service as they were content to give their own ruling on matter of religious issues and in matters of "Fiqh", they themselves were competent to give final rulings. The Umayyads sought the help of the learned in discharge of their duties and needed rulings on interpretations of Sunnah. Those who accepted anything from them did a favour to them and they were openly grateful to them. The learned men retained their

independence and openly rebuked the Sultans in open court and the rebuked ones respected them more for the rebuke. But the times had changed and like every other courtier they had to show their loyalty and ever readiness to be of help to them, praise them for their conduct of affairs of State. He pithily remarks that the Sultans would not dole them even a Dirham if they were remiss in the slightest degree in their respect to them, though in learning they might be equal to Imam Sha'fai.

His all pervasive, keen intellect does not ignore the role the education system plays in moulding the character and life of the young generation. After quoting the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) that "To seek learning is binding on every Muslim" and another "Seek knowledge even if you have to go to China." He did not say learn Alif, Lam Min, but he said to learn the sciences of action. As good actions become compulsory on a Muslim, to acquire knowledge about these duties become gradually compulsory on him. The duties are divided into two categories — those connected with religion and those not so connected and amongst the latter are some which can even be termed as Farz-i-Kefayah or binding on the community to sustain it as a whole — like agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, weaving and other Industries, consumer and metallurgical industries, medicine and mathematics, architecture, administration. He also prefers study of arithmetic, geometry, logic which is the science of reason — it states proof, cause and effect and deduction and result. Philosophy he regards as essential to theology to the understanding of God, His attributes, the cosmos, science of biology and astronomy and holds it essential even to Sufism — which is to reach the ultimate reality. To him even physics could not be totally ignored.

And he was emphatic that such composite courses of studies made a man learned and religious. He favoured a change in the curriculum and bemoans exclusion of Sciences, Logic, Medicine and Arts and, Crafts from the school curriculum. Lowering of the morals, he also ascribed to non-study of subjects which mould character and should form part of religious instructions. After all Islam prescribed religious affirmations and five pillars of duties. But a learned Muslim should, through knowledge, understand the Eternal and Perfect attributes of God, His Works and Wisdom in the creation of the world to which he

repeatedly calls for in the Holy Quran, the meanings of the Prophet-hood, the angels, the devils, the meaning of life after death, the punishment and reward, hell and heaven, the accountability and the balanced judgement.

"Some say that these things are mere examples but God says that "He has reserved for the pious what no eye has seen, nor ear has heard and no heart has conceived." Some say that man knows nothing of the paradise except its attributes and names. Others hold that some are mere patterns and some hold them to be identical with the realities which these names signify. Likewise, others hold that limit to the knowledge of God is one's inability to reach it. The object of knowledge is to remove the covers of doubt over these things from mind and the appearance of such light therein, which clears everything like the day light. This can not be attained without discipline and effort. This discipline and effort produce praise-worthy qualities such as patience, gratitude, hope, contentment, generosity, sincerity, truth-fulness, God's fear and thanks for giving you good faith and good conduct.

The blame-worthy evils which follow ill-education are envy, hatred, hypocrisy, flattery, greed, pride, anger and enmity, self conceit, honouring the rich and looking down upon the poor, vanity and boasting: outward show of friendship, deceit, breach of trust, loss of shame and lack of kindness."

As for the upbringing and education of children he stressed the importance of games along with study and teaching of manners by precept and example by the parents, he opposed corporal punishment and recommended suitable commendation of conduct and prizes for good performance at studies. But the base of the learning should be religion and its allied subjects, the rest should follow. Some of the Western Orientalists even ascribe his throwing away his post at Nizamayah and College to his dissatisfaction with the curriculae adopted and his inner dissatisfaction and his utter inability to reform it. I don't subscribe to this view; his flight to Sufism was a genuine urge to know the hidden secrets which others claimed to have found open. But he was dissatisfied with how the State was run. Though he must have encouraged Nizamul Mulk Tusi to write his famous book "Siyasat Namah" — "The Book of Government or Rules for Kings" he must have been dis-

satisfied with the resulting book.

The political thought at the end of the eleventh Century, and the principles of Government are still available in two Books written by those who ran the administration. The one is "The Nasi'hat-Nama"—Known as "Qabus-Nama" of Kai-Qabus. It was written in 1082 A.D. by Qabus one of the Z'ahirid Princes who, though Semi-independent, recognised the suzerainty of the Seljuks. Ten years later in 1092 A.D. Nizamul Mulk wrote his more famous "Siyasat Nama." After having served as Prime Minister for thirty years to two Sultans — Alap Arsalan and his son and successor Malik Shah. The Seljuk Turks had the zeal of recent converts and the political conditions of the realm being such that they vigorously defended Sunni orthodoxy against other sects. So both the author's strong championship of Sunni Islam accounts for the emphasis they place on the religious and ethical duties which the Ruler must perform for his own salvation and for the welfare of the State.

Being a ruling Prince Qabus naturally affirmed that "the welfare of the Kingdom lies in the effectiveness of the King's authority, but the exhortation is that "it is through the people that the country is made prosperous, for the revenues are earned from the people, who remain settled and prosperous if given what is rightfully theirs. While cautioning the Kings, against a too powerful Vazier, he counsels the Vazier "Urge your Master, the King, to be well disposed towards the army and the people, the King's continuance is dependent on his forces and the prosperity of the peasantry. Make it your constant endeavour to improve cultivation and to govern well; The truth of the matter is that; good government is secured by armed troops, armed troops are maintained with gold, gold is acquired through cultivation and cultivation is sustained through payment of what is due to the peasantry, by just dealing and fairness. Let therefore, be no place for extortion in your heart; the dynasty of Kings, who recognise rights of the people, endures long and becomes old, but the dynasty of extortioners swiftly perishes."

Nizamul-Mulk writes as the Chief Executive with thirty years experience in actual government and the whole book is permeated with the Islamic principles of good government. He is strongly opposed to B'atiniya sect, like Ghazali, and is against their employment in govern-

ment service even in lower capacities. The sovereign has to be just as to him "Justice is the might of the world and power of sovereignty in which the well-being of the common people as well as the elect consists." He must devote all his attention and efforts to the good of religion so that God Almighty may grant him the necessary ability to conduct temporal and spiritual affairs of the State. In the temporal affairs, Nizamul Mulk singled out for special attention — Army and Finance and Taxation, of spiritual ones, the sovereigns duty is to defend pure Sunni Islam and give personal example of life of piety and devotion. It is good advice in keeping with his times. The restraints on absolute monarchy could only be what are enjoined by Shariah. He repeatedly emphasised the accountability of the ruler before God and affirmed that if he scrupulously followed the Shariah the despot would be transformed into a good just Muslim monarch.

This was all very well but Imam Ghazali wanted to go further and provide checks to arbitrary rule and unwarranted behaviour. While he could not force a Majlisi-Shura on the King as enjoined by the Quran and utilised by "Khulafai-Rashidin"<sup>24</sup> as an instrument for policy and decision making as he explained in detail in "Ihya-ul Ulum," how the duty of keeping the monarch and others on Islamic rails developed on Ulema through performing the Amr Bil Maroof and, Anihali Munkar. "<sup>25</sup> Then he went a step further and enjoined this duty on every Muslim. He himself set about doing exactly the same thing and took upon himself the duty which he was preaching to others. In Ihya-ul-Ulum he had come to the conclusion that the main reason for loss of courage, failure to speak out against inequities, was their nearness to and dependence for sustenance on the Court. So he gave up his worldly position and possessions and took an oath at the tomb of Hazrat Ibrahim never to go near the Court or accept any financial help from them and he stuck to it for nearly 12 years. In addition to what he wrote in Ihyaul-Ulum he started writing letters to those who mattered, including the Vaziers, who succeeded Nizamul Mulk and they were son and grandson of Nizamul Mulk—Fakhrul Mulk and Sadar Din Mohammad admonished and advised them to run the country on correct Islamic lines. His

24. *The first four Caliphs.*

25. *The Qur'anic injunction to enjoin correct conduct and restrain what is not permitted.*

Book "Advice to the Kings" — was in fact a letter of advice to the reigning monarch, Mohammad Shah-bin-Malik Shah, which in its length became almost a book and could very briefly be summarised as follows:

- (1) The duties of every Muslim are two fold — one towards God and one to His creatures. God may forgive the first one but not the second one.
- (2) The King must realise the great responsibility that rests on him. The Holy Prophet has said that on the Last Day the tyrant ruler would be punished most severely. Hazrat Umar feared that if even an animal went without nourishment he would be answerable to God and he upbraided them saying "you are so indifferent to the condition of the people you rule." Then he uses strong language and says "if you are fond of food you are like a beast, if fond of silk and embroidered dress you are like a woman."
- (3) The King was like any other man and the kingdom belonged to God to whom every one was answerable. Do unto others what you would like done to you.
- (4) Behave in the world within the Sunnah so you see prosperity around you and have a good abode in the hereafter.

This had the desired effect and Ibn-Asir writes that "Mohammad Shah removed octroi duties, reduced taxes, abolished compulsory unpaid labour and travel visas. The remissions given were displayed on boards in market places," and ends by saying, "that as the King was just, merciful and vigilant, the other functionaries also reformed themselves and prosperity returned to the realm."

This was what Imam Ghazali had striven for.

However, it is worth emphasizing that, though it would be wrong to index him as the product of his times, we must take into consideration the time and circumstances in which he lived when we examine his position on matters of the State. The main source of danger for the State, as represented by the Seljuks, and in Nizamul-Mulk and in Al-Ghazali's view, was the Ismaili movement called by them B'atiniya or Ta'limiyia, represented by the Fatimids, and later during Al-Ghazali's lifetime, by Hassan bin Sabbah, who broke away from the Fatimids and established in 1094 his seat — Alamut nearer home. The main doctrine

of an infallible Imam seemed to Al-Ghazali to be particularly dangerous to the Sunni creed. Major portion of his literary activity was devoted to demolishing this main thesis of theirs. On the religious side he sincerely preached that after the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) there was no need for any Imam's guidance. One of his famous books on this theme was 'Al-Qist'-as-al-Mustaqim" which only last year became available in English translation as "The Just Balance" Tr: by D.P. Brewster of University of Canterbury, Christ Church, Newzealand. On the political side he deals with the office of the Khalifa or Imam as Head of the Muslim Community, symbolising its political unity and sovereignty of the Muslim State. In "Al-Iqti'sad-fil-Itiqad" he discussed the nature and purpose of the Khalifat or Imamat from the classical orthodox point of view. In "Al-Mustazhiri," a commissioned work by the reigning Caliph "Al-Mustazhir," he had to face the political realism of a nominal Caliph reigning and a powerful Seljuk Sultan actually ruling the realm. A compromise had to be made and in it the Khalifa was to delegate authority to one Sultan who gave allegiance to him. The Sultan was the man in control of affairs but owed allegiance to the Imam-Khalifa and honoured his prerogatives of the Friday Khutba and of the coinage in his name. He thus accepted "the Law of Necessity," as we call it today, subject to the main condition that the sovereignty of the Khalifa was not impinged which, in most of the countries at present, would be the written constitution, representing the will of the people. Its sanctity and supremacy has to be preserved and the powers of the Head of the State have to be as prescribed, exercised through instruments as ruled.

In religion, he upheld the pristine purity of Sunni-Islam and vigorously enjoined full acceptance and honest practice of the tenets of Islam in letter and spirit and his whole life was devoted to explain the spirit behind the letter.

The significance and importance of Imam Ghazali lies in the rational base that he provided for the orthodox Sunni theology. He mastered the Mutazallites, the B'atinites and turned the tables on them. There was extreme reaction amongst the orthodox against extreme rationalistic attitude of the Mutazallites, further aggravated by Al-Mamun's<sup>26</sup> attempt to make the Mutazallite doctrine of "Createdness"

26. *The only one of his times showing the right path to the people.*

of the Quran as test of Faith and, what has been termed as the Inquisition (Minha) followed. Strong reaction of Imam Ahmad bin-Hanbal and his followers swung the pendulum to the other extreme. Any questioning of dogmatic belief or raising the question of how and why was not permitted. Imam Ghazali personified in himself this reaction but restored the balance. The movement started by Al-Ashari found in Imam Ghazali its most profound and most vocal exponent, but miles ahead of him and of his own teacher the Imam-ul-Harmayn. The title he earned in his life time — Hujjatul Islam — he has retained to this day. I think the earliest mention of him as Hujjatul Islam is in the letter that the Chief Minister Sadruddin Mohammad-bin-Fakhrul-Mulk-bin-Nizamul-Mulk Tusi wrote on behalf of Sultan Sanjar and on behalf Khalifa Mustazhir-Billah persuading Imam Ghazali to give up his retirement from the world and return to Baghdad and take over the Nizamayah College once again. In the letter he was addressed as Ziauddin, Hujjatul Islam, Reformer of his times. The letter was signed by the Caliph the Prime Minister, and all the Ministers and dignatories of the Court. The impact of Greek Philosophy never left him and affected all he afterwards did and the Aristotalian method, logic, reasoning were always with him in whatever he wrote. As Al-Ashari by combining Mutazallite method with Hanbali doctrines defused the first wave of much too free thinking in religious matter, Imam Ghazali rendered the greater service by bringing together philosophy and theology and blowing out the flame of pure philosophical theorising culminating in Ibn Sina though in reality Al-Ghazali could never free himself from the influence of Ibn Sina who dominated his age. His contribution was making the philosophical thinking available in easily understood language to general run of the theologians and the intellectuals of the ordinary run for whom the books of Farabi and Ibn Sina were technically too difficult to understand. The intellectual acclaim that he received for his efforts, led to a genuine revival of religion and he demonstrated how the theological formulations should be linked with the deepest life of a true Muslim.

Now let us turn to his speculations about the nature of mystical experience linked with a new vista in the field of Sufis and their experience. It should not be forgotten that Ghazali was in the prime of his life — 37 years old — when he gave up the world and the worldly position, possessions and honours to satisfy the other instinct of other



worldliness. Having mastered all that was there to master in the intellectual movements of his times, his turning to mysticism was too natural as this was the only field left unexplored. He approached the mystical path also from the intellectual side. As he says in his autobiographical sketch "The Deliverance from Error" he, like philosophy, studied all that was there to study. But he knew that "the complete mystic way includes both intellectual belief and practical activity." "I apprehended clearly that the mystics were men who had real experiences, not men of words and that I had already progressed as far as was possible by way of intellectual apprehension. What remained for me was not to be attained by oral instructions and study but only by immediate experience and by walking in the mystic way."

"It had become clear to me that I had no hope of the bliss of the world to come save through a God-fearing life and the withdrawal of myself from vain desires. It was clear to me too that the key to all this was to sever the attachment of the heart to worldly things by leaving the mansion of deception and returning to that of eternity and to advance towards God Most High with all earnestness. It was also clear that this was only to be achieved by turning away from wealth and position and fleeing from all time consuming entanglements," And he fled.

It is wrong to say that he wandered in wilderness for 14 long years. He went to only — Damascus, Jerusalem and its nearby "Al-Khalil" (Hebron of the Bible) and Mecca and Medina. This in my view did not take more than four years. Because as he says, "Before long various concerns together with entreaties of my children drew me back to my home country (Tus and not the far off Nishapur). Here too I sought retirement, still longing for solitude and the purification of the heart. The events of the interval, the anxieties about my family, the necessities of my livelihood altered the aspect of my purpose and impaired the quality my solitude, for I experienced pure ecstasy only occasionally although I did not cease to hope for that; obstacles would hold me back, yet I always returned to it.

"I continued at this stage for years, and during these periods of solitude there were revealed to me things innumerable and unfathomable"

The fulfilment was there: as "I learned with certainty that it is above all the mystics, who walk on the road of God; their life is the best life, their method the soundest method, their character the purest character. Indeed, were the intellects of the intellectuals, the learning of the learned, the scholarship of the scholars brought together and an attempt to improve upon the life and character of the Sufis were made, they would find no way of doing so; for, to the mystics all movement and all rest brings illumination from the lamp of Prophetic revelation, and behind the light of prophetic revelation there is no other light on the face of the Earth from which illumination may be received."

"In general what the Sufis manage to achieve is nearness to God, some, however, would conceive of this as "Hulul" (Inherence), some as "Ittihad" (Union) and some as "Wasul" (connection or return)." Hal-laj cries out "Anal-Haq" and Bayazid Bistami proclaims "Subhani, Ma Azamat Shahani" (Glory be to Me, How great is My Majesty). And Imam Ghazali ends with the statement that "he who has attained the mystic state need no more than say: "Of the things I do not remember; what was, think it good; do not ask an account of it." And it evokes the Quranic version of "Mairaj" "And He saw what he saw."

Prior to Ghazali's times Sufis were considered a queer set for people outside the pale of Sunni thought and practice. Some thought them to be a secret sect and a secret plague. Their non-observance of prescribed outward ritualism made them targets of abuse and avoidance. Al-Ghazali's experience and jump into Sufism was from the well grounded Faith and Belief in God, Prophethood and the Last day, already referred to above. His main achievement was to bring Sufism in harmony with the orthodox dogma insisting on performance of the common religious duties, through his own personal example he brought the accepted beliefs in harmony with Sufism. He made it possible for the orthodox to accept Sufism as the higher form of orthodox spiritualism and perhaps made the mystics more careful to remain within the bounds of orthodoxy. By his retirement he resolved his own problems and gave to others access to the same inner salvation.

It is interesting to note the reason which he records in his autobiography, for teaching again, after withdrawal from it, was consultation with the other Sufis who advised him to abandon his retirement.

He had such visions, which he hints at that he inclined to believe himself to be the Muijadiid of the next 6th Century Hijra/12th Century A.D. only a six months away.

This was destined for another person, already born 19 years after him and at the time of his (Ghazali's) death was a mature man of 34 years. He was Shaikh Abdul Qadir Gilani (1077-1166 A.D.) who gave absolutely new turn by initiating and founding new mystical fraternity: the Tariqa and since then there has been no turning back.

Shaikh Abdul Qadir Gilani started his preaching in 1127 A.D. 16 years after the death of Imam Ghazali and so must have studied his works which were so well-known. Imam Ghazali's influence on him can be traced to what every body acknowledges was his final achievement. After having demolished all the disputative and disruptive forces within Islam, Al-Ghazali added the weight of his authority to the movement of accepting the mystic part of personal spiritual experience as a valid, and in some ways greater, proof of the existence of God, making revelation superior to reason in quest of inner truth and the final essence and asserted by personal experience that "O, you who inhabit the world of reason, mistake not that there exists another plane in which appear things that do not appear in reason." The grip of reason was "however, so strong on him that here too he argued that "the knowledge of intelligible is attained by learning and study and also by divine inspiration — the personal striving is essential for both — though the modes and methods differ. Divine intuition and inspiration supervene either swiftly or slowly as there is difference between the ranks of scientists, philosophers, saints and prophets in respect of it." And it is in accordance with the Quranic verse. "And Man can have nothing but what he strives for" (The Quran: Surah—53. V. 39).

The furtherest reach of acquisition is the degree of the Prophet, to whom all or most realities are revealed without conscious acquisition or effort, by Divine Revelation in the swiftest possible time." In his "Ihya-ul-Ulum" written after his mystical experience, in the book on "Things Leading to Salvation" he shows the "Tariqa" — "different station and states of the way-farer like Renunciation and Poverty, Penance, Love and Longing."

But it was left to Sh: Abdul Qadir Jilani to systemise this "Tariqa" and make it a way of the life for the masses and the elect. What effect it had on Muslim thought and on acquisition of knowledge is written into Islamic history.

But one point may be mentioned here that Ghazali in making Prophet the Chief and the main pivot separated S'ufis from Inherence/Union to which the orthodox had always objected and turned them to "the Perfect Prophet" and Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani took up this thread and wove it into a new pattern to which he introduced the world of Islam. Later Pirs converted it into "Obedience to Shaikh" making: Sh: Abdul Qadir Gilani, Shuhrawardis, Chishtis the Ideal Shaikh. Since Ghazali's times the Prophet Mohammad's (Peace Be Upon Him) Shariah and his own perfection became the binding force for the Umma. It was Ghazali's finest present to Sufi. and through them to Islam. The unity he forged in the Muslim beliefs and interpretation of dogma he gave is his ever-lasting contribution.

Through his own experience he convinced himself and through his vigorous writings he convinced his generation that in the final analysis it was the mystic element and its illumination which made religious life a reality through a dreamy dream.

