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AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S THEORY OF INTERPRETATION

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[summary]

Al-Ghazālī is one of the great Muslim thinkers who still have great impact on modern Islamic thought. Some scholars believe that his importance is due to the notion that he could reconcile two different modes of interpretation of Islam, namely that of orthodoxical Ash'arite system and that of the mystical Sūfī system.

This paper, however, tries to investigate the validity of such understanding by concentrating mainly on his theory of interpretation since it represents not only the core of Al-Ghazālī's system, but it also represents the core of the whole Islamic culture and civilization. It seems that Al-Ghazālī's task was not that of a theologian nor of a mystic; he wanted to introduce a comprehensive project for Muslims to "revive" religious sciences as opposed to worldly sciences. According to Al-Ghazālī, the true meaning of Islam is not to create the society of justice and goodness on earth, which has been the major task of Islamic civilization and culture since the 7th century till now; it is rather to attain self-personal salvation in the life-after. This life is a path which only counts as long as it leads to salvation in the life-after.

This attitude of Al-Ghazālī was due to socio-political transformations that occurred in the history of Islam and which are reflected in his writings. Instead of taking a positive attitude to emphasize the true meaning of Islam, he preferred to hold the negative aspect of self-salvation through purifications and rituals. Just like the life-after which counts in opposition to this life, it is the spiritual world that counts as opposed to this physical world. As for the human being, it is his inner spirit and soul which is more important than his body.

The whole universe has thus been conceived in terms of oppositions and dichotomies, it is likely that the meaning of Islam, and accordingly of the Qur'an, has to be turned upside down. Although Al-Ghazālī still holds the highly accepted notion of the four levels of meaning in the Qur'an, he seems to consider poetry as having more levels of meanings than the Qur'an, an idea which violates both the Ash'arite's understanding and the Sūfī's interpretation of the Qur'an.

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In Islam, unlike Judaism and Christianity, it is believed that the Qur'an is the exact words of

God revealed to His messenger, Prophet Mohammad, through the mediation of the Holy Spirit. The Prophet was ordered to transmit it to the people who were also ordered to apply it to their own social and personal life⁽¹⁾. All Muslims all over the world, despite their cultural and theological differences, believe that Islam, and accordingly Qur'an, is not a way for an individual to attain personal salvation, it is rather a way of creating the ideal society of God on earth as much as it is a way of controlling the individual conduct. It is a religion of this world as it is for the other world, for this life as it is for the life-after.

But this widely believed understanding of Islam does not seem to be the Sufi's Islam. What we intend to investigate in this paper is the specific understanding Al-Ghazālī holds of Islam. The importance of Al-Ghazālī lies in the fact that he tried his best to "reconcile orthodoxy with the mystical teaching which was widespread in his time" ⁽²⁾. Therefore, most of "the modern opinion about religion is much due to the influence of the Imam's thought"⁽³⁾. According to this, studying Al-Ghazālī's interpretation of Islam is not only a matter of scientific interest, but it is also important for the understanding of modern Islamic culture and thought. Al-Ghazālī's books, especially *Iḥyā' Ulūm al-Dīn*, are highly regarded and considered as important as the Qur'an itself.

Our interest in his theory of interpretation is due to some reasons. First, it is the essence of his mystical and philosophical system which enables us to indulge to all the aspects of this system. Second, it gives us an objective norm to evaluate the social and political significance of Al-Ghazālī's thought and understanding of Islam. Third, and more important might be, the problem of interpretation, *Ta'wil*, is not the essence of Al-Ghazālī's thought only, it is the essence of Islamic culture and civilization, old and present as such. Since the Qur'an, which is a linguistic text, is the core of this civilization, it is likely that the problem of interpretation is the dynamic process by which Islamic culture adjusts to the text or makes the text adjusted to itself. The history of Islamic culture and civilization could be studied in fact as a history of textual interpretation, and so could Islamic sciences, whether traditional, *naqlī*, or rational, *'aqlī*, be studied as different ways or modes of interpretation.

In order to explain Al-Ghazālī's theory of interpretation, we have to understand first the task he had to accomplish by his writings and teachings. Before searching for his motivations in the social and political background of his time, we have to rely first on his own words and discover his motivations from within his own writings.