He had already gone on record: "In dreams you imagine things and you believe that they are real and genuine, so long as you are in the dream state; but when you wake up you realise that these dreams have no basis in reality.

Philosophy in the Muslim East died with Avicenna and in the Western Islam the last was Ibn Rushd who did give battle to Ghazali. The flowering ushered in by Al-Kindi and Farabi, nourished by Al-Razi and Ibn Sina, last watered by Ibn Rushd withered with Ibn Taimiyya after having been ploughed in by Al-Ghazali. Their tools were Greek but the field was Islam. Farabi and Ibn Sina achieved as well as any man

could — a reconciliation between Philosophy and revealed religion. Ibn Sina never wished to undermine the foundations of the revealed religion or destroy religion for the sake of Philosophy unlike Al-Ghazali, who with a hatchet, made from the same old Greek tools, gleefully set about mutilating philosophy and uproot it in favour of religion. But I do not wholly subscribe to the view, as Arberry and others do, that "if Avicenna's interpretation of personal immortality had prevailed, the subsequent history of Muslim thought would have been different and that it is possible that the Greek philosophy would have continued upon its vitalising course." All the modern Western Orientalists hold that the fatal blow to philosophy in Islam was given by Ghazali and Willie Durant laments that the Philosophy in the East died with Avicenna. But a very basic fact is ignored by them that the Greek learning had itself exhausted its vitalising force and Farabi, Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd had absorbed what was there to be absorbed. The intellectual ferment had to find a new firmament and the speculative thought had to move in another new direction. Ghazali did not put a closure on speculative thought as no one man, even one as gifted, as scholarly and as divinely inspired as the great Ghazali, can deprive a civilization of thinking process. What did Ghazali do was to give a new direction and divert the turbulent Sufism into a placid stream. And the succeeding centuries of Islamic thought delved deep into this stream and produced intellects of a different mould. This is well illustrated by the true story of Abu Said ibn Abul Khayr, who was contemporary and friend of Ibn Sina, and said of him "What I see he knows," to which the Philosopher replied, "What I know he sees." The aim was the same to know the truth, the process and the channels and the seas were different. And Ghazali stands in that midstream. At their peak, philosophy and religion meet in the sense and contemplation of universal unity and where science and philosophy fail and reason falters, faith restores the balance. This balance was achieved by Ghazali and there in lies his significance to the modern Muslim world as well.

It is true as has been said that the modern sciences and the achievements in physical science and the marvels of the technology again pose a threat to the Islamic world as faced by the giants of the Abbaside and subsequent periods. They laboured, they studied, they absorbed and made it their own and gave it back to the succeeding generations

in an improved form. Our present generation has to do the same and not just sit, stare and marvel. Ghazali mastered all that was there to master in his time. (He was also a poet both in Arabic and Persian) and put it to his generation what is to be accepted and what's to be rejected. And it was mathematical and physical Sciences that he accepted as essential studies, from philosophy he repudiated only what in its interpretation it contradicted revelation and accepted its keen analytical approach. He adopted rationalism as his own even in interpretation of orthodox Sunni dogma. His works are permeated with it.

To him belongs the great merit and the great credit to have made personal spiritual Sufistic experience not only a valid but superior part of an enlightened religious man. But here too he insists that "though the validity of Sufi method is indisputable and undoubtedly it brings those who practice it to their goal, which is the sublime state enjoyed by Saints and Prophets," it must be rooted in and remain under the control of trained reason and his advice is that "the best course for a man is first to follow the path of scientific study and to acquire by labourers learning as much of the demonstrative sciences as human power can compass... And after that there is no harm in his electing to withdraw from the world and to devote himself entirely to God in an expectant mood." He gives an explicit warning that "if the soul has not been exercised in the sciences that deal with fact and demonstration, it will acquire mental phantoms that it will suppose to be truths descending upon it." According to him "many a Sufi has continued for years in one such fancy before escaping from it, whereas if he had a sound scientific education he would have been delivered out of it at once" (Mizan-al-Amal)...

"The greatest thing," it has been said by a recent<sup>27</sup> writer and translator of one of his books, "about Al-Ghazali was his personality and it may again be a source of inspiration. "Islam is now wrestling with Western thought as it once wrestled with Greek Philosophy and is as much in need as it was then of a "Revival of Religious Sciences." Deep study of Al-Ghazali may suggest steps to be taken by Muslims if they are to deal successfully with the contemporary situation. Christian World too is in a cultural melting pot and must be prepared to learn

27. Montgomery Watt in introduction to *"The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali."*

from Islam and is unlikely to find a more sympathetic guide than Al-Ghazali."

The steps to be taken need not be spelt out here. But I would repeat what I have been saying for years that one can not develop an illiterate nation either materially or spiritually.

We have no right to keep 80% of our children ignorant of the Quran, its teachings and its great Preacher through whom God Almighty chose to reveal it to a sick humanity. His final message. How many Ghazali's are still born without being awakened. Imam Ghazali too was born of poor parents. Both he and his younger brother, Ahmad Ghazali who, in his own right was a greater Sufi and a better known poet, received education at the Government subsidised institution and helped to receive the light which is still undimmed. The Muslims led the intellectual world because there was no illiteracy and the literate were helped to become learned. The West received the light from both Eastern and Western Islam but the intellectual flowering in Europe took place only when education became common and learning appreciated. The present day examples are before us and we don't learn the lesson. The socialist countries in Eastern Europe and China in Asia gained final control in 1948 and 49, a year or two years after Pakistan. The first priority was removal of illiteracy a political necessity as they wanted the new generation uncontaminated with the capitalist lore, and taking in hand the first generation of children, who were 5-7 years old, they ushered in the enlightened period within ten years. They did not let one generation remain unlettered. The rest followed and see the material results.

Along with this new education movement, which will be a reversal of Sir Syed's educational policy which we are following in Pakistan, though the times, the need, the requirements have changed, we will have to follow Ghazali in his quest of learning, his emphasis on mastery of physical and mathematical sciences and retaining the questioning mind. His "Revival of the Religious Sciences" is a must study for the present generation. Though both he and his younger brother, Ahmad Ghazali, made and issued a summarised version I suggest inclusion as text book in different stages the first part at the High School stage, the second II year, the third year and the Fourth in the final. Arabic me-

dium schools should be started to produce subsequently Arabic scholars to open the vast treasures of Arabic scholarship.

Thousands of Arabic manuscripts in Sciences, Literature and Philosophy lie hidden in the libraries of the Muslim World, in Istanbul alone there are no less than forty to fortyfive Museum and Mosque Libraries with uncatalogued manuscripts. The same is the case with Cairo, Iran, Iraq and this sub-continent and even Spain. Through RCD I sponsored the scheme of cataloguing them, Iran made substantial progress and published 5 volumes but Pakistan lagged behind most. It is worth quoting willie Durant who says "what we know of Muslim thought upto 12th Century is a fragment of what survives, what survives is a fragment of what was produced; what appears in Press is a morsel of a fraction of a fragment. When scholarship has surveyed more thoroughly this half forgotten legacy, we shall probably rank the tenth and 11th Century) in Islam as one of the golden ages in the history of the mind. Our mind is imprisoned in the skin of the Western Orientalism. To see and appreciate faith and culture from its own point of view is a difficult task and while a conscious attempt is made to be impartial, the unconscious prejudice does come to surface."

Against Al-Ghazali this prejudice appears in the verdict that he snuffed the light of enquiry and ushered in a decadence which led to three dark centuries after him. The statement has influenced our Muslim scholars who have begun to come to prominence because of their scholarship and I was pained to see it repeated in Pakistan that Muslims followed Ghazali in Faith and lost the leadership and the West followed Avicenna and snatched the torch from the Muslim hands.

Already in the 12th century the Arabic Philosophers were influencing Christian thought through Spain. Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd entered Latin Europe. Such an invasion by alien thought was a mental shock of the first order and at first met with an attempt at repression by the Church. In 1210 a Church Council at Paris forbade the reading of Aristotle's "Metaphysics and Natural Philosophy" or Averroes's (Ibn Rushd) commentaries thereon. In 1263 Thomas Aquinas assured Pope Urban IV that Aristotle could be "sterilised." What he feared more was the "Averroism grounded in an alien faith."

The thirteenth century in Latin Europe did not suddenly see the acceptance of new ideas. It was in fact the battle ground for free thinkers trying to absorb the Arab scholarship, the materialists denying resurrection – “since the soul perishes with the body,” the pantheists of the Greek variety and the atheists of the secular society all contested with the Church for the possession of the European mind. Averroism became a fashion with the educated classes in France and Southern Italy. Thousands accepted what they thought were the true meaning of Averroes thought that the natural Law rules the world without interference by God that there is only one immortal soul, the Active Intellect. The Church condemned as heresies what Muslims philosophers had taught (which Ghazali combated) “That there is only one Active intellect; That the world is eternal, That the soul is corrupted with the corruption of the body; That God does not know individual events, That human actions are not ruled by divine Providence.” All this sounds familiar. The urbanisation, industrialisation, contact with the Muslim world through the Crusades further added fuel to the fire of unbelief. And they started on a path that led to division of Churches, division of Europe into warring nations and to the present moral bankruptcy and inner emptiness because they didn’t have a Ghazali to restore the balance between Philosophy and faith and resolve the conflict between Revelation and Reason and illumine the path of reason with a ray of the Divine Light.

This is the tragedy of the West and the greatness of Al-Ghazali.

## CHAPTER THREE.

## EPILOGUE.

SOCRATES,<sup>28</sup> Plato and Aristotle – the Trinity of the teachers of the West – laid the philosophic foundations of its culture and later contributed to Islamic scholasticism.

Socrates was clearly a man of deep piety with the temperament of a mystic and it is a historical irony that he was indicted, convicted and executed on charge of impiety, the form of irony that he had himself perfected in his dialogues.

Plato, to my mind, advanced Socrates’ basic ethical approach and, with his sharpened acute intellect gave it a form and new dimensions. He securely laid the foundation of Socratic moral and political doctrine that one should concern himself with the development of a moral and

28. *Socrates left not a scrap of paper containing his doctrines. What we know of him and his teachings is what Plato recorded, then circulated and formulating his philosophy left the treasure in his books.*

rational personality and that this development was the key to man's felicity which in Islamic terminology can be termed "Taqwa and Tazkia."

Plato held that each man has the capacity to make some contribution to a moral, Rational and just Society. In the "Republic" his main concern is ethical and his great contribution to the ethical thought was his recognition that goodness consisted in the natural and proper functioning of our human nature and the social behaviour gave the normal background to moral life.

Plato's four virtues — wisdom, courage, temperance and justice—described in "the Republic" were later called the "Cardinal Virtues" The word "Cardinal" is derived from the Latin word "Cardo," meaning hinge of the door, and the Cardinal Virtues are the virtues by which moral life is supported as a door stands on its hinges. To him — as to the Greeks generally temperance was the supreme virtue of human social behaviour as each desire or aspiration was to be satisfied to its proper moderate degree and the whole moral life would then have the harmony and proportion of a work of art. The Greeks called the good man as one "who is beautiful and good." A harmonious balance is achieved by reason in accordance with the supreme virtue of 'wisdom.'

The Greeks had a proverb "Nothing too much" and it took a central place in Aristotle's conception of virtue. The aim the moral end is "eudaimonia" happiness, the final result of the moral life—an advance on Plato who did not mention the direction in which virtue should be exercised. Aristotelian guide is the reason in our "habit of choice," defined by him as the deliberate desire of things in our power after consideration of them to be by the intellect. He also argues, like a true Greek, in favour of the mean or the middle course, e.g. "Courage" is the position between rashness and cowardice as "liberality" is between extravagance and miserliness. Aristotle, who kept the man more in mind than Plato did, gave him the conduct of a prudent man, by his acquired knowledge through personal experience. He preferred it to the knowledge acquired through the contemplation of the philosopher. The practical ability of an experienced man can show ordinary man just how far each tendency — desire or wish — be allowed reasonable play in the vir-



*The English poet Lord Byron (1788-1824) joined the greek insurgents in 1823. Espousal of the greek cause led him to adopt their national costume in which he is shown in the portrait — by T. Phillips*

*The costume is really Turkish showing the Muslim Cultural influence in Eastern Europe till the first quarter of 19th Century.*

## EPILOGUE.

tuous conduct in life, though he continued to subscribe to the Socratic view that virtue is knowledge.

This virtuous conduct was a product of ethical morality for the Greeks, untouched by religion. The religion of spiritual individuality as of Abraham<sup>29</sup> and the Biblical Propnets had not touched them. Even Aristotle, the creed holder of the "Unmoved Mover" had to yield to their pantheistic abandon and account for no less than fifty-two such "unmoved moving" spirits. Their religious concept was of freedom, beauty, rationalistic realisation of human worth. Their gods were not external. They signified perfectness of realisation of life, individual and corporate. In their religion "there<sup>30</sup> was nothing in comprehensible, nothing which could not be understood, there was nothing pertaining to a god which was not known to man, which he did not find or recognise in himself."

The moral has to have some standard of recognition and acceptance — a law built into the spirit, generating "that sense of right and wrong, that order and discipline of desire, without which a society disintegrates into individuals, and falls forfeit to some coherent<sup>31</sup> State."

Moral progress in history can be said not to depend so much in the improvement of the moral code as in the widening of the area wherein that code is accepted, though through wider acceptance a certain standardized improvement does take place. Take for example sexual morality how has it changed over centuries. Among the North Americans the young men and women mated<sup>32</sup> freely. Among the Papuans of New Guinea pre-marital promiscuity was the rule, commonly practised and commonly accepted. Similar sexual liberties were prevalent amongst the Igorols of the Philippines, the natives of upper Burma, the Kaffirs and Bushmen of Africa, the tribes of the Niger and Uganda, Tahiti and Polynesia.

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29. "Abraham, His Life and Times," by Masarrat Hussain Zuberi, Karachi, 1985.

30. "Our Oriental Heritage": by Will Durant.

31. Will Durant: *Our Oriental Heritage* p. 935

32. Will Durant: *Our Oriental Heritage* p. 45

Chastity is a late phenomenon. The primitive<sup>33</sup> tribes held virginity with contempt — it was held to be a barrier to marriage. Some scholars hold that virginity came to be prized when the agricultural landlord began to consider women also as a part of his property. I hold the view that the shift in the moral code came with the religious ideologies. Both the Pharaonic and Hammu-Rabi law made adultery punishable and the sanctity of the marriage bond received religious sanction later. The gradual wide acceptance of or indifference to, the post-war wave of permissiveness is a throw back to the primitive heritage and show, not the lowering of the standard, but negatives the necessity of any standard even of the natural law, due to the weakening of the religious moral link.

The view of the moral law as a law of nature was adopted by the Christian thinkers hesitatingly and reluctantly in spite of what St. Thomas Aquinas<sup>34</sup> (1225–1274) taught “natural law is ordained by God, and that it is concerned with the social life of man as a creature of time and space living in the actual world where all his social relations are to be ordered according to the law of God.” The divine law gave not the rigidity but eternity. God’s eternal law is the command of His divine origin. Aristotle without acknowledging the divinity did subscribe to the natural law a sublime reality. Religion includes not only a wider range of duties than morality is also has a greater emotional content. Mathew Arnold defined religion as “morality<sup>35</sup> touched by emotion.” This in higher religion is emotion permeated with love as in Christianity, adoration and awe of God as in Islam, submission even in mundane affairs to the Will of God. Social work by a moralist is assertion of his personality but for a really religious man the same work done is in obedience, with a feeling of loyalty, to God, as a humble instrument of God’s beneficent powers. That’s why a Muslim following the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) is proud to call himself His ‘Slave,’ and in

33. Robert Briffault in “The Mothers,” R.H. Lowie in “Are we civilized,” and W.G. Sumner and A.G. Keller in “Science of Society,” have given evidence of sexual promiscuity before and after marriage in the primitive world.

34. No doubt influenced by Aristotelian Philosophy as readopted and explained by Avicenna and Averroes (Ibn Sina, 980–1037 A.D. and Ibn Rushd, 1126–1198 A.D.)

35. Mathew Arnold: “Liberature & Dogma: Chapter I.

that stake he finally disowns and discards any form of slavery to any human being.

Though Kant denied that morality in any form needed religion for its support, he did in a guarded way, confessed that moral law aroused in him a feeling of awe, which, in fact, is the characteristic of religious emotion which he failed to identify. This emotion is not to be equated with the feeling of self-abasement as asserted by some modern philosopher-thinkers,<sup>36</sup> but of exaltation as with the Muslim mystics.

The West has confused religion with Theology and erred in the philosophical study of God and His actions in terms of human experience. The religious man grasps His reality in intuition and illumination. To the Western metaphicians mystic experience is an “obscure contemplation” in the language of St. John<sup>37</sup> of the Cross and its supreme expression in the words of Pseudo-Dionysius is “ray of divine<sup>38</sup> darkness,” where in the Muslim mystic<sup>39</sup> cries out in ecstasy: “Glory to Me, How great is My Majesty.” Hadn’t God said in the Q’uran that He is the Light of the Heavens and of the Earth. He is Light upon Light, infinite undefineable. And the Prophet’s mission was to bring humanity out of darkness into His external Light. Allah guides to His Light whom He pleases. The illumination is not a reward, it is said and is a gift from God to man — the mystic — and depends not so much on good works as on Divine grace.

But more of it later — “the flight of the alone to the Alone” — let us leave it at that.

To my mind Socrates and Aristotle had a glimpse of the Immortal Reality and survived their death. Since Aristotle’s death in 322 B.C. there have been, without interruption until the present, schools and scholars who have studied, expounded, adopted and adapted his doctrines, his logic, his vision and his ideas.

36. William Lillie, quoting McDougall & De Burgh, in “The Relation of Morality to Religion” p. 85.

37. “The Mystical Element in The Metaphysical Poets of the 17th Century” by my brother Dr. Itrat Hussain (at that time Carnegie Fellow in English, Merton College, Oxford); Oliver & Boyd, London, 1948, p. 22.

38. Bayazid Bustami.

39. Surah 24, v. 35



He came to the attention of Muslim Scholars through the Nestorians in Syria and Persia (Iran) through the Syriac translations. But the flowering amongst Muslim scholars dates from Al-Kindi (801-873 AD) in the 9th Century AD. Then came Al-Farabi (870-950 A.D.) — followed by the great Avicenna (Ibn Sina: 980-1037 A.D.), one of the brightest intellects of the world. By that time study of Aristotle had become the seal of scholarship and Nestorians had begun earning their living as wondering teachers of his philosophy. Such a one by the name of Al-Natali arrived in the far off Bukhara and was engaged as Ibn Sina's tutor by his father. But his real interest was aroused when he began studying Al-Farabi and returned the compliment by surpassing him. Al-Ghazali (1058-1111 A.D.) rightly brackets the two as the leading interpreters of Aristotle, and the third to be added later was Averroes (Ibn Rushd: 1126-1195 A.D.) born after Al-Ghazali and took him on and created the controversy which has not seen the end even today as interest in Al-Ghazali has survived the ages. Ethics, though a part of Qur'anic teaching, was, as a separate subject, first taken up by the Muslim Scholars when Aristotle had become the craze and did, to some extent, provide the pollination for so many who flourished in their genius ridden century. Ibn-e-Miskawaih (died 1030 A.D.) was the first whose treatise "Tahidibul Akhlaq" became a first best seller, and Ghazali was often accused by his contemporary critics to have followed it so closely in his "Ihya-ul-Ulum" as to have almost plagiarized<sup>40</sup> it. The other books worth noticing — as they also came under Ghazali's review — and are still extant — are "Qut-al-autub" by Abu Talib Makki, "the al-Risala-al-Qushayria" and "Makarim-al-Sharia" by Raghīb-al-Isphani. But they were the generalists books, not attempting formulation of a systematic philosophical approach as we subsequently find in Ghazali. As an erudite scholar he must read them all and sifted what was worth sifting for his own use; and we find unacknowledged (as was his wont) gleanings from them in "Ihya-ul-Ulum" and "Mizanul-Amal." The similarity of treatment is due to the fact that Ghazali was as good a Muslim as they and more profound. The main springs of conviction were common and the same.

40. I have refuted it in the main Chapter II.

Ghazali was, however, of a different mould. He had the courage to doubt and express his doubt openly. As he himself says in his almost autobiographical work — "Al-Munqidh-min-al-Dalal" — Deliverance from error which is a mirror to his intellectual development finally leading to his mystic submergence, "from my early youth, since I attained the age of puberty before I was twenty, until the present time when I am over fifty. I have ever recklessly launched out into the midst of ocean depths. I have poked into every dark recess. I have made an assault on every problem. I have plunged into every abyss. I have scrutinised the creed of every sect... What I am looking for is knowledge of what things really are and so I must undoubtedly try to find what knowledge is." So very early he broke away from Taqlid — simple acceptance of religious truths on authority. The chaotic multiplicity of creeds and sects, beliefs and current philosophy disturbed him profoundly. "They are," as he put it, "like a deep ocean strewn with shipwrecks, each sect believing itself in possession of the truth and salvation." He, therefore, decided to plunge in that "deep ocean" and surfaced later clutching the wand of mysticism! Though he became convinced that it is a form of human apprehension higher than, and transcending rational apprehension, he never gave up the intellectual, rational approach completely.<sup>41</sup>

He walked the mystic way as he "apprehended clearly that the mystics were<sup>42</sup> men who had real experiences, not men of words and that he had already progressed as far as possible by way of intellectual apprehension".... From the sciences he had laboured at and the paths that he had traversed in his investigation of the revelational and rational sciences he had come to "a sure faith in God most high, in revelation gifted to the Prophets and in the Last Day." The rational sciences had nothing more to offer, he having satisfied his intellectual quest, mastering what was there to master, he still remained disturbed on not finding the Truth, not only the credal Truth. He finally, after great natural hesitation and self questioning, frankly outlined, took the plunge, "fleeing from all time consuming entanglements."

After ten years searching, agonising and rewarding, he got glimpses of beatitude. He convinced himself — not an easy thing — that the

41. As explained in Chapter II.

42. His "Deliverance from Error" — M. Watt's Translation p. 55.

Sufis were truly godly, their life most unsullied, beautiful and pure, "illuminated with the Light that proceeds from the Central radiance of Inspiration." He advanced "from witnessing forms and similitudes to stages where the power of the language fails and no rendering in words is possible."

These transcendental experiences convinced him of the actuality of receiving knowledge that was beyond the human reasoning intellect.

The two essential features of the "mystic consciousness" which the study of the life of the great mystics of Islam and later of Christianity (during the medieval period) reveals, are the acute consciousness of God and the belief in the capacity of the human soul to realise the living presence of God within it. Purification of the soul is the first prerequisite and that's why Ghazali had to free himself from "all entanglements" and take the first step towards what the later Christian mystics called "purgation."

The vision of the Lord is promised in the sermon of the Mount to the pure in heart alone, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The soul is recognised as the dwelling place of God and its purification is the first stage of mystical life.

"It is the paradox of mysticism that the beyond is within."<sup>43</sup> "Thou wert more inward to me than my most inward part," says the mystic, echoing the Qur'anic Verse, wherein God says "I am nearer than your jugular vein." The mystic has to acquire the virtues of humility, unquestioned obedience, absolute surrender to the will of God and thereafter, proud to be His slave. The complete surrender of self thus is extinction of "selfhood" and final acquiescence in the will and the purpose of God. Thus he is alone with the Alone — oblivious of even of himself. How well does the mystic poet, Jalaluddin Rumi, express his final release from the duality of self. "My place is the placeless, my

43. For a good summary of Christian mystics and poets, attention is invited to Evelyn Underhill's "Mysticism," Dean Inge, "Christian Mysticism," the two famous ones of my college days in Cambridge. Attention is also invited to my brother Dr. Itrat Hussain's book on "Metaphysical Poets of the 17th Century" referred to earlier.

trace is the traceless. It is neither body nor soul, for I belong to the soul of the beloved. I have put duality away and I have seen that the two worlds are one. One I seek, one I know, one I see, one I<sup>44</sup> call."

On the death bed of Ghazali was found the last poem he had written. In it are the lines:

"A bird I am, this body was my cage, But I have flown, leaving it as a token."<sup>45</sup>

Ghazali had to pass through a terrific self-agonising double conflict, intellectual and temperamental to give up the world he was used to and enjoying. His confession in "deliverance from error" is a self-portrait of unparalleled honesty.

A new breed of Western<sup>46</sup> Scholars has come into being — Arabic Scholars believing in Sufism so received the ray of Light that changed their whole being and changing their religion they became Muslim and their books on the subject are recommended.

Ghazali's main contribution, resulting from his own journey to the unconscious from the conscious, was that as an orthodox luminary, recognised and respected all over the Islamic world, made Sufism not only respectable but attainable; and brought the outlawed mystic within the orthodox cult. "The orthodox theologians still went their own way, and so did the mystics, but theologians became more ready to accept the mystics as respectable, while the mystics were more careful to remain within the bounds of orthodoxy."<sup>47</sup>

44. R.A. Nicholson's Translation of Rumi.

45. The whole poem is translated in Margaret Smith's "Al-Ghazali, the Mystic" pp.36-37 given in Appendix.

46. (a) Martin Lings: (now Abu Bakr Sirajuddin): "What is Sufism" and "The Book of certainty" (the Sufi doctrine of Faith, Vision & Gnosis).  
(b) Titus Burckhardt: (now Ibrahim Izzuddin): "An Introduction to Sufi Doctrine," translated by D.M. Matheson.  
(c) William Stoddart: (now Sidi Imran Yahya): "Sufism, The Mystical Doctrine & Methods of Islam," with a Foreward by R.W. Austin (now Sidi Umar Al-Shadhili).  
(d) Two other books: Rene Guenon (now Abdul Waheed Yahya) "Crisis of the Modern World." Gai Eaton (now Hasan Abdul-Hakim) "The King of the castle" should not be missed.

47. Montgomery Watt: "The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali"—p.15.

His deliberate attempt to dive into the Ocean and return on the Crest of the wave became so encouraging to the others, who like him, spoke of God, like a man that really believed in God. The familiar wording to the West-oriented mind: "seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you," became, because of Ghazali's pursuit, an actionable pathway. The seeker received instructions in the way of seeking and guidance in the art of knocking. In "Mishkat-ul-anwar" (the Niche of Light) he "expounds the doctrine of oneness of Being with an altogether uncompromising directness."<sup>48</sup> Ghazali, more than any one else, may rightly be said to have prepared the way for the general recognition and acceptance of Sufism. It was, as I have said earlier,<sup>49</sup> his younger contemporary, Shaikh Abdul Qadir Gilani, who was to make the recognition fully operative as a part of the creed and way of life for a Muslim (in graded degrees). He institutionalised the system which spread to the Muslim world from Morocco to India in his own life time. (d.1166 A.D.). He must have studied Ghazali as he was in his own lifetime Hujjat-ul-Islam and his place has remained undimmed since then. I can only speculate; with some amount of probability but it would be a worthwhile pursuit to trace Ghazali's influence on Shaikh Abdul Qadir Gilani.

Like Ghazali, "Shaikh Abdul Qadir Gilani had been something of an exoteric authority and we are told that when he finally entered a Sufi order, some of his fellow initiates were inclined to resent the presence of a Hanbali jurist in their midst. They little knew that for the next eight centuries and more – that is down to the present day – this novice was destined to be known as the Sultan of Saints; (and Light to the Seekers and Beloved of God – Mahbubi Subhani).

His Qadria Tariqrah was the outstanding one, others like Chishtia, Suhrawardia, Shadhilia developed in other places with equally deep roots. They saved Islam from submergence in the turbulent times after the sack of Baghdad (1258) and the later colonial imperialist impact by binding the Muslims together in awareness of God Almighty and love of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) whom Ghazali made the

central figure. But history and influence of various Tariqrah, an interesting subject, is beyond the present scope. Suffice it to say that Ghazali formulated and formalised the creed for general acceptance and Shaikh Abdul Qadir Gilani made it all pervading – a way of life.

The Muslim world was in real turmoil, different forces were pulling it apart and the pieces were turning into a patchy pattern. The glory that was Islam was fading into a multitude of facets and belief.

In this flux world was Ghazali and his greatness rests on his supreme achievement in giving the final lasting blow to all heresies and from all the encounters Islamic theology emerged victorious and strident. He gave the content and the Tariqrah provided the receptacle each one receiving according to his effort, his capacity, the size of his cup of Love.

Ghazali's great achievement was to give a rational direction to both ritual and dogma and that too in simple lucid language graspable by men of ordinary intelligence, inspiring the devotee, recalling them to the loving contemplation of God. He gave to revelation and the last recipient of that revelation central, pivotal position for guidance to the uninitiated ones.

The main theme of the last monothetic religion is universal brotherhood of those whose source of revelation is the same, and as I have said, elsewhere,<sup>50</sup> the Qur'an makes affirmatively and repeatedly, no distinction between the Abrahamic line of Prophets and its appeal on one point programme is let us all worship the one God that Abraham, the progenitor of all the three revealed religions, acknowledged.

The principal fraternity and brotherhood that God respects is spiritual, linking brethren in the profession of the same true religion that God loved to proclaim through his selected messengers. The true message of Islam is a natural, a spiritual, civil fraternity joined together in a common bond and a common pursuit. The separation of State and Church in Christianity came through political reasons as its acceptance

48. Martin Lings (Abu Bakr Sirajad Din): in "What is Sufism" p. 111.

49. Chapter II.

50. See my book: "Abraham: His Life and Times," Karachi 1985.

was politically motivated.<sup>51</sup> In the last revealed religion God saw to a creating an Ummah when He called mankind to a new spiritually motivated brotherhood free, of tensions of colour, race and even religion and tied in civil bonds in submission to His unfailing will, through the exercise of our own free will. The link through revealed religions is common but the directive is not even to defame the gods, the false gods in your view, but respect the sincerity of those who love to follow them. It was this beaten gold character that was primarily responsible for their conversion and acceptance of the new order in highly stratified, suppressed dominations of the Sassanian and Byzantian Empires. Not a sword was unsheathed, not a gun fired in the Far East wherein the largest Muslim State of Indonesia and highly prosperous Malaysia lie.

The Ghazalian way helped in unifying the majority of Muslim<sup>52</sup> Ummah. Though within less than a century of the Holy Prophet's death, the lands which become part of the Islamic world from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean from Transoxiana to Andalusia belonged to a new spiritual universe, Ghazali's medieval times were rent with religious schism and political dissensions. He tackled them with the tool of their own and lessened their intensity, giving them the final blow from which they never did recover.<sup>53</sup> He left such a profound mark upon the intellectual life of Islam that no account or discussions of any aspect of Islamic thought or achievement is complete without a reference to his own personal approach.

So much so that his influence on Persian literature — both prose and poetry can not be ignored and deserves reiteration. He not only

51. See Chapter II of my book "Abraham: His Life and Times." Even as late as 1078 A.D. (when Ghazali was alive) Byzantine Emperor Michael VII appealed to Pope Gregory VII for aid against Seljuks & in return promised the unification of the orthodox with the Catholic Church: *The Cambridge History of Islam*:

52. Seyyed Hossein Nasr would prefer to call it 'Sunni Ummah' — "Science and civilization in Islam."

53. It was nearly two centuries after him that Shiaism creed got a permanent foothold in Iran.

enriched it with ethical content which culminated in Saadi and H'afiz of Shiraz, his metaphysical approach in graspable easily understandable racy style made possible the prose of Fariduddin-Attar and the mystical poetry of Sanai and Maulana Rumi and others. The mystical element which made Persian so endearing and enduring was his contribution.

He earned respect and jealousy of his contemporaries, both orthodox and liberal the latter because he trounced the philosophers robbing them of their predominance, though in turn borrowed a lot of their reasoning and philosophical content and the former as he exposed them, outstripping them of their outer garments of sanctity and made them naked. Leaving aside the triumphant rejoinder—"The incoherence<sup>54</sup> of the incoherent" — a classic in its own right — of Ibn Rushd, the famous Averroes of the Medieval Europe, his detractors abounded; so much so that Qaziabu Abdullah Mohammed-bin-Kamdin<sup>55</sup> of Cordova and Qazi Ayaz of Mariah regarded him as heretic and ordered his works to be burnt and destroyed. This was done but when he was alive and a similar charge was brought against him, the Seljuk ruler, Sanjar, (d.1130 A.D.) dismissed it with the contempt<sup>56</sup> it deserved.

But the Marrakush Sultan Ali-ibn-Yusuf-ibn-Tashfin (1084—1142) was more orthodox and more solicitous of his soul that he ordered the destruction of his philosophical and theological writings including "Ihya-ul-Ulum," which gave great unbrage to the orthodox for various reasons which were again revived in subsequent centuries by learned luminaries like Al-Mazair (d.114) a traditionist authority, whose commentary on "Sahih Muslim" is still acknowledged, criticised him on his philosophical approach to religion inbibed, according to him, through study of Ibn Sina. Al-Mazari had never met Imam Ghazali but was closely associated with those who had sat at his feet and honoured his great learning. But Abul Walid Tartushn (d.1126) had met him and respected him for his great learning but did not think much of his "Ihya-ul-Ulum" as he alleged that he had quoted some traditions incorrectly and many weak ones incoherently. Allama Ibn Jenzi

54. "Tahafut al-Tahafut"

55. He got a footnote in history because of this outrageous action of his.

56. *Al-Ghazali*: by Allama Shibli Naumani, pp.26.

(d.1200) wrote a detailed book<sup>57</sup> on what he considered to be inaccuracies in *Ihya-ul-Ulum*. Ibn Taimiyyah<sup>58</sup> (d.1328), Ibn Qayyim (d.1350 A.D.) also denounced him as "One misguided." Liberals criticised him for his conservatism, moving away from philosophical speculation, and the conservatives accused him of importing philosophical arguments in theology.

I need not quote Ibn Taimiyyah who sharply accused him of inconsistency and who quoted Ibn Rushd (Averroes) as saying of him "One day you are a Yemenite when you meet a man from Yemen, but when you see some one from Maadd you assert you are from Adnan." Some modern critics have taken it up and called him inconsistent<sup>59</sup> and double-minded. This is due to the fact, as admitted by Dr. F. Rahman, that Ghazali is a most difficult author, though I won't go so far as he asserts "an outright<sup>60</sup> impossible one, to understand in any coherent manner." He is difficult because of not only his argumentative style of writing but also because multiplicity of the subjects dealt with and the line of argument taken addressed to persons of different level of intelligence and on different occasions. The one line of distinction is esoteric and exoteric substance of his different treatises e.g. between "Ma'ariyul Quds," professedly esoteric wherein both in the preface and at the end, Ghazali affirms to be guarded against those who are not fit for it and the "Miraj-al-S'alikin" which is exoteric obviously meant for the public. His own spiritual development also naturally coloured his later treatises e.g. his "Mishkatul Anwar" has to be different from "Kimia-i-Saadat." About his sharpest critic Ibne Rushd, Simon Van<sup>61</sup> Den Bergh comes to the conclusion (that even there) "the resemblances between Ghazali

57. Called "Ailamil Ihya" or "Ghalatul Ihya" (Inaccuracies of Ihya).
58. See for further details "Al-Ghazali" by Shibli Naumani pp.230-235 and for his defence of Ihya refer to "Afkar-i-Ghazali" by M. Hanif.
59. Quoted with approbation by Dr. F. Rehman in "Prophecy in Islam."
60. Dr. Fazlur Rahman in "Prophecy in Islam pp.94-96 and the Egyptian Scholar—Dr. Mohd. Zaki Abdul Salam Mubarak has spelled it out in his book "The Ethical Conception of Al-Ghazali," though conceding his great knowledge and unerring foresight anticipating some of the postulates of Descartes (1596-1667) Pascal (1623-1662) — Kant (1724-1804).
61. To whom Dr. Fazlur Rahman, dedicated his book 'Prophecy in Islam' and who translated Averroes "Tahafut al-Tahafut."

and Averroes seem sometimes greater than their differences." Even Dr. M. Iqbal succumbed to Ibn Rushd's view and asserted that "to this day it is difficult<sup>62</sup> to define, with accuracy his (Ghazali's) view of the nature of God. In him, like Borger and Solger in Germany, Sufi Pantheism and the Asharite dogma of personality appear to harmonise together, a reconciliation<sup>63</sup> which makes it difficult to say whether he was a Pantheist, or a personal pantheist of the type of Lotze." This view, I am constrained to say, was expressed when Dr. Iqbal was of an impressionable age of a student studying in Germany. Ghazali knowingly and in assertion of his well reasoned and ingrained faith, eschewed all kinds of pantheistic extravagances of the earlier intoxicated Sufis with whom he was familiar and in "the Munqidh" he expressly mentions that he had studied the "Qut al-Qulub" of Abu Talib al-Makki (d.996 A.D.), the works of Harith al Muhasibi (d.857) and was familiar with the sayings of Junaid Baghdadi (d.910 A.D.), Shibli (d.945 A.D.) and Abu Yazid Bustami (d.875). His own younger brother, Ahmad Ghazali, was in his life time better known as a Sufi — a Sufi poet and chronicler of S'ufis. And the brothers were so close, both studied together at Nishapur under same<sup>64</sup> tutors, worked together at Nizamiya — College. He respected earlier Sufis but did not follow them. He was far too individualistic in training, outlook and approach for that: And to the Hallaj's passionate cry "I am the creative Truth" or to Bustami's "Glory be to Me, How great is My Majesty" or his "within this robe is naught but Allah," he has regarded as indiscreet on. It is true he does not condemn them but his precept is that "the words of passionate lovers in the ecstasy should be concealed and not spoken of," and for himself he says:

"What I experience<sup>65</sup> shall not try to say,  
call me happy, but ask me no more."

62. Quoted in "A History of Muslim Philosophy" p.639.
63. Ibid — p.623, Footnote and "The Development of Metaphysics in Persia" p.75.
64. Yousuf Al-Nassaj in Tus, Al-Farmdli at Nishapur above all Imam Al-Harain, himself a pupil of renowned S'ufi Abu Naim al-Isphani (d.1038 A.D.). Margaret Smith refers to the sources of S'ufistic influence on him in "Al-Ghazali, the Mystic."
65. Munqidh p.61.

It has been correctly stated that "Al-Ghazali's view of God as being both immanent and transcendent, his firm belief in God being a personal God who allows His creatures to enter into communion with Him, his emphasis on God's being a creator who created the universe at a specific time through an act of volition, one and all, can hardly fit into any scheme of pantheism."

Then later Iqbal drank deeply at the mystic fountain. His "Baab Jibril" follows "the A'wa'z-i-Par-i-Jibrail" of Shihabuddin Suhrawardi "Maqtool," and Iqbal re-echoed Shabistri "Gulshan-i-Ra'z," giving it, however a fresh colouring in his "Gulshan-i-Ra'z-i-Jadid."

Then he wrote "Piyami-Mashriq," both as a tribute and as a rejoinder to Goethe and later recalled with admiration, mixed with regret, the western philosophers Spinoza, Nietzsche, Kant, Hegel, Bergson and Schopenhauer. He noticed every change and shortfall in their vision and castigated<sup>66</sup> them for the cooling of the earthly heaven within.

It was not for nothing that he called his first collection of Urdu verse "Bang-i-Dara," which Anne Marie Schimmel, rightly calls significant "since it points to Iqbal's view of himself."<sup>67</sup> He is like the bell which leads Muslims to the centre of their faith and life, the Kabaah in Mecca, after they have gone astray in the scented gardens of Iran or in the glittering cities of the West."

Iqbal was in the twentieth century, heir to the deadening Sufism fossilised in the various Tariqah's. Like Ghazali, he revolted and succumbed to the purity of the vision.

The intellectualised rationalism did not satisfy Ghazali or Iqbal. Ghazali read all that was there to read, extracted and then refined to his satisfaction what was then agitating the Muslims – the Mutazallites, the philosophers led by Ibn Sina, dominated by Aristotle, the F'atimides, the Ismailis with their immanent Imams, the orthodox Hanabalites

66. For further exposition of the theme see my article on "Khudi and the Concept of Life in Iqbal."

67. "Mystical Dimensions of Islam" by Anne Marie Schimmel.

and the logician Kalamists. He then went out to what was left – the Sufis and the Sufism.

Like Ghazali, Iqbal studied all that was there to study in modern western philosophy as alluring as Aristotelian one was in the earlier times. He also studied Sufism of Persia and remained dissatisfied with all forms of pantheistic absorption in a universal life or soul as the final aim and salvation of man. For him "the moral and religious ideal of man is not self-abnegation but self-affirmation and he attains to this ideal by becoming more and more individual and unique."