In his book *The Deliverer From Error, Al-Munquidh Min al-Ḍalāl*, Al-Ghazālī gives a detailed account of his intellectual and religious struggles, the reason why he broke with the methods of the theologian, and his experience which resulted in his concluding that the way of the sufis was the best and surest path to true knowledge. But the sufi system which Al-Ghazālī adopted is a very unique one within the realm of Islamic Sufism in general. It is obvious that he never gave up in his writings theological and philosophical way of argumentation. As for the subject-matter of his writings, he dealt almost with all the religious sciences, which makes it very hard to classify his writing under any specific discipline.

Al-Ghazālī's task in fact was neither of theologian nor of philosopher or Sufi; he wanted to introduce a comprehensive project for Muslims to “revive” religious sciences. The concept of “revival” presupposes the returning back to the past which is always conceived as pure and glorious. This process of returning back means that the present situation in Islamic society is not in accordance with the teachings of religion. That is why the returning back is through the revival of religious sciences.

The religious sciences Al-Ghazālī wanted to revive, however, are not those sciences which are supposed to make social and religious reformation possible; they are instead the sciences that help the individual attain self-salvation in the life-after. Religious sciences are opposed to worldly sciences which Al-Ghazālī attacks so severely and accepts them only on the minimum level that helps attaining the real purpose of human existence. To our astonishment, Al-Ghazālī includes jurisprudence, *Fiqh*, in worldly sciences and attacks jurists of being involved in worldly matters⁽⁴⁾. Al-Ghazālī evaluation of this science is based on its aim and function which is to establish the code of conduct for society as well as for individual, for worldly matters as well as for rituals, in accordance with the teachings taken from the Qur'an and from the Prophet's traditions. According to Al-Ghazālī, it is a worldly science because it concentrates only on the seen behaviour and conduct, while what really matters is the unseen intention and the inside purification of the Muslim. It is not only that jurisprudence is a worldly science, but jurists also are condemned because they, according to Al-Ghazālī, are affiliated with kings and rulers and Sultans and became highly interested in worldly matters, violating the true aim of religion and misleading ordinary Muslims.

Here we find numeral clues from Al-Ghazālī's writings that might help understanding social and political conditions of his time. In this connection, we can understand Al-Ghazālī's crisis that caused him to abandon everything he used to enjoy. He tells us that he realized how involved in the worldly affairs he was; even the most important thing he used to do, teaching, was not absolutely for the sake of God; it was rather for sustaining his position and for gaining good and wide reputation⁽⁵⁾.

We might add that Al-Ghazālī himself served by his writings to support the Abbasid political regime, which means how involved he was not only in ordinary worldly matters but also in political debates. In his book *Scandales of Shi'ism*, *Faḍā'iḥ Al-Batīniyyah*, he mentions that it was written in respond to the "Highly Sacred Order" of the Abbasid Caliph, Al-Mustaẓhar. Al-Ghazālī refers to himself as "servant" ⁽⁶⁾. This explains why Al-Ghazālī based his refutation of the Batini's ideas on intellectual argumentations, but when he came to defend the Caliph's authority he fell in the cage of ideas he had to refute; he attributed to the Abbasid Caliph all the attributes of the Imam of Shi'ah. This contradiction in ideas and thought is very obvious in this book⁽⁷⁾. We will deal later with this contradiction in Al-Ghazālī's system.

It is now evident that Al-Ghazālī's attack against worldly sciences was also against himself and against his own conduct which included teaching and writing. So, the Sufi solution for him was some sort of self-purification of the sins he thought he had committed. Al-Ghazālī's personal experience cannot of course be isolated from the social and political background of his time because his writings stand as witnesses of his age as they stand as expression of his personal struggle⁽⁸⁾. The Sufi solution then was a solution for Al-Ghazālī as an individual as it intended to be for all Muslims. The personal dilemma had forced itself not only on the way Al-Ghazālī understands Sufism but also in the way he understands Islam. It is out of question that it also affected his theory of interpretation.