His own explanation of "Khudi" (Ego) is, that in man, the centre of life becomes an Ego or Person. "Personality is a state of tension – if the state of tension is not maintained, relaxation will ensue. It is the state of tension which tends to make us immortal." Quite a good many will rather plunge for equilibrium than tension but let us not digress further. Incidentally though it might be mentioned that the axiom of tension explains to a certain extent his enchantment with the Ibletian<sup>68</sup> revolt.

But to him Man is the realer Ruler of mankind as all the trials of a painful evolution have come to an end with him. In our strife towards perfection we raise ourselves in the scale of life. The pathway to vice-regency of God in man, repeatedly asserted in the Qur'an, is to aspire to the ideal. And both for Ghazali and Iqbal that ideal, in human earthly life, is treading in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), the acme of human achievement and of perfection in a human soul, a historical unparalleled record of success.

"The superman"<sup>69</sup> of Nietzsche surprised Iqbal with his doomsday warnings for the west. He acknowledges the depth of his vision but accuses him of its incompleteness in that he stopped at "L'a Illahe" and could not take the next step of "Illalah." Nietzsche's nihilism, his

68. See his "Ba'b-Jibril" p.435 (dialogue between Jibril and Iblis), p.508 (Iblis and the Creator borrowed from Ibn Arabi) and Iblis (Armaghan-i-Hijaz) p.635 etc.

69. Like Aristotle's attraction even for Ghazali, as Ghazali finally put an end to his domination, Iqbal brushed Nietzsche's "superman" aside and both delved deeply in the Qur'an and reasserted the Holy Prophet as the centre – the ideal man.

denunciation of Hellenistic and Jewish encrustations on Christianity appealed to him but he could not accept his negativism. He admonishes him on his painful cry "God is dead," but still calls him "a Momin at heart, with the brain of a Kafir" (قلب او مومن و دماغش کافر است), surprisingly re-echoing Hazrat Ali, who of the Arab poet Ummay-i-Bin-Salat of his time, said: "His language is pure, his mind distraught" (امن لسانه و کفر قلبه)

In spite of what he says of Ghazali disapprovingly, both reach the same source. Iqbal ends his lectures<sup>70</sup> quoting a Muslim Saint (whom he does not name but I think he had in mind Ahmad Ghazali, the younger brother but a greater Sufi in his own right) that "no understanding of the Holy Book is possible until it is actually revealed to the believer as was revealed to the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him)." And he uses the term 'religion' in that sense. To how many can thus development of religious life be vouchsafed? Doesn't he get nearer to Ghazali's concept, who, in Sufi experience, grasped the certification of the Prophetic message in its essentials.

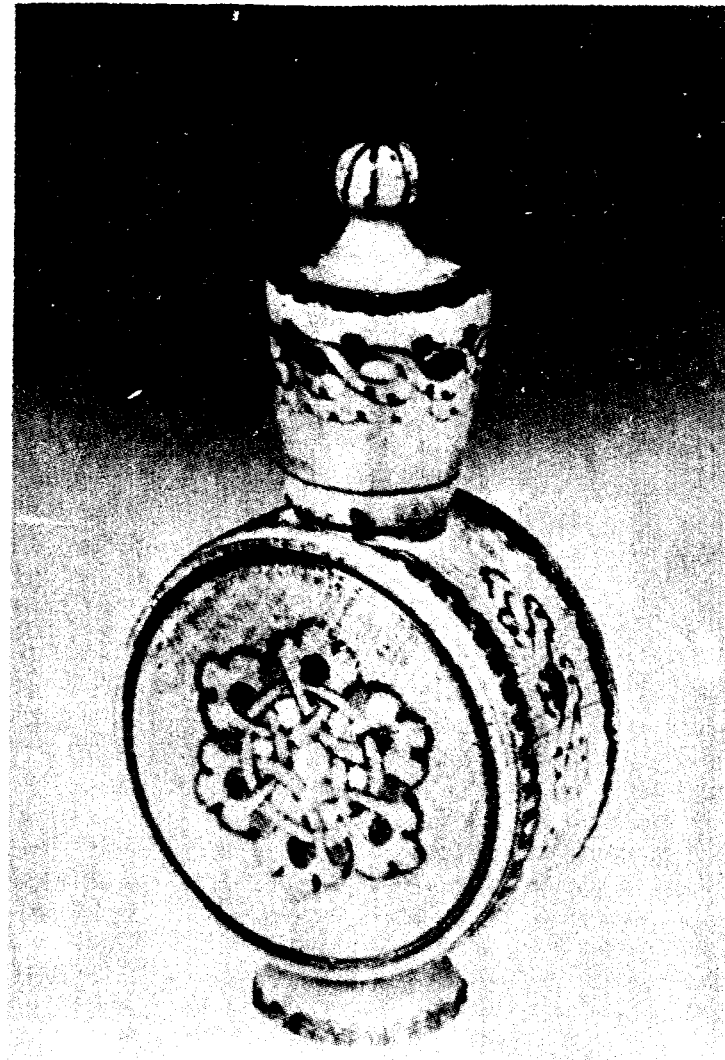
Ghazali's rationalism, though dented, still survived as the Qur'an meant it to be.

The main criticism, amounting to accusation, against Ghazali, so commonly expressed, is that through his emphasis on fundamentalism he submerged philosophical intellectualism and stilled the zest for inquiry and scientific reflection. The west while acknowledging him as unquestionably<sup>71</sup> the greatest theologian of Islam and one of its noblest and most original thinkers "hold him responsible for the decadence that really began about two centuries later when the cycle of the natural end of Empires took shape." The decadence and eventual fall of Empires and cultures is a highly complex political, socio-logical, economic phenomena and it is too much of an over-simplification to ascribe it mainly to a single man, however gifted and great he may be.

It is in the nature of an Empire to disintegrate for the energy that created it disappears from those who in later stages inherit it, the bold-

70. "The Reconstruction of Religions thought in Islam" — The Epilogue:

71. Hitti — 'History of the Arabs' p.431.



The wooden case of a scent bottle presented to delegates to an International conference in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1986; showing how the Muslim influence persists even in the 20th Century.

## EPILOGUE.

ness and ambitious of satraps grow, the army generals develop political ambitions; the centrifugal forces come to the fore. Destiny deserts and Fates take over. That the Muslim religious citadel was not totally pulled down inspite of a Hulaku is due to Ghazali and Shaikh Abdul Qadir Gilani and others who literally trod the same path.

Thomas Aquinas, one of the greatest theologians of Christianity and later Pascal were affected by the ideas of Ghazali:<sup>72</sup> "The scholastic shell constructed by Al-Ash'ari and Al-Ghazali has held Islam to<sup>73</sup> this day" but he goes on to say that "Cheristendom succeeded in breaking through its scholasticism, particularly at the time of the protestant Revolt. Since then the West and the East have parted company, the former progressing while the latter stood still."

What Ghazali really accomplished was to send Aristotle back to the Greek mythical antiquity and retained Ibne Sina, his greatest disciple and exponent, "the second Master," as a symbolic link in Islamic thought development. Both became only a monument to the past.

If there is something enduring, an immortal spirit in Muslim thought, it is to be found in its retreat from the rationalising and secular attitude of Hellenistic tradition in its retreat even from the trials and tumult of history — to become more fully conscious of its own vocation as a religious community. "If the Greek thought had fueled the phase of splendour and expansion there is a further<sup>74</sup> phase which to the outside critical historian may look like stagnation and squalid decay, but seen from the inside may reveal itself as a maturing of consciousness, the moment of spiritual insight and timeless 'Hikmah' (wisdom) to replace timebound discursive philosophy. And indeed in Islam we see, from the time it recedes from the frontage of history, the growth of an imposing new metaphysics, Sufism. which inspires the unitary vision of justice, harmony, (Love) and controlled order extending to the whole cosmos reflecting back on man's life."

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72. Latin "*Al-Gazee*".

73. Hitti: "*History of the Arabs*" p.432.

74. Giorgio De Santillana in his preface to Dr. Seyyed Hossain Nasr's "*Science and Civilization in Islam*."



But he too cannot help expressing the very common gibe against Ghazali that he "went to building up the whirlwind of intolerance and blind fanaticism which tore down not only science but the very School system and the glorious Ijtihad, the interpretation of the Qur'an."

I repeat here to re-emphasize, what I have said earlier<sup>75</sup> that "to the diligent reader it is obvious that Ghazali had a sneaking respect for the philosopher's learning and their scientific rational approach and exposition of the fundamentals of nature and man's response, of the unmoved Mover — God — His attributes and His creation and he set out to surpass them in their own branch of learning." He was then heading the Nizamiya College at Baghdad and the temptation to outdo them was irresistible. It was also an important part of his quest for the ultimate Truth. To clarify his own ideals he first wrote 'Maqaasidi-Philosophia' (Aims of the philosophers). It is an irony (and how it would have infuriated him had he come to know of it) that this book became a classic for the West and that Ghazali, for his clear-thinking and clearer exposition, was hailed as a great Aristotelian).

The accusation of being irrational, fanatic and chief protagonist of orthodox approach to both nature and theology is based on his "Tahafut-al-Falasafah" (The Incoherence of the philosophers) and his subsequent flight into Sufism denying a rational approach to religion and its mystery. What an incorrect accusation.

Let us dissect both. In the very first preface he tries to limit his studies to a few particular statements of only two Muslims Philosophers — Al-Farabi-Abu-Nasr and Ibn Sina. And he clearly states that "Therefore, let it be known that we propose to concentrate on the refutation of the philosophical thought as it emerges from the writings of these two persons." He then goes on to affirm that the scientific truths like lunar and solar eclipse, established by astronomical and mathematical evidence, have to be accepted. He goes further and says that it can be correctly forecast when a lunar or solar eclipse will take place, whether it would be total or partial and how long it will last and "he who thinks that it is his religious duty to disbelieve such things is really unjust to his religion and weakens its cause."

75. Chapter II p.30.

So in the very beginning he asks the faithful to accept and respect mathematical truths. He also pointedly accepts the logic and logical deductions. "But logic is not their (philosophers) monopoly" and to him it is the something "as in the art of scholastic reasoning we call it the book of theoretical inquiry. The philosophers have changed its name to logic to make it new, formidable. We often call it the book of disputation or the data of the Intellects." So accepting the both, how can he be called anti-science, anti-intellect, anti-logic.

His simple aim in his own words is "Let it be known that it is our purpose to disillusion those who think too highly of the philosophers<sup>76</sup> and consider them to be infallible." It can safely be asserted that he is out to demolish the infallibility of the only two Philosophers — Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina. Not such a big crime to deserve the obliquely now universally showered.

After making his stand so clear and affirmative he gives a list of twenty<sup>77</sup> 'problems' in whose discussion he proposed to expose "the contradiction involved in the philosophers' theories."

After all the lengthy dialectical questioning and reasoning he brands the two<sup>78</sup> philosophers with infidelity (in terms of the accepted orthodox views) on only three counts out of the twenty he so labourously discusses and dilates on.

Those three are:—

- (1) The problem of the eternity of the world, where they maintained that all the substances are eternal.<sup>79</sup>
- (2) their assertion that divine knowledge does not encompass individual<sup>80</sup> objects.
- (3) their denial of resurrection of bodies.<sup>81</sup> According to him these

76. All quotations are from the English translation of his book by Sabih Ahmad Kamali, published by Pakistan Philosophical Congress, Lahore, 1963.

77. See p.11 English Translation of "Tahafut-al-Falasafah" referred above and presumably their uncritical followers.

79. Now with the "bang theory" of creation scientifically advanced Ghazalian theory is upheld.

80. Is still open to objection. For Ghazali, it does contradict the Qur'anic Conception of God. His view of a personal God is a tenet of all Muslims.

81. His conclusion on this point is almost a compromise.

views (on 2½ points) teachings are "hypocritical misrepresentation designed to appeal to the masses. And this is blatant blasphemy to which no Muslim sect would subscribe."

As regards the remaining seventeen points he exonerates them as at one point some of them they were advocated by the Mutazillites or one or the other Muslim sect and can at best be called aberrations.

This is the sum total of a very philosophical dialectical, logically argued thesis. There is no fanaticism, no obsturatism, no illogical deductions. How can he be accused of what is accused. Was he, in fact, so far removed, in his approach to philosophy and religion, from Avicenna, the idol of the West that if Ideal Muslims should have followed him (Avicenna) they would have continued reaping a bigger and better harvest down the centuries. The duel between the two in "Tahfatal — Falasifah" to my mind ended as a squib, with a whimper. The angle of approach differed but not the approach.

It must be clearly stated and clearly understood that Islamic civilisation, like other traditional civilisations, is based on one basic point: the revelation brought by the Prophet Mohammad (Peace Be Upon Him) is "the pure," the simple religion of Abraham,<sup>82</sup> the restoration of a primordial and fundamental unity. The creed of Islam — "there is no divinity other than God and Mohammad is His Prophet" summarizes in its simplicity the basic attitude and spirit of Islam. The word 'Islam' means both "submission" and "peace" — or "being at one with the Divine Will." It is to be grasped that the essence of Islam is that God is One and that the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) was the vehicle of revelation. All the Muslim philosophers, scientists and mathematicians operated within this matrix and never in defiance. None of the famous<sup>83</sup> philosophers could or did repudiate the basic unity of God or of His Cosmos. The terminology differed as the onslaught of Greek thought had to be met on its own ground. They were not

82. See recently published book by the author "Abraham: His Life and Times": 1985.

83. Al-Kindi (d.873), Al-Farabi (d.950), Avicenna (Ibn Sina d.1037—only 20 years before the birth of Ghazali (b.1058), Ibn Baja (Averpace d.1138) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes d.1198).

orthodox, because they did absorb new ideas but always tried to fashion them and bring them in line with the basic truth.

It cannot be denied that pollination and flowering of philosophy of these Masters would not have been possible without the Greek and particularly Aristotelian impact but their attitude towards Islam remained reverant and their sharpened intelligence gave them new tools and new terminology to explain revelatory process, the bed-rock of Islamic belief. Their attitude was: "It is fitting to acknowledge the utmost gratitude to those who have contributed even a little to the Truth, not to speak of those who have done much... We should not be ashamed to acknowledge the truth and assimilate it from whatever sources it comes to us, even if it is brought to us by former generations and foreign peoples. For whom who seeks the truth, there is nothing of higher value than the truth itself, it never cheapens him or abases him who searches for it, but ennobles and honours him."

These are the words of Al-Kindi found in the Preface of the earliest metaphysical work in Arabic, dedicated by him to the reigning Caliph Al-Mustasim-Billah. Al-Kindi's main contribution was his attempt to bring philosophy in accord with religion. And he hastened to transform Aristotle's "Unmoved Mover" into the Creator and the Truth becomes the "True one"<sup>84</sup> (Al-Wahid Al-Haq) is the First, the Creator and sustainer of all that He has created." For him God is real: "God is the True one. He is transcendent and can be qualified by only negative<sup>85</sup> attribute. He has no genus, no differentia, no species, no accident. He is the immutable... He is, therefore, absolute Oneness, nothing but Oneness (Wahdah)." In spite of the new garb, no Muslim will differ from what is underneath.

Al-Farabi, followed Kindi and took his reconciliation attempt not one but two steps further. He gave Platonic philosophy a phraseology and form, without changing the content, to make it more consonant with Islamic teachings, which he, in turn, interpreted more rationally. It

84. See p.424 of "History of Muslim Philosophy" — Article on Al-Kindi p.429.

85. As far His Existence is concerned.

has been<sup>86</sup> stated that "Farabi expounded philosophy in a religious way and philosophized religion pushing them in two converging directions so that they could come to an understanding and co-exist," and it was through Al-Farabi that Avicenna got his initiation into Aristotelian fecundities and surpassed the second Master and made the First Master a world figure renowned down the ages. There can be no greater tribute to Avicenna than that even the great Ghazali could not pin infidelity on him inspite of the scruting spread over a fully reasoned whole book—his adherence to main principles of his religion remained untarnished. His commitment to revelatory process of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) was unalloyed,<sup>87</sup> though expressed in terminology which was then current in intellectual circles of his times and the light of conscience remained bright till he penned his last will and testament.

Ghazali's account of prophecy in the 'Mairaj-al-Quds' can be said to fall into two distinct parts — in the first he gives arguments to establish the fact, relevance and prime necessity of prophecy and in the second part expounds the process at three levels: of imagination, of intellect and as miraculous. The first part is marked by an attempt to express dogmatic theology in the current philosophical approach in the second part "he borrows entirely and almost literally from Avicenna's account." And following Ibn Taymiya, who accused him of oscillation between philosophy and Islam, F. Rahman takes the view "that it is obvious that here Ghazali takes orthodox Islam as his guiding impulse and is using philosophy to formulate<sup>88</sup> that Islam." His main contribution was not to push back philosophy (and with it Avicenna) into oblivion which he did not intend and if did, did not, succeed in. His main contribution in the service of Islam was to literally rout the Mutazallite school. And "it was probably to the good of Islam that Muatazallite rationalism, having done its work but not knowing where to stop, was

86. Dr. Ibrahim Madkour, Prof. of Philosophy Cairo University, quoted in *History of Muslim Philosophy* p.455. See Chapter I too for further reference.

87. "Prophecy in Islam" by Dr. F. Rahman pp.96-97-98.

88. I would not go that far. He didn't "formulate Islam," he proved the dogma using philosophical line of reasoning to establish the "Truth" see Chapter I also.

(A) See Introduction to "Abraham, His Life and Times" by Masarrat Hussain Zuberi.

defeated. Had it been successful, it is doubted whether the popular movements out of which the regeneration of Islam was to come, could possibly have been tolerated, much less accommodated, within the frame-work of orthodoxy. Sooner or later the unity of Islamic culture would have suffered violent disruption."<sup>89</sup>

Ghazali ever remained a philosopher — though a deeply religious one, wedded to logical interpretation and ever ready to accept established sciences. There might have been lapses, designed or undesigned, and Ibn Rushd's (Avennoes) charge of the "Incoherence of the Incoherent" at best remained an unsubstantiated one.

The Greek philosophy had had its natural course and end. The Muslim philosophers picked out from it what could be assimilated and synthesized within Islamic concepts and movements, fresh and more vitalising, began to generate vigour and satisfied the quest of larger number of men than the Greek devotees. The Greek encounter was a passing phase, though it did, leave its mark on the presentation of the accepted truths.

Though the Neoplatonist ideas and vocabulary occupy a prominent place in the works of the Muslim philosophers (including to a certain extent Ghazali also) they ever remained sub-ordinated to the old Qur'anic structure of ideas and beliefs. Ghazali's triumph was that he bereft their philosophy of the external floss, making it acceptable and more accessible to the masses because of his exposition in an easy, simple language. Its rationality appealed to those who were getting under an influence which was turning anti-religious and the religious began to appreciate that the approach was not contradicting the fundamentals. What he did not like in Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina at the outset was that they did violence to the principles of religion because of their insistence on metaphysical approach as the sole criterion and he corrected that slant. It may sound paradoxical that one of the reasons for his general popularity was that he made philosophical thinking available in easily understood language to general run of theologians and middle of the

89. "Islam" by H.A.R. Gibb (2nd Edition) Oxford University Press p.80 (Formerly entitled: "Mohammedanism").

road intellectuals and of the ordinary run for whom the books of Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina were technically too abstruse and difficult to understand.

The intellectual acclaim that he received for his efforts led to a genuine revival of religion and he demonstrated how the theological formulations should be linked with the deepest life of a true Muslim.

He did not invent Sufism, nor was he amongst the pioneers. It is as old as history. In the historical context of "Islam."<sup>90</sup> I have called Abraham the first<sup>91</sup> Sufi, who gave up all — hearth, home, kith and kin, country to seek and follow the guidance. Ghazali, following him, gave up his eminent position, his prestigious status, his intellectual pursuits, his family, children, the Royal Court and deliberately turned his face against all worldly temptations and embarked on the new quest of inner peace and salvation and in the process made it attainable by all those who seek and knock at the door. But here too his rationalism did not desert him and he advised those who were inclined to follow the path that they should first "follow the path of scientific study and to acquire by labourious learning as much of the demonstrative sciences as human power can compass... And after that there is no harm in his electing to withdraw from the world and to devote himself entirely to God in an expectant mood." He gives a very explicit warning that "if the soul has not been exercised in the sciences that deal with fact and demonstration, it will acquire mental phantoms that it will suppose to be the truths descending upon him." According to him "many a Sufi has continued for years in one such fancy before escaping from it, whereas if he had had a sound scientific education he would have been delivered out of it at once."<sup>92</sup>

Let us also face the historical facts. The Hellenist treasures did not become available to the Muslims till the golden age of Harun Rashid (786–809 A.D.) and his gifted son Al-Mamun (813–833 A.D.), which takes us to the end of the second century of Islam. And the first two centuries were not so sterile. Well before the end of the first cen-

90. Meaning "peace" and "submission."

91. Please see my recent book "Abraham: His Life and Times."

92. Refer to his "Mizan-al-Amal."

tury Hijra the newly founded twin cities of Kufa and Basrah developed into centres of the most animated intellectual activity in the Muslim world to which Spain had been added before Harun-Rashid came to the throne and Cordova, which was soon to rival the splendours of Baghdad had been captured in May, 756 A.D. by the last survivor of the Umayyads, Abdur Rahman, who even outclassed the great Charlemagne (742–814) when he marched against him (778 A.D.) at the instigation of his ally the Abbasids.<sup>93</sup>

The real stimuli for intellectual activity was the revolutionary Islam and its concept which began with the very first revealed 'ayah': "Read in the name of thy Lord who createth man from a clot. Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous, who teacheth by the pen. Teacheth man that which he knew<sup>94</sup> not,".

This is the first message meant for a new word different from the past forgotten or the tottering ones. The message was ushering the new scientific world based on study and research and fresh knowledge.

There are numerous injunctions in the Holy Qur'an enjoining study of nature, study the realities of the universe around us, study of the laws governing nature, study history of different nations and of different countries. But one is not to forget that — "He is the creator of the Heavens and the Earth and all that is between them." If you don't ever forget this basic Eternal Truth and call for His Divine help he will do what' "Make<sup>95</sup> subservient to you in the Sun and the Moon, Make subservient to you the night and the day."

Thus from the beginning Islam asked all to acquire knowledge but it ordained that knowledge should stimulate and fortify the morals consciousness of man, giving him the humility to learn more.

There is no limit to the pursuit of knowledge when Mohammad, the uninitiated, initially protests at the time of the first revelation "I can not read: I don't know how to read." becomes the Holy Prophet

93. Incidentally the contrast between Europe and the Umayyads and Abbasids was so great that when Harun sat on the throne and presided over the glittering gatherings of intellectuals, Charlemagne was learning to sign his name.

94. Surah 96 V.1 to 5.

95. Capture their essence & use it for worldly good.

(Peace Be Upon Him) and knowledge of earthly and heavenly secrets are being revealed to him, he is still ordered to pray "Rabb-i-Zidni-Ilma" "My Lord increase me in knowledge."

It was not the transferred Greek pantheistic philosophy but the purity of Islam bedded in the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah that transformed every aspect of Muslim society and its every activity centred in and revolved around the revealed precepts. The initial urge for every activity came from religion. The congregational prayers required a mosque and mosque gave birth to architecture, which could not flourish without mathematics, the Qur'anic injunctions led to the study and writing of history and gave birth to jurisprudence and philosophy; the enjoined study of nature and its laws led to astronomy and astrology, to higher mathematics and Algebra, to Alchemy and Chemical Sciences, Music was adapted to religions Rajz in Jihad; the stressed duty to care for the lonely, the forsaken, the sick and the needy led to medicine and establishment of hospitals; the whole social revolution was to be financed through the institutionalised Zak'at. The Qur'anic language – the Arabic – compulsory for early familiarisation with the religion and all that implies led to grammar lexicography and compilation of dictionary and enabled quick spread of knowledge throughout the Islamic domain.

The concept of knowledge was its totality – religious, secular, scientific. When the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) asked the Muslims to go to the other end of the world – China – to acquire knowledge – he was referring to secular knowledge of varied<sup>96</sup> hue. Knowledge was for all, to acquire it became a passion with the Muslim world.

The sum total of knowledge that a cultured person, in the heyday of Islamic glory, was supposed to, and did acquire, included history, geography, logic, mathematics, physics, ethics, philosophy, jurisprudence, poetry and music besides the Qur'an and Hadith.

96. And it was obeyed very early and the first Muslim envoy was sent by Hazrat Usman, the third Caliph and arrived there in Changan, the Capital of the Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.) on Aug: 25, 661 A.D. See "An outline of History of China," 1981 by the Muslim Chinese Scholar, Prof. Jamaluddin Bai Shouyi of Peking, quoted by Masarrat Hussain Zuberi in "Abraham: His Life and Times:: pp.41-42.

The knowledge became available to Europe centuries later through translations of Al-Farabi (Al-Pharabius), Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Ghazali (Al-Gazel), Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Al-Razi (Rahzes), Ali-Ibn-Abbas (Haly Abbas), Ibn-Jazlah (Bengeshah), Ali-Ibn-Isa (Jesu Haly) Al-Biruni, Al-Kindi and host of others.

The European Renaissance came because of them and not through mere rediscovery of Plato and Aristotle preserved by them. They gave in fact the true scientific spirit which cradled the new European life.

It is tardily accepted by not a very friendly critic and chronicler<sup>97</sup> that during the better part of the Middle Ages Muslim scientific and material superiority over Europe was undeniable, it is only "the sixteenth century that witnesses the end of 'Arabism' in European studies, although stray survivals linger as late as the first part of the nineteenth century."

So Ghazali can not, in fact, or in truth, be said to have been the agent that congealed the Muslim thought and action. For the 'intellectual stupor,' which even Iqbal forcefully laments, Ghazali can not be blamed. He had no share in it inspite of his flight to the sheltering Sufism.

In any case I do not subscribe to this congealing theory at all.

Sufism was not invented by him. It was there long before him and survived him for centuries. He only succeeded in establishing a harmony between the exoteric and estoric elements of Islam and he clarified once for all the role which philosophy, as the attempt of human reason to explain all things in a system, was to have in Islam, "particularly<sup>98</sup> Sunni Islam."

I regard Abraham as the first Sufi in the world of Sufism of the Classical mould.

97. Gustave E. Von Grunebaum in "Medieval Islam" p.337.

98. Emphasizes Syed Hossein Nasr, though he too remains critical of Ghazali: See p. 307 Science and Civilization in Islam.

In the ascetic Sufi line the first one in Islam was undoubtedly Khawaja Al-Hasan Basri (643-728), born in Medina near the end of the Caliphate of Hazrat Umar, who is said to have given him his blessings and as a young child was fondled and cuddled by Hazrat Ali, who is said to have foretold great things of him and who, in his own life-time met nearly one hundred and fifty of the companions of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him). It is through him that some link it to Hazrat Ali and good many go even further and see the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) in that cast: Junaid Baghdadi (D 910) is reported to have said: "All the mystic paths are barred except to him who followeth in the footsteps of the Messenger and all our love is anointed with his sayings." Then came Rabia Basri, proving that even in this line a woman can attain the same heights if she strives as hard as a man treading the path. The intensity of her love for God was such that neither love nor hate of any other thing remained "in my heart." In fact she was the first amongst the Sufis to be introduced<sup>99</sup> into European literature as early as the thirteenth century by Joinville, the Chancellor of Louis IX. Rabia's figure was used in the seventeenth century in a French treatise on pure love as a model of Divine Love. There was Ibrahim bin Adham (d.790) who has become in Islamic tradition one of the proverbial examples of true poverty, abstinence and trust in God. Shaiq-al-Balkhi (d.809) was the first to discuss the mystical states and was deeply concerned with what he calls "the light of the pure love of God." In such forfeit love the mystic ceased to exist and acquired "death of self before death."<sup>100</sup>

To be brief, mention only be made of the most renowned ones of the fraternity. They were Bayezid Bustami (d.874), Hallaj, Husain bin Mansur (executed 922) Junaid Baghdadi (d.910) and Shibli (d.945) who was present at Hallaj's execution and threw a rose at him, which hurt him most, though he was smiling at the stone throwing of others.

The content of these Sufis was love of God and God alone. Their source of inspiration was the Qur'anic verse (v.59, Surah 5) "He loves

them and they love Him," which Rabia Basri elaborated into: "Love<sup>101</sup> has come from eternity and passes into eternity and none has been found in seventy thousand worlds who drinks one drop of it until at last he is absorbed in God and from that comes the saying: "He Loves them and they Love Him."

Imam Jafar as-Sadiq, the sixth Imam of Shias (d.765) was also one of the greatest teachers of early Sufism. The definition of divine Love, given by him and considered classic, is "a divine fire that devours man<sup>102</sup> completely."

The epitome of this Love came with Bayezid Bustami and erupted in the cry of Hallaj Mansur "I am the Truth" And coming down of these ardent souls begins with Abu Bakr-ask-Shibli, a friend of Hallaj who survived him by twentythree years, though another friend of his, Ibn Ata, paid for his friendship with his life. Junaid called Shibli "the crown of Sufis" and himself exercised great influence in deepening the new currents coming to the shore—the longing of the shore to embrace the whole ocean: Whether Hallaj's execution was politically motivated as Maulana-i-Rumi penned: "when a wicked judge holds the pen. A Mansur will die on the gallows," and now so thoroughly investigated by Louis Massignon<sup>103</sup> or was martyred for telling the Truth, I would avoid going into. But the aftermath of the trial and the execution frightened both the Government and the Sufis. Ibn Ata, summoned as a witness, not only defended Mansur but openly insulted the Vazier. He was promptly executed. After the cruel execution of Hallaj which took three days, riots ensued. Sufis feared further retaliation and persecution. The orthodox Ulema began to condemn the Sufis of flouting the accepted beliefs and the ordained ritual.

"The case of Hallaj had confronted the Sufis with the danger of persecution but they also felt that "the path had to be made more ac-

99. "Mystical Dimensions of Islam" by Anne Marie Schimmel pp.8 and 39.

100. A saying of Abu Said bin Abdul Khayr, a contemporary of Avicenna, as stated earlier (d.1049 A.D.).

101. Quoted in "Mystical Dimensions in Islam" by Anne Marie Schimmel p.41 from Fariduddin Attar's "Tazkari Aulia."

102. "The Koranic Language of Mysticism" by S.J. Paul Nauyia, Beirut, 1970.

103. "The Passion of Hajjaj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam" by Louis Massignon (four volumes) translated by Herbert Manson, Princeton University Press. The death sentence read: "We consider and God will obtain the just solution, that the man is a heretic and an infidel who deserves to be executed without an invitation to show repentance."

cessible to people who could never reach the abysses of mystical experience Hallaj had reached." The general run were to be weaned away from attempting following even Junaid and Shibli: Men like Ibn Khafif (d.982) and Abu-Nasr-as-Sarraj (d.988) began expounding the path, relating it to Qur'anic injunctions and histories of those who were the beacon lights. But the one who excelled others and because of writing in Persian, commanded a bigger audience, was Syed Ali bin-Usman Hujwari (d.1071) now called Data Gunj Bux, the famous saint of Lahore. His "Kashf-al-Mahjub" (unveiling of the Hidden), became, and still is, a popular classic on the subject, its history, its luminaries and systematization of the pursuit.

And with him we come to the age of Al-Ghazali who says that he studied the books available on the subject<sup>104</sup> and subsequently reached the inevitable conclusion that one has to tread the path and see personally where it leads to. It was typical of him that he approached the mystical path first from the intellectual side. "Knowledge was easier for me than activity," he records<sup>105</sup>, and "I began by reading their books... and obtained a thorough intellectual understanding of their principles. Then I realised that what is distinctive of them was can be attained only by personal experience, ecstasy and a change of character." Out of his experience came the "Ihya-ul-Ulum" for the general public needing guidance how to lead a pious life and to things leading to salvation, "discussing different stations and states of the way-farer, like poverty and renunciation, patience and gratitude, love and longing."

For the initiated ones well on the path he wrote "Mishkat-al-Anwar,"<sup>106</sup> depicting his own "mystic leap, his own personal Mairaj."

He had now arrived at the doorstep and walked in. He opened the 'Gates of Heaven' and paved the way for all the wayfarers.

104. He was a quick, voracious reader. He must have studied Ibn Khafif, Abu Nasr as Sarraj's *Kitabi-al-Luna-fil-Tasawwuf*, *Kashfal-Mahjub*, as Hajwiri was in Baghdad and known there and he confesses that he did rely heavily on Abu Talib-al-Makki's "Out-al-Qulub" (*The Food of the Hearts*).

105. "Al-Muniqudh min al-Dalal" (*Deliverance from Error*).

106. Translated by W.H. Gairdner as "The Niche of the Light."

For the common man his prescription was, as infact ordained by the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), that "the true saint<sup>107</sup> goes in and out amongst the people and eats and sleeps with them and buys and sells in the market and takes part in social intercourse, and never forgets God for a single moment." His other precept which seeped in the heart of every Muslim<sup>108</sup> was "The sign of the lover of God is to follow the Prophet, in his morals, and his deeds and his orders and his customs."<sup>109</sup>

The main current of moderate orthodox Sufism had been systematized by Ghazali, yet his own works contain views that were to develop in full in that stream of Islamic theosophy which he did so much to fight against. His "Mishkat-al-Anwar" became the starting point for the initiated ones. "The clearest<sup>110</sup> expression of the Light, Illumination mysticism setforth explicitly in this work of Ghazali found its way in the mystical theories of the Masters of Illumination" e.g. Shihabuddin<sup>111</sup> Suhrawardi Maqtul, (1153-1191) who paid for his life at the age of thirtythree, influenced the Great Master, Ibn Arabi (1165-1240) whose influence on the development of Sufism is universally recognised.<sup>112</sup> And even Ahmad Sirhindi - usually considered as an antagonist has this to say: "The S'ufis who preceded him (Ibn Arabi) only hinted about these matters and did not elaborate. Most of those who came after him chose to follow in his footsteps and used his terms. We late comers have also benefitted from the blessings of that great man and learned a great deal from his mystical insights May God give him for this the best award."<sup>113</sup> Ghazali<sup>114</sup> had had his share in Ibnul-Arabi's doctrine of Logos. But to my mind his influence on

107. Maulana Jami: "Nafahat al-Uns." Edited by M. Tauhidipur, Tehran, 1957.

108. He had written another book "Al-Qistas al-Mustaqim" translated as "The Just Balance" by Dr. D.P. Brewster: 1978.

109. Fariduddin Attar: "Tadhkirat al-Auliya," Edited by: R.A. Nicholson.

110. Anne Marie Schimmed: (already quoted earlier) p.259.

111. Author of "Awazi Pari Jibril."

112. See "The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyiddin Ibnul Arabi" by A.E. Affifi, Lahore & "S'ufis of Andalusia" Tr; by: R.W. Austin, 1985.

113. "Shaykh Ahmad Surhindi: An Outline of His Thought and a Study of His Image in the Eyes of Posterity" by Y. Friedmann, Montreal, 1971.

114. Afifi pp.66-87.

Dante's Divine Comedy, has to be emphasised as borrowings from him by Dante has been convincingly high-lighted recently.<sup>115</sup>

Another luminary, professedly his disciple, worth mentioning was Abu-Ala-Ma'ali Abdullah, known as Ain-al-Qud'at-al-Hamadani (1098–1131) who was executed in Baghdad at the age of thirty-eight in spite<sup>116</sup> of his protest that he was in his writings merely following what Ghazali had already asserted and explained. Four centuries later in India Sar-mad (executed in Delhi 1661) forfeited his life in echoing him.

Sufism in shallow depths and deepest deep continued with Ghazali at the centre who reconciled it, in spite of its many early unorthodox practices, with Islam "and grafted mysticism upon its intellectualism."<sup>117</sup>

The Sufis flourished and mystic poetry came into its own. Sanai and Omar Khayyam were his contemporaries and Maulana Rumi put the seal on it two centuries later.

Al-Ghazali made Muslims good Muslims and made good Muslims better Muslims and the best of them gave expression to themes which continued to improve the minds in the then extant world.

If by the charge of congealing Muslim mind and stagnating enquiry is meant that he finally blocked the Reformation and subsequent Renaissance which came to end in the form that it did in Europe, then it was the greatest achievement that he saved Islam from the fate which Christianity faced and is facing and the Renaissance delinked humanity from the primordial Tradition and brought the modern society to the brink of a final disaster.

It is now dawning on the younger generation of European intellectuals, not overawed by the arid Kantian philosophy, pleading for the Forgotten Truth in the life of their society. Their thinking can be the

beginning of a new change that if civilization is to survive and rest on a secure foundation it can only be within the Traditional church which means in conscious relation to a spiritual order of being. Man and State both shall have to give up the Renaissance conception of the sovereign autonomy of self, developed under the false lure of the liberal and naturalist philosophy of Rousseau and other heretics of the French Revolution.

Even T.S. Eliot urged the necessity of a Christian Society organised within the fold of a revised united Catholic Church which did not exclude the continuance of national Churches and said, "However<sup>118</sup> bigoted the announcement may sound, the Christians can be satisfied with nothing else than a Christian Organisation of Society which is not the same thing as a society consisting exclusively of devout Christians" and went on to explain: "It must be kept in mind that even in a Christian society as well organised as we can conceive possible in this world, the limit would be that our temporal and spiritual life should be harmonised; the temporal and spiritual world would never be identified. There would always remain a dual allegiance to the State and the Church, to one's country men and to one's fellow Christians everywhere, the latter would always have the primacy." With T.S. Eliot even the duality persists. It is only in Islam that this duality has no place and is annihilated. The West has to relearn this basic unity. "Man has<sup>119</sup> a profound need to re-believe that the Truth is rooted in the unchanging depths of the universe. The today's world is splintering and we, the modern, the worldly wise, have to have once again, a uniting force and that can be the other-worldly force. That in simple truth is enshrined in every religion and realisable in Islam.

The conflict both within and out is the same. That which is lacking is a profound knowledge of the nature of things. "Islam is the human condition both in man's soul and society. On the earthly plane it puts each thing in its own place."<sup>120</sup>

115. "Islam and The Divine Comedy" by the Spanish Scholar Asin Paclacios; Translated by Harold Sutherland, 1968.

116. See "The Apologia of Ain-al-Qudat-al-Hamadani: A Sufi Martyr": Translated by A.J. Arberry.

117. Hitti: "Story of the Arabs" p.430.

118. "The idea of a Christian Society" by: T.S. Eliot p.34.

119. "Forgotten Truth: The Primordial Tradition" by: Houston Smith.

120. "Understanding of Islam" by: F. Schuon Tr. by: D.M. Matheson.



In Christianity the duality of allegiance to the Church and the State has become cardinal further deepened by the Renaissance and the split of Reformation. Jesus has remained the incarnate God but not a divine Ruler. The duality of his will as human and divine is part of the Christian<sup>121</sup> dogma cannot be repudiated. Let us leave it at that.

The modern<sup>122</sup> sciences and the achievements in physical sciences and the marvels of technology again pose a threat to the Islamic world as faced by the giants of the Abbaside and subsequent periods. They laboured, they studied, and made it their own and gave it back to the succeeding generations in an improved form. Our present generation has to do the same and not just sit, stare and marvel. Al-Ghazali mastered all that was there to be mastered and put it to his generation what was to be accepted and what was to be rejected. And it was mathematical and physical sciences that he accepted as essential studies, from philosophy he repudiated only what, in its interpretation, seemed to contradict revelation but accepted its keen analytical approach, he adopted rationalism as his own, even in interpretation of orthodox Sunni dogma. His "Ihya-al-Ulum" is permeated with it and can still be adopted as a moral practical guide.

His thinking was in line with the majority of his community at the intellectual, moral level and received acceptance. As he settled the religious issues, he released creative energies which made the two succeeding centuries so fruitful. They surpassed the West in art, architecture, literature, science, medicine, astronomy, music in fact in all that an advanced progressive civilization sure of its foundations, can give to the world.

There was no stagnation only a crowning glory of achievements. Though like others, Will Durant also avers that "the victorious<sup>123</sup> mysticism of Al-Ghazali put a closure on speculative thought," he goes on

121. See "Abraham: His Life and Times" by Masarrat Hussain Zuberi: pp.29-30 Karachi, 1985.

122. See "Khudi and the Concept of Life in Iqbal" a paper read by the author at the National Symposium on the Teachings of the Holy Prophet—Khudi—25-29th Dec. 1982, Lahore.