Since the task of Al-Ghazālī is to revive religious sciences as opposed to worldly sciences, including jurisprudence, it is because this life, this world, does not really matter, but the life-after, the other world, that really counts. It is very clear then that Al-Ghazālī has to change the significance of religion and accordingly of revelation. The aim of revelation is not the human life any more, but it is the life-after. The struggle early Muslims went through in order to establish the society of God based on justice and liberty of mind and spirit has no significance for

Al-Ghazālī. The concept of society itself, Ummah, has no existence in his writings; when he discusses the problem of leadership, Imamah, he only defends the Abbasid leadership against the opponents of that regime⁽⁹⁾.

This attitude against this world in favour of the other world was due to social and political transformation occurred in the history of Islamic civilization. As the Qur'an does not make any distinction between different aspects of human life, the Prophet Mohammed was the political leader of the new-born society as he was its religious leader. It continued to be the same way during the era of the first four Caliphs, the last of them was 'Alī who was confronted by the 'Umayyad opposition. The establishment of the 'Umayyad dynasty broke the unity of leadership as much as it broke the unity of society itself. It has been believed that the Islamic model had been transferred into a monarchic model.

As for the Abbasid dynasty, the Caliph who was highly regarded a religious leader as he was a political leader turned to be a mere symbolic character. "About 820 more extensive authority was concentrated in the hands of one man, the Caliph in Baghdad, than in those of any other living person; by 920 the power of his successor had so diminished that it was hardly felt even in his capital city" ⁽¹⁰⁾. The great Islamic Empire was divided into so many small dynasties, thus the social and political transformation moved from unity to multiplicity. The symbolic leadership of the Caliph was just a religious symbol, whereas the political leadership, gained by military power, was in the hands of some minor groups. It is in this age of multiplicity of dynasties and duality of religious and political that Al-Ghazālī lived and wrote.

In his Faḍa'ih Al-Baṭīnyah, he realizes, and accordingly maintains, that power, namely military power, al-Shawkah, should be considered as one of the leadership conditions⁽¹¹⁾. He also refers in his Iḥya' to the obligation of every Muslim to obey those military leaders as long as they have the power and as long as they rule under the name of the Caliph and confess his religious leadership⁽¹²⁾. He argues not to revolt against such rulers no matter how bad, unfair, or unjust their policy is, because they have the power and any revolt could lead to blood-shed. This attitude of Al-Ghazālī, and of Sufism in general, is not like other attitudes of other religious groups within Islamic tenet. Sufism avoided any kind of political reaction against what was believed to be a deviation from the norms of Islam. So, instead of fighting against what was wrong and evil in social and political life, the Sufi took the easiest path, to withdraw from life and society and solitude himself seeking for purification and salvation. Since corruption has

stretched its wings everywhere, the Sufi felt that happiness could never be attained in this world and should be searched for in the other world. That is exactly what Al-Ghazālī is trying to convince us to do by teaching us the real meaning of religion and the true aim of revelation.

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The duality of religious and political in social life has been transferred on the level of ideas and conceptions to a duality of life and life-after, of this world and the other world. Although this duality on the level of social life was conceived as convergent, it has been formulated on the conceptual level as divergent. It has been transformed from duality to dichotomy. It is absolutely impossible from this prospective to enjoy this life and to guarantee happiness in the life-after at the same time.

If we reminded Al-Ghazālī of what has been believed to be said by the Prophet “Consider this life and do for it as if thou will live forever, and consider the life-after and do for it as if thou will die very soon” , he would say that we should consider this life as long as it is the only way to cross to the other life, it is a necessary stage for man to be evaluated and treated in the life-after according to his conduct in this life, so why do you get involved in the temporal while you have the eternal. The Muslim, according to Al-Ghazālī, should act in this life like a traveller because this life is only a journey, a bridge to the life-after⁽¹³⁾. The dichotomy of life and life-after is more elaborated in Al-Ghazālī's system of thought.

The first sign of the learned sufi is to know the absolute contradiction of this life and the life after. It is therefore his obligation not to:

“seek the world by his learning. He considers the world as insignificant and the hereafter as great and never lasting. He considers this world and the next world as diametrically opposed to each other like two hostile friends of a man, or like two co-wives. If one friend or co-wife is pleased, the other friend or co-wife becomes displeased. The two worlds are like two scales of balance, the lower the one falls, the other rises up higher. Or they like the east and the west. The more one advances towards the east, the more he goes distant from the west. Or the two worlds are like two pitchers, one is full and another empty. The more you pour water from the full pitcher into the empty one, the more the full pitcher will become less and the empty one more in water. There is defect in the intellect of a man who has not come to know that the happiness of this world will soon pass away, as this matter has been as true by

veritable sights and experiences. . . . He who does not consider this world and the next world as opposed to each other does not know the religion of the Prophet and does not believe in the Qur'an from first to last" ⁽¹⁴⁾.