123. Will Durant: Age of Faith: p.257

to say: "It is a pity that we know "imperfectly of Arabic offlorescence."<sup>124</sup>

"Thousands of Arabic manuscripts in science literature and philosophy be hidden in the libraries of the Moslem world: in constantinople alone there are thirty<sup>125</sup> mosque libraries whose wealth has been merely scratched; in Cairo, Damascus, Mosul, Baghdad, Delhi, Iran are great collections not even catalogued; an immense library in the Escorial near Madrid has hardly completed the listing of its Islamic manuscripts in Science; literature, jurisprudence and philosophy. What we know of Muslim thought is a fragment of what survives, what survives is a fragment of what was produced, what appears (in the West) is a morsel of a fraction of a fragment." And thousands upon thousands were burnt and destroyed in Baghdad, Ghazni, Granada.

And then we convict Ghazali and the congealed Muslim thought. It is alleged generally, as already quoted, that the so called stagnation began from about<sup>126</sup> the sixteenth century due to mysticism... So at least for nearly four to five centuries (Ghazali died in 1111 A.D.) the impact of Ghazali's thought and precept was other than stagnation.

"If Ghazali, more than anyone else, may be said to have prepared the way for the general recognition of Sufism, it was his younger contemporary, Shaikh<sup>127</sup> Abdul Qadir Gilani (as stated above) who was to make the recognition fully operative — It would perhaps be true to say that no one else exercised in person such a spiritual influence of such far reaching dimensions as did Sh: Abdul Qadir Gilani."

The founding of the Qadiriya Tariqah led to — immediate and widespread conversion and his order spread to most parts of the Islamic world within one generation. Shaikh Abdul Qadir Gilani (1077—1166 A.D.) had himself been initiated early in the Old Junaidi Tariqah. Like Ghazali he had been "an exoteric authority" and "some of his fellow<sup>128</sup>

124. Ibid. See Appendix also.

125. I would say more than forty or fortyfive. And we should not ignore Iran and even Samarkand.

126. I will take up this point a bit later: See pp.118 to 121. 123 to 127.

127. Martin Lings (now Abu Bakr Serajuddin) in "What is Sufism," p.112.

128. Martin Lings quoted prepage.

initiates were inclined to resent the presence of a Hanbali Jurists in their midst." Amongst the others to appear were the Suhrawardi Tariqah whose founder was Shihabuddin-as-Suhrawardi (1144–1234) and the venerable Sh'adhili Tariqah founded by one of the greatest<sup>129</sup> luminaries of Western Islam, Shaikh Abul Hasan-ash-Sh'adhili (1196–1258). Another contemporary renowned Sufi order flourished in the Indo-Pak Sub-Continent was the Chishtia Tariqah led by Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti (1142–1236) of Ajmer whose three famous Khalifas – Khawaja Bakhtiar Ka'ki, Baba Fariduddin Shakarganj, Khawaja Nizamuddin<sup>130</sup> Aulia of Delhi (popularly known Mehbubi-Ilahi: Beloved of God) – still rule the hearts of Muslims of Northern India-Pakistan. Sufism became a mass movement and the moral principles laid down by Ghazali and others did much to shape the outlook of the Muslim society in the Sub-Continent. There is no need to doubt Barni, (d. about 1360 A.D. and Nizamuddin Auliya (d.1325 A.D.) when he says that it became almost a fashion to purchase copies of the classical books mentioned.

Amongst the Suhrawardi saints mention may also be made of Bahauddin Zakarya of Multan (1172–1262) and Lal Shah Baz Qalander of Sehwan (Sind) who were spreading the Light of Islam in the<sup>131</sup> area of S. Punjab and Sind.

To the later contemporary age of the leaders of the four Tariqahs mentioned also belongs the greatest mystic poet of Islam –

129. William Stoddart (Sadi Imran Yahya) himself initiated in Shadhili order p.58.

130. He marks the high tide of mystical life in Delhi, Barni, the contemporary historian, records that it was Nizamuddin Auliya's influence that inclined most of the Muslims in Delhi towards mysticism and prayers, remaining aloof from the world. No wine, gambling or usury was to be found in Delhi and people even refrained from telling lies (even upto my school days if a Muslim boy told a lie a Hindu would chide him that being a Muslim he was telling a lie and put him to shame.)

131. Makki's "Qut-ul-Qulub" (which even Ghazali studied carefully); Ghazali's "Ihya-ul-Ulum-ad-Din," Suhrawardi's "Awarif-al-Maarif," Hujwiri's "Kashf al-Mahjub"; Letters and the Apologia of "Ainul-Qudat Hamdani" etc. and the book written locally—Lawami, written by: Hamiduddin Nagori (d.1274) the saint noted for his poverty & his Vegetarianism. See p.348 of Anne Marie Schimmel's "Mystic Dimensions in Islam"; Ferishta mentions that there were atleast 500 schools and colleges at that time in Delhi alone. See pp. 307-311 of my book: "Voyage Through History" Vol: I.

Maulana (Turkish Mevalana) Jalauddin Rumi (1207-1273) buried in Kouya (Turkey) but alive to this day throughout the Muslim World. And there was the towering mystic of the age, described as "the greatest<sup>132</sup> speculative genius of Islamic Sufism," Shaikh Muhiuddin-Ibn-Arabi (1165–1240).

Compared to all these Ghazali was a beginner almost a novice in the Sufi path. His contribution was that he not only saved himself, but others too from spiritual blindness – those to whom God refers in the Qur'an as "they have eyes, they do not see, they have ears but they do not hear."

As Ain-al-Qudat-Hamadani, the martyr, states "Ghazali made, the eye of spiritual vision to open – and I do not mean intellectual vision," but even his younger brother Ahmad Ghazali (as I have said earlier) was a more advanced, more favoured, more rapt mystic and Ainal-Qudat met him when he came to Hamadan and "in less than twenty days attendance on him my spiritual transformation was completed." Al-Ghazali merely shepherded the sheep to the fold and the rest did the rest.

But then came the big bang of Baghdad doom when Halaku entered Baghdad (1258 A.D.). The massacre and destruction which lasted forty days and accounted for, 1,800,000 in dead, plunder and arson not only destroyed the city but the treasures in the libraries stocked over six centuries. "There happened things I like not to mention, it is hard to hear spoken of even generally, how can think, then, of the details. Imagine what you will, but ask<sup>134</sup> me not of the matter."

Muslim civilisation was at that time the shining light in the world. But I don't agree with those who assert that it never recovered from that deathly blow. The blow was to Arab hegemony and to the Arabic centre that the Caliphate and Baghdad symbolised. But the torch was

132. Hitti: History of the Arabs: p.585 and see "Islam and the Divine Comedy" by Asin Paolacis for Dante's borrowings from Ibn Arabi.

133. Quoted in A.J. Arberry's translation of his Apologia: titled A Sufi Martyr."

134. Rashiduddin Fakhri who wrote his "Kitab-i-Fakhri" in 1280 A.D. which contains eye witness account of the sack, being the original source used by the historians.

taken up by others and Muslim civilization continued to be the shining light to Europe as well.

The Islamic resilience was such that even Halaku's armies were destroyed within two years (in 1260) in his attempt to subjugate Syria when Baybars, the distinguished general of the Egyptian Mamluk Qutuz<sup>135</sup> defeated his forces and westward advance of the Mongols was definitely checked. Halaku died in 1265 and within thirty years Islam triumphed. His great grandson Ghazan became "Ghazan Mahmud" and ruled as a Muslim (1295–1304).

"Hard pressed between the mounted archers of wild Mongols in the East and the mailed knights of the European crusaders on the West, Islam in the early part of the thirteenth century seemed for ever lost. How different was the situation in the last part of the same century. The last crusader had by that time been driven into the Sea. The seventh Il-Khans,<sup>136</sup> many of whom had been flirting with Christianity, finally recognised Islam as the State religion. Just as<sup>137</sup> in the case of the Seljuks, Islam had conquered where the Muslim arms had failed. Less than half a century after Halaku merciless attempt at the destruction of Islamic culture, his great grand son Gha'zan, as a devout Muslim, was consecrating much time and energy to the reverification of the same culture." The short history of the Il-Khan's need for detain<sup>138</sup> us as it was not the Mongols who were destined to restore the glory of Islam and unfurl its banner triumphantly over new and vast territories. The banner was taken up by three different dynasties who brought new Renaissance to the Muslims and were more than a match to everything that contemporary Europe had to offer. They were the Ottoman Turks whose Empire under Sulayman, the Magnificent (1520-1566) stretched

135. Rashiduddin Fakhri, mentioned prepage, quoted by Hitti.

136. Name of the dynasty that Halaku founded in Persia, his other brother Kublai ruled in Peking.

137. Philip K. Hitti: "History of the Arabs" p.488. See Appendix the civilizing effects of the crusades on Europe & it acting as a general catalyst.

138. Inspite of brilliance of Ghazan and his two successors – Mohd. Khuda-banda (better known as Uljaitu 1304–1316) and Abu Said (1316–1335) the dynasty petered out in 1344 and then came Temur (1363–1403) to outshine them. See History of Persia by Sir Percy Syke pp.110-118.

from Baghdad on the ancient Tigris to Budapest on the Danube and from Aswan near the first cataract of the Nile, almost to the strait of Gibraltar. The second were the Safavids, beginning with Ismail (1499–1524), attained their Zenith with Shah Abbas, the Great (1587–1629) and made the Persian culture what it is. The third were the great Mughals who came to India with Babur, fifth in descent from Taimir. He was a King of Ferghana by heredity but became an adventurer by force of circumstances. With his success in the battle of Panipat (April 1526) he started the brilliant Mughal Empire which with brilliant successors like Humayun, Akbar, the Great, Jahangir, Shah Jehan and Aurangzeb, became a legend in contemporary Europe. According to foreign<sup>139</sup> accounts India then surpassed the brilliance of the strongest European monarch Louis XIV of France and left Europe gaping at India's prosperity and riches. Even in Industrial production they had an edge in quality and quantity over Europe. Istanbul (Constantinople), Isfahan and Agra, Delhi had no rivals in Europe. Neither Muslims nor Islam<sup>140</sup> could by any imagination at any time during the three centuries – fourteenth to the seventeenth be termed sterile or stagnant.

"We gather again some faint conception of the riches of Indies in Moghul days when we find the greatest of the historians of architecture (Ferguson) describing the royal residences at Delhi as covering twice the area of the Vast Escorial near Madrid and forming at that time, and in its ensemble "the most magnificent<sup>141</sup> palace in the East, perhaps in the world." To be brief, let us take only on item of the then achievements of the Muslims – their achievement in architecture of the period. I select architecture because it involved application of so many

139. See Travels of Bernier, Travenier, Manucci, & Sir Thomas Roe. See Chapter XIX pp.252-53 of the author's book "Voyage Through History" Vol. I

140. Please see below: The effects of Industrial Revolution in Europe and onslaught on the Muslim countries.

141. Will Durant; "Our Orient Heritage" p.608. The Delhi Fort originally contained 52 palaces. During the occupation of 1857 most of them were destroyed to make room for the stores and all the palaces were looted Lord Bentinck once tried to sell Tai Mahal to a Hindu Contractor for \$150,000 to balance his budget. Bernier also mentioned that Versailles even paled into insignificance as compared to Delhi Fort. Sir Thomas Roe, British Ambassador to the Mughal Court, always mourned of his poverty – "five years advance salary would not enable me to have one suit of complete dress, as worn by the nobles at the Court, made, and they change one every day."

applied sciences which form the base of modern technological advance on which the West prides itself and using it as a yard stick, accuses the Muslims of decay and of something inherent in their religion responsible for that decay.<sup>142</sup>

It is a fact of history that Muslims proved themselves master builders where ever they established themselves at Damascus, at Jerusalem, at Baghdad, at Granada, at Constantinople, at Isfahan, at Samarkand, at Cairo, at Bokhara, at Agra, at Delhi, at Lahore. It did borrow from the earlier locals but everywhere the Islamic crucible transformed it so much that it became distinctly and purely Islamic, in its concept, in its design, in its details.

Islamic buildings, though masterpieces of bold engineering design, are set in a setting (everywhere in the Islamic world) to proclaim the subduing of nature by man. Islamic architecture is mathematically abstract and its illustration is in geometric pattern. The design is also symbolic in its unity embodying the purity of the living soul and the undying unity of the creator. Islamic calligraphy, a part of the interlinked, intertwined geometrical and dimensional pattern of illustration, is used as a principal means of expression, as the carrier of the word of God and the humble greatness of his greatest creation – man His slave and His Servant before whom and Him alone he prostrates and humbles himself: the King, the architect, the Engineer, the mason, the calligraphist, the disciplined, the devoted worker each engaged in a heavenly ordained creation of perfection.

The final reflection of the unity of effort, part of the eternal<sup>143</sup> unity. The underlinking of influences Smarkand, Ottoman, Iranian and Indo-Islamic during the 16th and the 17th centuries further enriched the Islamic art under the three Muslim dynasties – Turkish, Iranian and Mughal. Sinan the Turkish architect made the dome of Sulaimaniya Mosque in Constantinople sixteen feet higher than that of Santa Sofia to eclipse the West at its best within the region, the Iranians made

142. Dealt with later.

143. Please see pp.145-149 of the author's book "Voyage Through History" Vol. I for further exposition of the theme, which includes what he describes as "the Din-i-Ilahi" architecture of Akbar at Fatehpur Sikri, Agra.

Isfahan, currently "Nisf Jahan" (Isfahan half the world), and of the Taj Mahal, Agra, the acme of sublimity, taste, self-restraint, perfection of beauty, it is said that "if time were intelligent it would destroy everything else before the Taj, and would leave this evidence<sup>144</sup> of man's nobility as the last man's consolation." I can address this prayer to the only God – "La illaha Illallah" – the Sufi Zikar too.

But to me the climax of Shah Jehan's architecture is the small miniature of a mosque, the Moti Masjid in Agra Fort the simple stark white marbled, breathing purity of devotion of his own. It is Shah Jehan, passing his days peacefully to the solitary, confined end; expecting nothing from his vanished past but the pearly whiteness of a simple<sup>145</sup> shroud.

So the Islamic Renaissance after the fall of Baghdad cannot be dislinked from Islamic history as is done by the Westerners and they treat each country piecemeal distorting their achievements. They invent the miseries and generate their own stories. And their miseries were due to misrepresentation, bias in selection<sup>146</sup> of material and where Muslim States are concerned surviving the sub-conscious crusade antipathy.

"For a variety of reasons the crusades, the first formal military encounter between the religions of the East and West, kept a permanent scar on the souls, or the collective unconscious of both sides. Because of the scar the wound is still sensitive today and the slightest pressure on it sets it throbbing<sup>147</sup> again."

"Because of the crusading experience, the idea of conquest and conversion lay side by side in the consciousness of the Christians of the western world." And because the Crusades had failed, "the resultant

144. Quoted in "Voyage Through History" Vol. I p.130, 128-129 also.

145. "Voyage Through History," Vol. I, p.148.

146. As confessed to even by Will Durant in Preface to his Volume, "The Age of Faith."

147. "Militant Islam" by G.H. Jansen, p.66, the underlined words "on both sides" are worth noticing as illustration of the bias. The Muslims never carried the scar as their centuries old fair and protective treatment of Christians (and Jews) contradicts. Compare the treatment of Christians by Muslim Rulers of Spain and the treatment meted out to Muslims when Granada finally fell in Jan. 1492.

bitterness produced so much anti-Muslim propaganda in Europe over the centuries that Christians were brought up to expect to be in a relationship of force and violence with the Muslim world. "The crusades form the great central epoch of medieval history," is the verdict of another modern historian,<sup>148</sup> and he continues, "As a sustained effort of militant religious idealism on the part of many nations they were unprecedented. Long after the fighting in Palestine was over their memory remained vivid – in the naval battle of Lepanto in 1571, in the defence of the Christian Vienna against the Turks in 1683 and even in General Allenby's capture of Jerusalem in 1917 during his campaign to drive the Turks from Palestine."

Though Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, at first several times denied that the War (The First World War) against Turkey was a crusade against Islam, this feeling was not subconsciously alien to him. It came out in the open, when only a year later proposing a gratuity to General Allenby, he told an appreciative House of Commons – "The name of General Allenby will be ever renowned as that of the brilliant Commander who fought and won the last and most triumphant of the Crusades. It was his good fortune, by his skill, to bring to a glorious end, an enterprise which absorbed the Chivalry of Europe for centuries. We forget now that the military strength of Europe was concentrated for generations upon this purpose in vain, and a British army, under the Command of General Allenby, achieved it and achieved it finally."<sup>149</sup>

And did not the French General, entering Damascus, on a white charger, knock at the entombed door of Saladin—"We have returned"<sup>150</sup>

The historical irony is that this "final crusade" was not won by the British or the Allied armies but by the Indian<sup>151</sup> army and the engineered revolt of the Arabs.

148. "Encyclopedia Americana," Vol. 8 – Article on "Crusades" by John J. Saunders, University of Canterbury, Christ Church, New Zealand. So a modern non-European Historian of far off New Zealand also confirms the Christian crusade bias.

149. "House of Commons" Debates. quoted in "Voyage Through History" Vol. I p. 70.

150. *Ibid*, Saladin's white charger was as famous as he himself.

151. *Ibid*: pp. 70, 72-73.

This<sup>152</sup> leads us to the Industrial Revolution in Europe and beginning of the 19th Century. Crusades against the Muslims. One century of piracy was the initial stage to get the mastery over the open seas. From white colonies they turned to economic markets, Missionary civilising missions linked to Imperialism in the<sup>153</sup> two continents of Asia and Africa. The Russians, the Dutch, the French, the Spanish and above all the British mounted Crusades against the Muslim States. Apart from the occupation of the Indian Subcontinent finally in 1857, supplanting a Muslim dynasty, the Dutch consolidated their hold on Indonesia, the Imperialist Juggernaut pushed on. (The list is long but worth giving in brief).

<sup>154</sup> Oman and Qatar went under British Protectorate (1820), Conquest, of Algeria by the French (1830–1857), Subjugation of the Caucasus and advance into central Asia by Russia (1834–1859), Russian conquest of Territories around Samarkand and Bukhara (1866–1872), Uzbek territory overrun by Russia (1873–1887), conquest of Tunisia by the French (1881–1883), Eritrea, Conquered by Italy (1883–1885); Conquest of Senegal, Upper Niger and Ivory Coast (1890–1899), Sudan subjugated by Britain (1899); Somalia resists British occupation (1900–1910) Chad conquered by France (1900); Muslim Sultanates of Nigeria became British Protectorate (1906), Libya conquered by Italy (1912–1913). Balkan Wars against Turkey (1912) War against and dismemberment of Turkey (1914–1922); Kuwait went under British protection (1914) and Iran (Persia) occupied by the Allies during the First World War (1914–1919) forcing Shah Reza to abdicate when he wanted to remain neutral.

152. G.H. Jansen p.66 quoting Stephen Neill and Daniel "Islam and the West" "Orientalism" by Edward W. Said (Pantheon Books, New York) is worth perusal on the bias aspect. Even the present revival is seen as "Confrontation of Islam with the Western World" (Jansen's title page).

153. During the 17th and the 18th Century Mediterranean was almost an Ottoman Lake. So much that the American sought safety in paying \$83,000 annually to the rulers in Algeria as did Holland, Denmark and Sweden. Please see chapters IV, V & IX of my book "Voyage Through History Vol. I, where this is fully discussed. In 1801 the Qarmali dey (Governor) of Tripoli insisted on the increase on the \$83,000 which the USA had been paying annually since 1796 and a 4 year War ensued. Hith-p. 712 of History of the Arabs. And the European Powers had to find Cape of Good Hope to mount their Imperialist Crusades against Muslims.

154. See p.79 of "Voyage Through History," Vol. I & Chapter 3 of Jansen's "Militant Islam," pp.49-65.

The Muslims resisted and the Europeans never had a walk over. In India alone the British had to fight one hundred eleven wars spread over one hundred fifty years, the last one being in 1892. Resistance everywhere else was prolonged and intensive with no quarters given on either side. Dissaction of reasons of Muslim military weakness or unpreparedness and later subjugation to alien rulers, leading to economic debilitation and cruel unabated impoverishment in the interests of mother country of the Imperialist rulers would take us beyond the scope of this book.

Similarly the counter movements by the Muslims and counter opposition to the imposition of the oppressive colonial rule would fall out of the scope of the book and its volume would exceed the Epilogue.

And Ghazali would resent it as irrational and unscientific. He did successfully stave off the Reformation in Islam like the one that split up Christianity and which contributed to slow moving currents of irreligion (irrationally called the movement of Reason and the Age of Reason and Renaissance).

Suffice it to say that the turn the European Renaissance did take was at the cost of its soul. It gave up the ghost and recrucified Christ and tried to live by bread alone.

The price that the European powers have paid in men and material (during the last two World Wars) is the direct result of their misguided Industrial Revolution. The present technological advance breath taking by itself — carries within it myriad germs of self destruction and has brought the world to the brink of atomic holocaust

*"When the heaven is cheft asunder  
When the planets are dispersed  
When the Seas are poured forth  
And the graves are overturned"*<sup>155</sup>

And

155. Surah: 82, V. 1-4, Surah 81.V.1-3, Surah 84:V.1, Surah 77:V-10, Surah 70:V. 9, Surah 101:V.5.

*"When the Sun is overthrown  
And when the Stars fall  
And when the hills are moved"  
And when the mountains become  
like carded wool:.....*

*And the Earth hath cast out all that was  
in her and is empty"*

And

*"Those who love wealth with abounding"*<sup>156</sup> *love"*

*"Those in the love of wealth are violent"*<sup>157</sup>

*"Rivalry"*<sup>158</sup> *in worldly wealth distracteth you  
until you come to the grave," bereft of all the  
worldly possessions. He bestowed on you, the Reality, the  
Absolute Reality will be revealed*

And

*the West will regret that they  
did not have a Ghazali to  
show and keep them on the lighted path*

The tragedy of the West is that they did not produce a Ghazali and when they did discover him it was from "a fraction of a fragment" — his "Maqasadi — Falsafa" and admired him for two centuries as Aristotelian Philosopher.

With the subsequent wave of appreciation of Sufism they again misread him taking his flight into it as closing the door to intellectualism whereas he had opened the gates of Heaven and all that means.

It is only latterly that a few<sup>159</sup> writers do not belittle the importance of a definite and unequivocal commitment to one particular<sup>160</sup> religion and the truth has dawned upon them that it is a religious tradi-

156. Surah 89.V.20

157. Surah 100:V.8

158. Surah 102:V. 1-2.

159. Like F. Schuon, Gai Eaton, Rene Guenon, Martin Lings, William Stoddart and Titus Burchhardt now all Muslim Converts.

160. Like Louis Massignon in his Study of Hallaj looked back to his own 17th Century moorings and became a good Christian.

tion that moulds a man. This is negation of the earlier approach of the secular seduced scholars who studied "all religions as universally primitive and outmoded attempts on the part of pre-scientific man to comprehend the universe and his place in it."<sup>161</sup>

Even Iqbal was aware that the present moment is one of great crisis in the history of modern culture.<sup>162</sup> "The modern world stands in need of biological renewal. And religion which in its higher manifestations is neither dogma, nor priesthood, nor ritual, can," in his opinion "alone ethically prepare the modern man for the burden of the great responsibility, which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves and restore to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it there." To him "it is only by rising to a fresh vision of his origin and future his whence and whither, that man will eventually triumph over a society motivated by an inhuman competition, and a civilization which lost its spiritual unity by its inner conflict of religions and political values."

The modern western and the western oriented man has ceased to live "soulfully," that is from within. In the domain of thought he is living in open conflict with himself, and in the domain of economic and political life he is living in open conflict with others.

Iqbal describes patriotism and nationalism, in terms of Nietzsche as "sickness and unreason" and as the "strongest force against culture."

It is so, because as one modern<sup>163</sup> writer widely acclaimed in the west says, "the new Reason is the new modern outlook. But we forget that science does not treat of the world, above<sup>164</sup> and below as one; it

treats of a part of it only and so splinters and is splintered in compartmental based sciences" and the world is being divided intellectually into two — the scientists and Humanists. It is because the science has 'become the new religion.

Life's values, purposes and above all Life's meanings slip through science "Science, piecemeal thought, is positive but Scientism<sup>165</sup> is negative as denying what it does not touch." Science misses the wavelengths that the Prophets and Saints catch and so denies them. We have to admit that "Science peers down a restricted view finder," and it is saying the obvious that the view finder's view is restricted view. We need the ever moving larger antenna of the greater number of subtler speculative minds and of the great religious<sup>166</sup> teachers."

"Ours is not a time for impotence. The events of the past fifty years suggest that the process to which the Western man committed himself some centuries ago is speeding up at an all but uncontrollable rate and that moment — the point of no return on the curve of progression—beyond which no real choice will be possible is fast approaching. The world we have made is closing upon us, the pressures are mounting, and techniques whereby man<sup>167</sup> can be reduced to a condition only fractionally different to that of automata are improved year by year. The 'developed' world, as it is curiously called, with "the developing" world close on its heels, now seems to be possessed by an impersonal force quite outside the reach of our will, a force which means to prevail regardless of transformation it requires in man's nature and in his status. Development understood in this sense obeys its own laws. They<sup>168</sup> are not ours — or God's" and nor Ghazali's.

161. R.W. Austin (now Siddi Umar Al Shadhili), School of Oriental Studies, University of Durham.

162. Reference may also be made to Rene Guenon (Abu Wahid Yahya) "Crisis of the Modern World", The end of the world he feared is now within the realm of possibility — a Computer & a button is the reality since Guenon wrote.

163. Houston Smith: "Forgotten Truth, The Primordial Tradition," already quoted. See also his other book: "The Religions of Man."

164. Though Qur'an asserted it: "God is the Greater of the Heaven and the Earth & what is in heaven & below the Earth & above the Heaven."

165. Refer to C.P. Snow's book "Two Cultures." His analysis of the 20th century western society, convinced him that the intellectual life is being split into two polar groups. See also pp.40-41 of my book "Abraham: His Life & Times."

166. Arthur Lovejoy in the "Great Chain of Being" p. 26: (Cambridge: Harvard University Press).

167. Frankly the stage is reached. The seven wise industrialised nations are taking to computerised robots and soon recourse would be to the "Star War."

168. "King of the Castle." Choice and Responsibility in the Modern World, by: Gai Eaton (now Hasan Abdul Hakim).

There was no stagnation in the Muslim World till the 19th Century. The Civilization which could still produce stalwarts like Fariduddin Attar, Al-Razi, Ibn Haitham, Ibnul Arabi, Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, Hafiz Shirazi, Shaikh Saadi, Ibn Khaldun and Conquerors like Saladin Ayubi, Taimur, Sultan F'ateh Mohammad the second, could never be called stagnant. Islam was definitely refreshed and strengthened by Al-Ghazali "it acquired a more popular character and a new power of attraction."<sup>169</sup> During two centuries after Al-Ghazali it won over large sections of the population in Western Asia and North Africa which had hitherto held somewhat aloof.... In the vast areas of Asia Minor, Central Asia, India, Indonesia which were in the process of annexation to the Islamic Dominions multitudes were brought over to Islam."

The colonial subjection by the alien races destroyed and distorted our original cultural norms. Subjection meant non-participation in every form of national activity – administration, education, economic policies and attempted super-imposition of another ideology. This also meant deliberate denial of benefits of technological revolution of the 19th century which led to national material poverty and enforced mass illiteracy.

This was attempted strangulation and not stagnation.

From its long inner history Islam acquired both the adaptability and toughness to meet all the challenges that the West offered. There were counter movements in every Muslim country. There<sup>170</sup> were the Mahdi movement in Sudan, the Amirghamiya of Nubia, the Senussis of North Africa, the Wahabis of Saudi Arabia. There were educationist reformers like Mohammad Abduh of Egypt and his Syrian disciple Rashid Rida (1865–1935) Sir Syed Ahmed Khan of India and the Pan Islamist Jamaluddin Afghani – to mention only a few. The Muslims, everywhere, resisted successfully the undermining of their base – Islam. They rejected the Western type of Reformation which split Christianity

169. Ibid.

170. "Islam" by H.A.R. Gibb p. 97.

into small factions. There are no less than two hundred fifty denominations in U.S.A. alone and the secularisation of the Renaissance from which Europe is still suffering and its consciousness has now dawned upon them.

Even in the 18th – 19th Century the great debate was between Muslim and Christian<sup>171</sup> and not yet between Darwin and Christ. In the West Darwin won and disrupted its art and centuries long base of its culture. The Muslims retained their identity and defended their base.

They struggled against their colonial oppressors and threw them back to places where they came from. Every Muslim country is now free and independent. The competition of the cultures is not over but the west once again should not mistake Muslim Renaissance and its attempt to reforge its disrupted unity and brotherhood as Militant Resurgence. Both are now "free to mingle in the osmosis of mutual influence."

"The East takes on our Industries and armaments and becomes Western, the West wearies of wealth and War and seeks inner peace. Perhaps we shall help the East to mitigate poverty and superstition, and the East will help us to humility in philosophy and refinement in art. East is West and West is East and soon the twin shall meet."<sup>172</sup> The meeting will have to be on very friendly terms and the West shouldn't resent if the Muslims quickly learn their sciences as they have begun to do. The Pakistanis are in fact teaching modern sciences in European and American Universities and Prof. Abdul Salam, Director of the International Centre for Theoretical Physics at Trieste, Italy, has won the highest recognition in the world of Physics through the award of the Nobel Prize and has been honoured from Moscow to Argentine. The next prestigious honour for a Scientist is Fellowship of the Royal Society of Britain whose patron the reigning monarch is still described as "Her Sacred Majesty."<sup>173</sup> Of the fifty fellows listed there are only four non-Christians and they are all Muslims – three from Pakistan and one from

171. Will Durant, "The Age of Reason" pp.536-37.

172. Will Durant: The Age of Reason: p.537.

173. See the latest 1985 issue of the list of the Fellows.



<sup>174</sup> India. Dr. Durrani of Birmingham University may also be mentioned as one of the leading Scientific Researchers, who was one of the dozen Scientists of the world to whom the "Moon dust" was sent for analysis. And Muslims have begun to participate in space flights. Prince Sultan Ibn-Salman-Ibn-Abdul Aziz, twenty-eight year old nephew of H.M. King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, has become the first Muslim Space Traveller – astronaut in the Space Shuttle "Discovery" in June, 1985. The Muslims have begun to face the 20th Century realities and are not frightened. They are preparing themselves to be participant partners in the peaceful uses of advanced technology.

Let the Christian West show Christian compassion and not hallucinate with the fright of an Islamic atom-bomb.

Neutralising each other through the union of their seemingly opposed but actually complementing attributes let us return to the centre point – God of Abraham, God of Issac and Jacobs, God of Ishmael and Mohammad. Call Him by any name. We Muslims have ninety-nine, you can add more.

Chuang Tzu called Him "the motionless centre of a circumference on the rim of which all contingencies, distinctions and individualities revolve. From it only infinity is to be seen which is neither this nor that, nor yes nor no. To see all in the yet undifferentiated unity, or from such a distance that all melts into one, this is true intelligence."

Chuang calls it the Pivot; the modern Rene-Guenon calls it the Mathematical point. T.S. Eliot calls "the still point" of the turning world –

*"Neither flesh nor fleshless  
Neither from nor towards, at the still point, there the dance is  
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity  
Where past and future are gathered, Neither movement  
from nor towards*

174. Ibid. They are Abdus Salam, (elected 1959), Salimuzzaman Siddiqui (elected 1961), Mohammad Athar, Prof. of Biochemistry, University of Southampton, England, (elected 1980) and Obaid Siddiqui, Prof. of Molecular Biology, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay, India, (elected 1984).

*Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point  
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance."*<sup>175</sup>

So let the old and new mingle. Chuang Tzu's the Pivot; T.S. Eliot's still point, Rene Guenon's Mathematical point are immaterial points. Aristotle named it the 'Unmoved Mover' and Al-Ghazali saw in it "Allah, the Merciful, the Beneficent." The vision is the same. The man-made descriptions differ.

175. "Four Quartets; Burnt Norton," T.S. Eliot.

## APPENDIX ONE

### AL-GHAZALI'S INFLUENCE ON THE WEST.

The ancient Greek world was pre-scientific and it is said that — “the astronomy and mathematics of the Greeks was never thoroughly accclimatized in Greek culture. The Greeks systematized, generalized and theorized, but the patient way of investigation, detailed and prolonged observation and experimental inquiry were altogether alien to their temperament.”

Although there is not a single aspect of European growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic culture is not traceable, nowhere it is so clear as in the new spirit of inquiry, of the new methods of experiment, observation, and measurement, of the development of mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks — the bed rock of modern scientific achievements.

"The debt of<sup>176</sup> our science to that of the Arabs does not consist in startling discoveries of revolutionary theories, science owes a great deal more to Arab culture, it owes its existence — the supreme source of its victory, the distinctive force of the modern world." Europe received another flood of light through Islamic mysticism. The word mystic is derived<sup>177</sup> from the Greek root mu — meaning silent or mute — muo = "I shut my mouth" which by derivation becomes unutterable, unexplainable — "He saw what he saw."

Al-Ghazali was famous even in his life time through out the Muslim world — upto the farthest Spain. Ibn Rushd was not the only one to take him an and refute his stand on philosophy, the fact that the Qazi of Cordova had his works burnt publicly and that the Sultan of Marrakesh banned them and any one found in possession of any book or even part of it was threatened with confiscation of property or even with death show how widely he was read and appreciated. Ibn Tufail's debt to Al-Ghazali in his famous book "Hayy bin Yaqzan" has been shown to<sup>178</sup> be considerable. But the more modern research has established Al-Ghazali's influence on the great mystic Mohyuddin Ibn Arabi. "Ibn Arabi's mystical psychology and his theory of knowledge, together with his views on "the inner eye" and on dreams bear the closest resemblance to those of Al-Ghazali so much so that it has been possible for more than one student of Ibn Arabi to attribute to the later mystic what is actually the work<sup>179</sup> of the earlier mystic writer."

And that leads us to the important revelation that Dante in his "Divine comedy" was influenced not only by Ibn Arabi as proved by Asian Palacios but through him by Al-Ghazali. The Muslim<sup>180</sup> thought was siphoned into Europe through Spain and Al-Ghazali's influence was also transmitted through Spain. Within half a century of his death trans-

176. Briffault, "The Making of Humanity" pp.201.

177. Houston Smith — "Forgotten Truth — The Primordial Tradition," p.110.

178. Margaret Smith — "Al-Ghazali, the Mystic" p.203. She has also traced his influence on the founders of Tariqah — Qadria, Suhrawardiq, Al-Shah-dhazalia see pp.204-208.

179. Margaret Smith p.12 and the foot note same page.

180. "The History of Sufism" by A.J. Arberry.

lation of his works appeared in Hebrew and Latin. His philosophical works were translated into Latin by Avendeath (Ibn Daud 1090-1165) of Toledo, a converted Jew. "The Zohar," a Jewish mystical treatise, compiled from many sources, which appeared in Spain in the thirteenth century, has considerable resemblance to Al-Ghazali's exposition of the mystic path, to the theory of the soul and seems to be based on Al-Ghazali's "Alam-al-Malakut," "Alam-al-Jabarut." The "Mishk'atul Anwar" was also known to Jewish writers. It was translated by Issac Alfasi and extensively quoted by the 16th Century writer, Moses-Ibn-Habib of Lisbon, who was himself a well-known poet, philosopher and translator of Arabic treatises. "It is impossible to read the poems of the Spanish mystic of St. John of the Cross without concluding that his entire process of thinking and imaginative apparatus owed much to Muslim mystics of Spain" and those mystics owed so much to Al-Ghazali.

Toledo continued even after Christian conquest to be a centre of Islamic learning. Archbishop Raymond (1130-1150) established a school for the translation of Arabic writings into Latin, the idea being to train Christian missionaries to work in Islamic countries and provide teachers to the newly founded Universities at Naples and Paris and Padua.

The tribal civil wars and Byzantine intrigues resulted in the recapture and occupation of Sicily, the centre of Islamic transmission of culture into Italy, by the Normans. The Conqueror, Count Roger, "though himself an uncultured Christian,<sup>181</sup> surrounded himself with Eastern philosophers, retained Arabic as one of the official languages, maintained the former system of administration and even retained Muslims in high position. His Son and successor Roger II (1130-54) even dressed like a Muslim and his critics called him "the half — Heathen King." His coronation robe bore Arabic lettering as decorative motif and the Church he built had medallions bearing Kufic Characters. The highest office in the realm was that of Ammiratus Ammiratorum (Amir-al-Ummara) and the chief ornament of his Court was Al-Idrisi, the most distinguished geographer and cartographer of the Middle Ages. The second of "the two baptized Sultans of Sicily" was Roger the second's

181. "History of the Arabs" by P.K. Hitti p.607.

grandson, Frederick II, (1215–50) who ruled both Sicily and Germany as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire; by virtue of a marriage assumed the title of King of Jerusalem and led a crusade which further “inculcated” him with Muslim ideas.

The spirit of investigation, experimentation and research which characterised Arab learning became the hall-mark of Frederick’s Court and this marks the beginning of the Italian Renaissance. But his greatest contribution was the founding of the University of Naples (1224), “the first in Europe to be established by a Royal Charter.” In it he deposited a large collection of Arabic manuscripts. The works of Aristotle, Al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd were translated and used in its curriculum; copies of the translations were sent to the Universities of Paris and Bologna. The University of Naples counted Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) among its pupils. Influence of Al-Ghazali is not only widely acknowledged but admitted by him in “Summa Theologica.”

In reference to the inability of the creature to realise the majesty of the creator, St. Thomas uses the very words of Al-Ghazali in saying that “the Sun, though supremely visible cannot be seen by the bat, because of the excess of light.” Asin Palacios, Bruno Nardi and Margaret Smith amongst others affirm that it is in Al-Ghazali’s teachings on the beatific vision and the gnosis, which leads it, that St. Thomas seems to have derived most from the Muslim mystics, specially Al-Ghazali. The doctrine of Al-Ghazali concerning the vision is given almost word by word from *Ihya* and *Al-ilm-al-Jaduni* by St. Thomas in “The joy of paradise is in proportion to the love of God and the love of God is proportionate to the knowledge of Him; and so the source of that Joy is the gnosis revealed through Faith,” and he too states that the Joy of the vision surpasses all other Joys.

Al-Ghazali’s influence in the west was both theological and philosophical. His “*Tahafut Falasafa*” was translated into Latin in the twelfth century. His “*Maqasid*” was translated under the title “*Logika philosophia Algazelis Arabic*” by Gundisalvas and published in Venice in 1506 A.D. His “*Al-Nafsal-Insani*” was translated under the title “*De Anima Humana*.”

Asin Palacios has brought out clearly Al-Ghazali’s influence on the Christian world in his comprehensive work “*La espiritualidad de*

*Al-Gazel su sentido Cristiano*” and in “*La Mystique d’Al-Ghazali*.”

Among early Christian writers who made a special study of Islamic teachings was Archbishop Raymond Martin, a catalonian, who spent quite a considerable time in Barcelona and died some time about 1284. In his two books “*Explanatio Symboli*” and his “*Pugio Fidei*” he quotes directly<sup>182</sup> from Al-Ghazali’s “*Maqasid al-Falsafia*,” “*Ihayal-al-Ulum*” and “*Mizani-al-Amal*” to buttress his own argument, showing how Al-Ghazali affirms that the joy of knowing God and of contemplating Him face to face is the most glorious and excellent of all joys.

In philosophy Al-Ghazali’s direct influence on Pascal has been established. He came to know of him, through Raymond Martin’s book, mentioned above and adopts Al-Ghazali’s concept of faith<sup>183</sup> in superiority to reason, “which moves slowly and does go astray, but intuition acts in a flash and is always ready to act and therefore, men should put their trust in it for it means assurance.”

Asin Palacios draws comparisons between Pascal and Al-Ghazali. Pascal, like Ghazali, is of the opinion that our senses may deceive us, and compares the text of “*Al-Munqidh*” with that of Pascal’s “*Pensees*,”<sup>184</sup> and both say the same thing – “God is felt not in the intellect but in the heart.”

Even in the 20th Century revival of interest in mysticism, Al-Ghazali reigns supreme: Evelyn Underhill, the one mostly responsible for this revival, defines mysticism in terms echoing Al-Ghazali.

“True mysticism is active and practical, not passive and theoretical. Its aims are wholly transcendental and spiritual. The Mystics heart is wholly set upon “the changeless one,” a living and personal object of Love – the guidance of the heart (in paraphrase of Al-Ghazali’s “the eye of the heart”). Again like Al-Ghazali, she asserts that “it is obtained neither from an intellectual realisation of its delights, nor from the

182. Margaret Smith – “*Al-Ghazali, the Mystic*.”

183. *Ibid* p. 225.