Along with the life-life-after dichotomy, there are so many paralel dichotomies that manifest the same view in Al-Ghazālī's system. That is the physical and nonphysical world, the physical is the seen world, 'Alam al-Mulku wa-as-Shihadah, while the nonphysical is the spiritual and nonseen world, 'Alam al-Malakut. This dichotomy is manifested in the duality of human body and spirit. While the human body is part of the physical world, the human spirit belongs to the spiritual, non-seen, world. As for the way through which man can attain knowledge, this dichotomy also is at work; man has his five senses which can reflect the physical world, and accordingly attain worldly knowledge which is the base for the worldly sciences. The intellect, on the other hand, or the heart, is the organ to attain real knowledge or truth, and it can not attain this kind of knowledge unless it is purified and polished, therefore it will be ready to receive truth not from the outside seen physical world but from the inside spiritual nonseen reality, from God⁽¹⁵⁾.

Since the life-after is the spiritual life, and the heart is the organ that belongs to the spiritual world and can attain truth while the body is still residing in this world, the Sufi practice should try to overcome any physical desires or any materialistic needs in order to strengthen his inner power, the power of heart. It is the task of religious sciences to teach man to attain that goal⁽¹⁶⁾.

It is not difficult to realize that every thing in Islamic religion has been turned upside-down. The social function turned to be personal solution, the living world, this life, is a mask or a dream that should be removed or interpreted. Man, "God's vicegerent on earth" ⁽¹⁷⁾ turned to be a monk who should devote himself absolutely to the life-after. His Ihya', as Al-Ghazālī says, might seem to be organized and arranged like those of jurisprudence, but this is only the appearance while the content is different⁽¹⁸⁾.

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Al Ghazālī's interpretation of Islam concentrates mainly on the first stage of revelation, i.e. the Makki Qur'anic verses. These are the Qur'anic verses which deal mostly with specific subjects such as the existence of God and His Unity, the destruction of the world and eschato-

logy⁽¹⁹⁾. As for the second stage of revelation, i.e. Madanī Qur'anic verses, Al-Ghazālī either reinterprets them to convey his orientation towards the life-after or makes them only teachings that control the behaviour of the Muslim in this life in order to attain happiness in the other life.

When the Qur'an says, for example, "But seek, with the (wealth) which God has bestowed on thee, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget thy portion in this world" ⁽²⁰⁾, Al-Ghazālī interprets the "portion in this world" as the portion that leads the Muslim to be saved in the life after⁽²¹⁾. It is obvious that Al-Ghazālī ignores the real meaning of the verse which acquires a balance of attention and consideration between this life and the life-after. He, on the other hand, ignores that the context of the Sūrah indicates that this verse was a part of an advice to a very rich man of Moses' contemporaries, so the meaning should be applied properly to those who does not pay any attention to religious matters. If the verse addresses the rich people asking them not to forget their portion of this world, what should the advice be to the poor people?

Since Al-Ghazālī has turned everything upside-down, including revelation itself, such a question is meaningless, because poverty is considered as a blessing from God, and the poorer a Muslim is the closer to God and to attain happiness in the life-after he is⁽²²⁾. Al-Ghazālī even turns the social institution of marriage to be a mere way of protecting the individual from committing sins⁽²³⁾. Its function in human life is not to preserve human spice, but rather to protect man from committing adultery. If man can resist his sexual desire, marriage is not necessary, because it might lead to involvement in worldly matters in order to meet marriage's responsibilities.