184. Evelyn Underhill – “*Mysticism*,” (1911 first printing) and by my brother in “*Mysticism in seventeenth century English Literature*” 1960.

most acute emotional longings, though these must be present, they are not enough." It is like paraphrasing Al-Ghazali's "Al-Munqidh-min-al-Dalal" when she explains that "it is arrived at by an arduous psychological and spiritual process — following the Mystic way or path — entailing the complete remaking of character and the liberation of a new form of consciousness which imposes on the self not "ecstasy" but the unitive state." It involves perfect consummation of the Love of God — "the achievement here and now of the immortal heritage of man" — establishing conscious relation with the Absolute — what Al-Ghazali terms "face to face." The moral condition towards which the interior travail is directed is that of utter humility: "Everything depends upon a fathomless sinking in a fathomless nothingness." Those who met Al-Ghazali in later life were surprised at his meek humility contrasted with his earlier arrogance at Baghdad.

Pascal's contemporary Descartes is regarded as a pioneer of modern philosophy in the West. There is no acknowledgement, by him, direct or indirect, to any Muslim thinker but when all the recently established universities and intellectual circles were buzzing with the uncommon ideas acquired through the freely circulating Latin translations of Avicenna, Algazal, Averroes (Ibn Sina, Al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd) Descartes could not have remained ignorant of their extent works, being, like almost every scholar of repute, a Latin scholar was also an author of two important philosophical treatises — "Meditationes de prima philosophia" and "Principia Philosophiae" in Latin. The similarities of approach, discussion and resultant views are so worded and follow their sequence so closely Al-Ghazali's that the conclusion is irresistible that he must have read and been familiar with Al-Ghazali's works. Brief illustrations would suffice.

Al-Ghazali's starting point of self-examinations starts with the formula "I will, therefore, I am" Descartes also begins with a study of his self and has the formula, "I think, therefore, I am." Like Al-Ghazali he begins describing how he studied, with a questioning mind, every school, every creed for a solution to the problems that disturbed him and finally resolved to discard all authority. He seems to be familiar with "Al-Munqidh-min-al-Dalal." He also followed Al-Ghazali's derivation of the negative and the positive attributes of God from the concept of necessary existence.

There is so much remarkable internal evidence of similarity between Al-Ghazali's "Al-Munqidh" and Descartes' "Discours<sup>185</sup> de la Methode" that it has led some scholars to say that "had any translation of (Al-Munqidh) existed in the days of Descartes, everyone would have cried out against the plagiarism."<sup>186</sup>

Similarly Spinoza has been shown as deeply influenced by Al-Farabi whose cosmological proof of the existence of God was accepted by him, as by Maimonides (Maimum in Arabic) and by Saint Thomas before him and Al-Ghazali's distinction between the infinite and the indefinites was followed by him as it was done by Bruno, Galileo and Descartes. His idea of freedom was also identical with Al-Ghazali's of necessity (non-dependence upon anything else) and that of necessity is equated with the latter's idea of possibility (dependence upon a cause). The difference in exposition is merely a difference in terminology. Similarities between Kant and Al-Ghazali would surprise many. But they are there. Like Al-Ghazali, Kant regarded the physical world alone capable of explanation through scientific knowledge. Like Al-Ghazali he demonstrates that the theoretical reason can analyse what the senses yield and that it cannot solve the basic and more important questions of philosophy and religion such as the existence of God, the nature of His attributes, the immortality of the Soul. Kant reverted to the practical reason of man, for a solution and Al-Ghazali to direct approach to reach the Absolute Reason.

T.H. Green observed that the doctrines of Leibniz had a permanent influence on Kant. Leibniz, like Al-Ghazali regarded the world as phenomenal and that "human knowledge does not consist solely in the perception of Universal truths, nor does it entirely depend upon the senses. Both made a distinction between concepts and precepts (though naturally using different terminology). Time and space for that are not real or characteristic of the real. "Kant's affinity to and reliance on

185. First published in French in Paris in 1637 and the latest English translation (in abridged form) is by Auscombe and Peter Thomas Geach, Edinburgh, 1954.

186. Henry Lewis in "Biographical History of Philosophy." See also M.M. Sharif on this point in "History of Muslim Philosophy" Vol. II, pp.1382-1384.

187. Ibid pp. 1384-85.

Leibniz has led some<sup>188</sup> to affirm Al-Ghazali's influence on Kant, Spinoza and to say that he anticipated and explained much which the West regards as original contribution to Western Philosophy and thought by iconoclasts Spinoza and Schopenhauer." Even Bergson, like Al-Ghazali, makes intuition or immediate consciousness the source of knowledge emanating from the Absolute, the Truth, the Vibrant Force.

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188. Prof. M.M. Sharif's "Muslim Thought, Its Origins and Achievements."

## REFORMATION AND RENAISSANCE.

Even in the West the Philosopher's reign came to an end when the religious link with it was broken and Martin Luther led the revolt against Papal dominance in religious affairs, and when the armed forces of Emperor Charles V (1519-56) triumphed and changed the face and character of Italy and put an end to the Italian Renaissance. The Spanish hegemony broke the spirit of the Italians as subjection to an alien rule does every where. In any case spirit of Renaissance was of the few, for the few, by the few. The alien occupation gave birth "to a somber pessimism and resignation fell upon the spirit of the once joyous and exuberant Italian people." Even the dark Spanish dress — black cap, black doublet, black hose, black shoes — became the fashion and not as asserted by some<sup>189</sup> now "as if the people had put on mourning for

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189. By J.A. Symonds — *The Renaissance in Italy* — Vol. VII — *The Catholic Reaction Part I* p.33.

glory departed and liberty dead," but as common everywhere in every age the well-to-do always ape the alien ruling class.

Another factor in the fading of Renaissance mood was the Lutheran Reformation coupled with Papal counter-Reformation.

As a slight digression, I may explain that in early stages the reformation movement was dissatisfaction over material exactions rather than theological differences. In Oct. 1510 Luther had visited Rome, kneeling and kissing the soil of Rome cried: "Hail to thee, O, Holy Rome." It was only ten years later did he described Rome "as an abomination, the Popes worse than pagan Emperors and the Papal Court served at supper by twelve naked girls."

The Church in Germany, however, was the richest in Christendom, owned nearly a third of the whole landed property, avarice was their besetting sin and were never satisfied with increase in rents, taxes, and perquisites. "The lower clergy was poor. The ostentatious living of the higher order provoked indignation of the people, jealousy of the upper classes and the scorn of all the serious-minded." The rise of nationalism of national states gave a new upsurge of resentment against supremacy of the Pope over Kings and Emperors and against his right of appointments at demand price too. Bishoprics were openly sold and given to the highest bidder, constant flow of gold into Rome led to hatred against the Pope and the Papacy. Emperor Maximilian complained that the Pope drew a hundred times more revenue from Germany than he himself could collect.

Pope Leo X (1515-1524), about whom it was then said that "all his faults were superficial except this superficiality," issued on March 15, 1517, a general indulgence, to complete the St. Peter's basilica, to all those who contributed. His agent, Tetzel, offered the general Indulgence to those who would confess their sins and pay according their means. The Indulgence issued by him, on behalf of the Pope, is worth reproducing.<sup>190</sup> "May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on thee, absolve thee by the merits of His most Holy Passion. And I, by His

190. As very few Muslims, unaware of such practices, could be familiar with.

Authority, that of his blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, and of the most Holy Pope, granted and committed to me in these parts, do absolve thee, first from all ecclesiastical censures, in whatever manner they may have been incurred, and then from all thy sins, transgressions and excesses, how enormous soever they may be, even from such as are reserved for the cognizance of the Holy See, and as far as the Keys of the Holy Church extend, I remit to you all punishment that you deserve in purgatory on their accounts and I restore you to the holy sacraments of the Church — and restore you to the innocence and purity which you possessed at baptism, so that when you die, the gates of punishment shall be shut and gates of the paradise of delight shall be opened and if you shall not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when you are at the point of death. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost."

He gave sealed letters stating that even the sins which a man was intending to commit would be forgiven Luther<sup>191</sup> quoted Tetzel as saying that "if a man violated "the Mother of God," the Indulgence would wipe away his sin."

The Elector of Saxony forbade sale of the Indulgence in his territory to avoid drain of capital from it to Rome. Several purchasers however, brought these letters to Rev. Father Martin Luther, Master of Arts and Sacred theology and lecturer-in-ordinary, in the University of Wittenberg, and asked him to attest their efficacy. He refused. Tetzel, hearing of the refusal, denounced him.

And both became immortal. Luther reacted quickly and refuted the Pope's Indulgence to be effective beyond the grave and salvation "for the sake of miserable money with which to build a Church" on Oct. 31, 1517 Luther pinned his thesis in Latin with a German translation to the gate of the University, saying "out of love for the faith and the desire to bring it to light the propositions will be discussed."

The Lutheran revolt, given the name of Reformation, had begun. The Religious wars and nationalist regimes began and the Renaissance

191. Luther, Works, Vol. I, p.26 quoted by Will Durant.

faded into a colourless past. The English secession, the Spanish hegemony of which the only consolation, which Will Durant sees in the latter, was that it "probably saved Italy from spoilation by the Turks," deepened the Crisis. The Church's fateful reaction to so called Reformation was folding the gates of faith more tightly. Just as the Spaniards had devised the Inquisition in the 13th century to hold the fort and save the Church, so now in the 16th century to save and serve the pure faith, the spaniard Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556) founded "the Society of Jesus" in 1534 and brought in the Jesuit repression to fight and suppress religious heresy and revolt. Liberalism of Renaissance was deeply buried. The rigid orthodoxy of the Church, after the Council of Trent (1545–63), led to Calvinist intolerance. Morality however, did not improve. Fornication, adultery, illegitimacy, incest, obscene literature, political corruption, robbery and brutal crime in Italy of 1534–76 was as before.<sup>192</sup> Pope Paul III, before his election had begotten two bastards<sup>193</sup> but he was (1534–40) – forgiven as an accepted custom. Criminal law remained as severe as before: torture was frequently applied to innocent witnesses as to the accused, and murderers still had their flesh torn away by red-hot pincers before being hanged.<sup>194</sup>

The restoration of slavery<sup>195</sup> as a major economic institution belongs to this period. When Pope Paul III declared war on England in 1535 he decreed that the English soldiers captured should be enslaved. By about 1550 the custom of using slaves and convicts to row the galleys of trade and war was fully established.

Economic misfortunes that ruined Italy and had long-term disastrous effects which led to the waning of the Renaissance was the rounding of the Cape of Good Hope (1488), the opening of a new all-water route to India (1498) and the whole pattern of international trade changed the Venetian Genoese trade, Florentine finance declined, the Mediter-

192. J.A. Symonds already quoted and see also the delightful "Autobiography" of Benvenuto Cellini (1500–71).

193. Leopold Van Ranke, "History of the Popes," Part I, p. 181.

194. J.A. Symonds as per No. 192 – "Catholic Reaction," Vol. LVI, Part I p. 273 quoted by Will Durant in "The Story of Civilization" Part V – The Renaissance p. 690.

195. Ibid.

anean control of trade by the Turks was now a passing phase and the German trade was diverted to North Sea-routes. The new development of discovery of America (1492–98) enriched the Atlantic countries while helping to impoverish Italy, Adriatic States and spelt ruin to the Ottoman Turks. This change in the Sea-routes and new pattern of commerce and trade was a greater revolution, changing the course of history in favour of Atlantic States, putting them on to the race of colonial Imperialism and the wars of ruling the waves began. The Industrial Revolution which fanned this race did in fact lead to technicological advance and was responsible for the new scientific age in which we live and might perish.

The Renaissance which is mistakenly taught to us, in the Third World, as the glory of Europe was in fact only a transitional period of awakening. It is a misnomer to call the later half of the 17th century as even the Age of Reason. It was an age of religious bigotry, Christianity split up into numerous sects, each sect determined to exterminate the other; education was the monopoly of the few rich, who could make endowments meant exclusively for his own denominational institutions. Till the end of the 19th century even Oxford and Cambridge, till then the only two Universities in England, did not admit students other than of the established Anglican Church.

Oxford till 1871 continued "to exact from every candidate for a degree assent to the thirtynine articles of the Established<sup>196</sup> Church.

In Catholic and Calvinist countries education was controlled by the ecclesiastics. In England and Lutheran countries clergymen,<sup>197</sup> administered it, controlled by the State. Religious differences put an end to international character of the Universities as nearly all of them required teachers and students both to accept the official religion.

With education so restricted and confined to the upper few, it is saying the obvious that the majority (over 80%) of the people were still illiterate. And illiteracy begets superstition and maintains poverty.

196. Will Durant – *The Age of Reason*, p. 583.

197. Ibid.



Popular superstition were beyond number. Fairies, elves,<sup>198</sup> hobgoblins, ghosts, witches, demons lurked every where. Every event was considered as a sign of God's pleasure or wrath or of Satan's activity and comets presaged disasters.

The great majority of the people, and quite good many in the upper classes, had horoscopes made. Duke Wallenstein, Imperial General in the (1583–1634) in the thirty years Religious Wars, took an astrologer on his campaigns, Catherine de Medicis and her court had whole-time paid astrologers. At the birth of Louis IV an astrologer was hidden in the bed Chamber of the Queen to get exact time of birth for a horoscope.

This period is also said to be the hey-day of judicial murders for witchcraft. If one could win the intercession of a Saint by why not secure the help of the devil by courting him. A book "Christian ideas on magic," at Heidelberg<sup>198-A</sup> in 1585 affirmed that "every where the whole universe, inward and outward, water and air is full of devils, of wicked invisible spirits." It was a common belief that human beings could be possessed by devils entering them. Though there were protests from some against witches being burnt, defenders within the Church and outside were numerous. "Protestants theologians like Thomas Erasmus, in 1572 and Catholic theologians like Bishop Binsfield in 1589, agreed that witchcraft was real and that witches should be burned. The Bishop approved of torture but recommended that repentant witches should be strangled before being burned." In the town of Ellingen, 1,500 witches were burned in 1590. German Scholars estimate a total of 100,000 executions for witchcraft in Germany in the 16th century.

Kepler (1571–1630), the famous scientist of the Renaissance, believed in witchcraft and his own mother<sup>199</sup> was charged with practising it. How she escaped burning is a mystery. She was in prison for thirteen months. During the Renaissance there did live great men wor-

198. A. Berry: "Short History of Astronomy" and L. Thorndike already quoted.

198-A Quoted by Will Durant — *Age of Reason* — p.576. See also p.577-78 on the burning of witches on the continent and England.

199. A Berry quoted earlier.

thy of age-long tribute — Leonarda da Vinchi (1452–1519), painter, sculptor, architect, Engineer, Michel Angelo (1475–1564) one of the greatest artists — painter, sculptor — of the Renaissance, Titian (1477–1576), Venetian painter and Machiavelli (1469–1527), political philosopher, diplomat, historian.

The science had, in fact, its beginning with Nicholaus Copernicus (He was Polish and his real name was Nikolai Kapernick) (1473–1593) astronomer who demonstrated that the planets including the earth revolved on their axis and moved in orbits around the Sun. It could not be accepted by the Church and the clergy, still controlling the Universities and sharpening censor scissors on any idea contradicting the Bible. Protestant theologians were as loud in their denunciation<sup>200</sup> as the un-yielding Catholics. Bacon and Bodin alike repudiated the theory. Poor Giordano Bruno (1548–1599) the real scientist of the age paid for its affirmation with his life, tried by the Inquisition, condemned and handed over to the Civil authorities, he was stripped naked, his tongue pulled and tied to an iron stake was burnt alive. Galileo (1564–1642), another great name, who invented the telescope and discovered satellites to Jupiter, was arrested, questioned by the Inquisitors three or four times, made verbal recantation, repudiating the Copernican theory, escaped the stake by speedy death while under house arrest. Kepler (1571–1630), though clarifying amending and improving upon Copernican theory, was saved because he was beyond the reach of the Inquisition being a Protestant. And he proved his piety by mingling mysticism with science, illustrating Goethe's generous saying that "a man's defects are the faults of the times, while his virtues are his own." His treatise was placed on the Index of prohibited books but as a pious Protestants, serving as Imperial astronomer, was not disturbed. To end, let us see Galileo before the Inquisition in Rome. The Inquisition directed cardinal Ballarmine "to summon before him the said Galileo and admonish him to abandon the said opinions, and in case of refusal—to intimate to him, before a notary and witnesses, a command to abstain from teaching or defending the same opinions and even from discussing them. If he do not acquiesce there in he is to be imprisoned.

200. L. Thorndike already quoted.

"Galileo appeared and declared his submission to the decree. A week later the Holy See issued its historic decree:

"The view that the sun stands motionless at the centre of the Universe is foolish, philosophically false, and utterly heretical, because contrary to the Holy Scripture. The view that the earth is at the centre of universe and even has a daily rotation is philosophically false, and at least an erroneous belief."

Galileo continued to be harassed over the years and repeatedly summoned before the Inquisition court. He was made to kneel, repudiate the copernican theory and add:<sup>201</sup>

"With a sincere heart and unfeigned faith I abjure, curse, detest the said errors and heresies, — and I swear that I will never more in future say or assert anything — which may give rise to a similar suspicion of me and that if I know any heretic or any one suspected of heresy, I will denounce him to this Holy Office — so may God help me and these His Holy Gospels which I touch with my own hands."

Modern researches have not upheld Copernicus, Bruno and Galileo. But they were pioneers searching for scientific basis of nature and universe. Sir Issac Newton (1642–1727) was also a child collecting sea shells on sea shore. But he did shore up an ocean. Science began with him as technology advance began with George Stephenson (1781–1848). The fact of history is that the French Revolution and resistance to Napolionic imperialism encouraged the new ideas of national identity sovereignty of the people, awakening to issues springing from language and ethnic culture, not dynastic factors or religious controversies and heresies, till then supreme. After Napoleon's fall these ideas helped to reshape Europe and its destiny.

201. Charles Singer: "Studies in History and Method of Science" Vol. I, p.269, and A. Wolf: "History of Science, Technology & Philosophy in the 16 & 17th centuries."

## APPENDIX THREE

### AL-GHAZALI'S LAST TESTAMENT.

Imam Ghazali woke up one early morning and as usual offered his prayers and then enquired what day it was, his younger brother, Ahmad Ghazali replied, "Monday." He asked him to bring his white shroud, kissed it, stretched himself full length and saying "Lord, I obey willingly," breathed his last.

And underneath his head rest they found the following verses; composed by him, probably, during the night.

*"Say to my friends, when they look upon me, dead  
Weeping for me and mourning me in sorrow  
Do not believe that this corpse you see is myself  
In the name of God, I tell you, it is not I,  
I am a spirit, and this is naught but flesh*

*It was my abode and my garment for a time.  
 I am a treasure, by a talisman kept hid,  
 Fashioned of dust, which served me as a shrine,  
 I am a pearl, which has left its shell deserted,  
 I am a bird, and this body was my cage  
 Whence I have now florn forth and it is left as a token  
 Praise to God, who hath now set me free  
 And prepared for me my place in the highest of the heaven,  
 Until today I was dead, though alive in your midst.  
 Now I live in truth, with the grave — clothes discarded.  
 Today I hold converse with the saints above,  
 With no veil between, I see God face to face.  
 I look upon "Loh-i-Mahfuz" and there in I read  
 Whatever was and is and all that is to be.  
 Let my house fall in ruins, lay my cage in the ground,  
 Cast away the talisman, it is a token, no more  
 Lay aside my cloak, it was but my outer garment.  
 Place them all in the grave, let them be forgotten,  
 I have passed on my way and you are left behind  
 Your place of abode was no deweling place for me.  
 Think not that death is death, nay, it is life,  
 A life that surpasses all we could dream of here,  
 While in this world, here we are granted sleep,  
 Death is but sleep, sleep that shall be prolonged  
 Be not frightened when death draweth nigh,  
 It is but the departure for this blessed home  
 Think of the mercy and love of your Lord,  
 Give thanks for His Grace and come without fear.  
 What I am now, even so shall you be  
 For I know that you are even as I am  
 The souls of all men come forth from God  
 The bodies of all are compounded alike  
 Good and evil, alike it was ours  
 I give you now a message of good cheer  
 May God's peace and joy for evermore be yours. 202*

202. Translated by Margaret Smith, quoted in "Al-Ghazali; Mystic": Hiy'a International Publishers, Lahore, 1983.

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