In this process of reinterpretation, Ta'wīl, Al-Ghazālī tries very hard to validate his own view of religion. If the life-after that counts, the concentration on revelation will be on one stage of revelation ignoring the other or reinterpreting it. But this process of Ta'wīl is not applied only to the linguistic text of the Qur'an, but it is also applicable to the Prophet's tradition as well as to any text whether linguistic or not; it is applicable to the text in the semiological sense. It could be applied of course to dreams and to actions as its usage in the Qur'an suggests⁽²⁴⁾. Since this life is only a bridge to the other life, it is likely that its meaning and significance lies behind its appearances; the relationship between this life and the life-after is conceived in terms of image and meaning. They are like a dream which has visionary scenes that hide the real significance of the dream. To understand a dream is to interpret the images into meaning, or in other words to cross from the level of form and image to the level of ideas and meaning. The process of crossing,

whether applied to this world in relation to the other world or applied to a dream, is nothing but a process of Ta'wil.

This world, according to Al-Ghazālī, is the world of forms and images while the life-after is a world of meaning and ideas,⁽²⁵⁾ once again it is the physical world as opposed to the spiritual world. The truth lies there in the other spiritual world, and man may attain that truth if he abandons this world of forms and images and purifies his heart to enable it to reflect the spiritual truth. But this truth could not be easily attained because the Sufi has to go through a very hard struggle against his soul and desires. It is in the inside struggle, instead of the outside social and political struggle, that the Sufi should gain victory. It is a struggle between Angelic aspects and Satanic aspects inside man who becomes the battle field in Al-Ghazālī's system.

In this connection, Al-Ghazālī does not hesitate to impose his life-after orientation over the period of the Prophet and his companions. Since this period is conceived as the purest and the most glorious period of Islam, Al-Ghazālī explains that the reason behind that was that the early Muslims, blessed by being the prophet's contemporaries and witnesses of revelation, could easily gain victory over Satan's seductions. But the later the period is the weaker Muslims are in resisting the evil⁽²⁶⁾. It is here that we also realize the process of "Ta'wil" working in understanding Islamic history. The outside social and political struggle turned to be an inside personal struggle.

The term "Jihad" then is not any more the sacred war against any forces that stand against man's welfare and liberty, it is rather a war against the devil that resides inside man; it is a spiritual internal struggle and war. It is the victory in this war that is more important for a Muslim to attain the truth and to be saved accordingly. If man succeeds in purifying his heart he is elevated to the rank of Angels in the spiritual world; if he fails and follows his desires and materialistic demands, he is worse than an animal. The two choices are available to man, and it is up to his strength in this internal war to gain any. Being victorious and elevated to the spiritual world will make the Muslim able to understand and interpret revelation properly.

The purification of the heart is then the aim and the end because, if abolished, it will reflect clearly the truth like a mirror. It is important here to have Al-Ghazālī own words explaining the importance of heart purification and of "Ta'wil" also. He quotes what is believed to be a prophetic tradition which says "Angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog", and, using the Ta'wil process, he interprets it as "The light of knowledge will not be reflected on an

unpurified heart". According to him, this interpretation of the Ḥadith does not violate the literal meaning of its words, because the two meanings, i.e., the literal and the symbolic, can be related to each other by means of analogy, in which the light of knowledge stands for Angels because Angels are the carriers of knowledge and truth to the the heart. The heart, on the other hand, stands for the house because the heart is the place where Angels reside if cleaned and purified. The dog signifies all the bad qualities and attributes that should be removed from the heart, otherwise it will be locked against God's light of knowledge.

This symbolic interpretation, or allegorical meaning, does not contradict the literal meaning of the Ḥadith; it rather sustains it. The relationship between the two levels of meaning, i.e. the literal and the allegorical, is exactly the same relationship between image and meaning in a dream, and the interpreter should cross the literal meaning, in which images signify, to the allegorical meaning. The images in this Ḥadith are the Angels, the house, and the dog, every of which should have a hidden internal meaning as has been explained.

Al-Ghazālī goes on to relate the literal meaning, the forms and images, to this life, while the allegorical or symbolic meaning is related to the life-after. In this world, the ideas and meanings are hidden in the images and forms, while the life-after has the images and forms hidden in meanings and ideas⁽²⁷⁾. If death means transfer from physical form to spiritual existence, it means also the attaining of the real and plain truth. Here another Ḥadith could be quoted "people are sleeping; when they die, they are awaked". But the Sufi who purifies his heart for the light of knowledge that is revealed by God is not sleeping; he is waked up by his purification of heart, therefore, he is able to cross the world of forms and images to attain the hidden meaning; in other words he is capable of Ta'wīl.

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Since the hidden meaning is the real as the life-after is the real, and since Ta'wīl is confined to those who are capable of complete heart purification, the question might be raised: what about ordinary people; how are they going to be saved? Al-Ghazālī, like all other Sufis, will not hesitate to distinct the Sufi as an elite from ordinary peoples of the same society. Once again the social class division of people has been transferred in the Sufi's system to a division of learned and not learned, Khāṣṣah and 'Āammah, the first are of course superior to the later in every aspect⁽²⁸⁾. Ta'wīl, therefore, should not be made available to the later because their minds can

not comprehend any interpretation but the literal. Allegorical or symbolic interpretation might even, if revealed to them, distort their beliefs and thus affect badly their fate⁽²⁹⁾.

According to this division of people, we should expect to have two kinds of interpretation, two kinds of religion and belief. In fact we have. Some times we find it absolutely impossible to reconcile the two systems of thought in Al-Ghazālī's writings, which have been explained always according to what was believed to be his effort to reconcile Sufism and Ash'arism in one system. It seems to me, however, that he intended to introduce the two systems of thought as two separated entities, one is for the non learned people, i.e., the Ash'arite's system, and the other is for the learned people of purifican and Ta'wil⁽³⁰⁾.

In this respect we can understand and explain most of the contradictions found in Al-Ghazālī's writings. One of these contradictions, may be the most important and striking, is that to be found in his interpretation of the most important Islamic pillar, i.e. the Unity of God, Tawḥīd, which has two meanings. The first meaning is that of the 'Ash'arite system, while the second and the most important, because it is the real, is that of the Sufi which is based on Ta'wil. As for the first, Al-Ghazālī holds the idea of the literal meaning of revelation concerning so many theological problems such as the unity of God's essence and attributes, God's vision in the life-after, God's speech, God's will and human will, and lastly all the verses and traditions concerning eschatology⁽³¹⁾.

In all these problems, Al-Ghazālī defends very strongly the literal meaning. His argumentation is based on the simple idea of "possibility", since something is possible, we should avoid any kind of Ta'wil. This idea of possibility relies, as he clearly states, on intellectual norms of necessity, possibility and impossibility⁽³²⁾. In some place else, Al-Ghazālī severely attacks the intellect as being invalid in attaining the meaning of religion because it has its limitation and boundaries. The function of the intellect is only to verify prophecy and thus to maintain authenticity of revelation⁽³³⁾.

Tawḥīd in the second meaning, that of learned people of Ta'wil, is to conceive of God as The One Who causes all the causes to be causes; without his support, they have no effect whatsoever because they are only his means of action⁽³⁴⁾. The true meaning of Tawḥīd is to believe that these causes are only mediators, therefore, they should not be hated if they cause bad effects, nor be thanked if they cause good effects. They are like the hand or the pen in writing, so

whether the written is good or bad, it is not due to the pen or to the hand, it is due to the writer; so things should be related directly to God's will and action without realizing the causes. If we realize causes and pay attention to them, we are then in the first meaning of Tawḥīd.

This meaning of Tawḥīd just explained led Al-Ghazālī to so many contradictory elements in his system of thought, each of which has some dangerous social and political implications. The first to start with is that this conception of Tawḥīd leads automatically to some sort of Pantheism, Waḥdat al-Wujūd, which found its complete expression in the mystical system of Ibn 'Arabī just one century after Al-Ghazālī's death⁽³⁵⁾. Al-Ghazālī insistence that everything should be related directly to God leads him sometimes to maintain that God is the only real existence⁽³⁶⁾. We have also to mention that he is very cautious in the way he expresses such idea, but most of these expressions surely paved the way for the philosophy of Waḥdat al-Wujūd. This fact might make us reconsider the highly accepted differentiation between what is believed to be the orthodoxical, Sunni, Sufism and the philosophical Sufism.

The second implication of that conception of Tawḥīd is that since everything is related to God, and any direct cause should not be considered, it is likely to accept with content, riḍā, everything happens in personal life or in social life, no matter how bad or unfair that thing is. This idea of content is very dangerous if applied to social and political life. In social life, a criminal should not be punished or executed for what he or she commits. In political life, the idea will be an excuse for any ruler or government because it will justify any unfair and unjust policy. In this connection, Al-Ghazālī, as was mentioned before, demands the loyalty of subjects to any ruler no matter how corrupted he is, since any opposition action could lead to social and political disturbance⁽³⁷⁾. Since social and political stability is the main concern of Al-Ghazālī, and since it is also the main concern of any political regime, it is no wonder that his books are, and were always, highly regarded by the official clerics all over the Islamic world.

The third and the most important implication is reflected in that attack Al-Ghazālī always makes against learning through books and teachers, i.e. through mediations. Although he defends the process of learning and teaching in his treatises on Baṭīni thought, and although he devotes one section of his Iḥyā' to teaching, he confines it to practical sciences, i.e., worldly sciences. Religious sciences should be attained only by God through purification of the heart. Al-Ghazālī condemns any learning that depends on books, and he even claims that the Prophet and his companions got their learning and education of religion not through books but through

imitating the Prophet on one hand and through meditation on the other hand. As for the Prophet, he got his learning through God, through revelation which was the result of his meditation⁽³⁸⁾. We don't have to remind Al-Ghazālī of any differences between his time and that of the Prophet and his companions because time movement, according to his system, brings about the worse not the best.

Since learning and teachings are denied in relation to religious sciences because the process involves mediators and causes, the only way to accomplish salvation, especially for ordinary people, is through imitation. Here, once again there is another dichotomy, i.e., of imitation and meditation, the first is for ordinary people and the second is for learned people of Ta'wil. If imitation is a primary level which might lead to performance of rituals and obedience of religious law, meditation will lead to attain the inner and real meaning of religion⁽³⁹⁾. If ordinary people is satisfied with imitation, the Sufi starts with imitation and by moving to meditation he attains a higher stage.

The conception of imitation, as opposed to that of meditation, leads Al-Ghazālī to a very strange and new projection of the personality of the Prophet Mohammad in Islamic culture. Instead of being the messenger of God who transmits and explains revelation as much as being an ordinary human being, The Prophet, in Al-Ghazālī's system is stereotyped so that his human aspect has been hardly realized or considered. It is, therefore, emphatically stated that the Prophet should be imitated in every detail of his actions and conduct no matter how trivial those details are⁽⁴⁰⁾.

Although Al-Ghazālī quotes so many Qur'anic verses to indicate the necessity of the imitation of the Prophet, he does not seem to have realized another Qur'anic verses that emphasize the human aspect of Mohammad. Since everything contains form or image and meaning or idea which is covered by the form or image, every action of the Prophet should contain a hidden meaning or idea⁽⁴¹⁾. From this prospective, religion has not only reduced to be a way of self salvation and deplored of its social function, but also this religious self-salvation has been reduced to be accomplished through imitation of the prophet in every detail of his life. Although Al-Ghazālī does not use such terms like salvation, the idea is very close to that of Christianity about salvation through Jesus Christ. The idea of salvation and incarnation was previously introduced in Sufism through Al-Hallajī, who was crucified about two centuries before the time of Al-Ghazālī, but our thinker is very cautious, so he quotes the Qur'anic verse which praises the Christians as the

closest and most intimate people to Muslims, because they include among them monks and priests,⁽⁴²⁾ to indicate that the life of monks and priests is the desirable religious life, because it is the only life that leads to the attainment of truth. Al-Ghazālī goes on to explain that the aim of Mohammad's mission and Islamic revelation is to lead people back to the way of God which has been deserted. What the Prophet said about Jihād as a substitute for priesthood in Islamic revelation is interpreted here to be the struggle against the soul and the devil⁽⁴³⁾.

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Meditation, as opposed to imitation, leads to a higher stage, that is of understanding and reinterpreting. Ta'wīl is the process through which the hidden meaning is discovered and revealed. But it is, in mysticism, not only an apparatus to reconcile with the text, it is rather a process of projecting and understanding. Since Sufism is a personal inner experience, the duality of subject-object on the level of epistemology no longer exists. The object, whether is an action or a thing or a text, is internalized within the organ of knowledge, the heart, because knowledge springs off from inside it not from any outside relation with the object. It springs off as clean purified water comes out of a deep well which, if compared with the water of rain which gathers in a hole on the ground, signifies the Sufi knowledge in comparison to theological or philosophical knowledge attained by the intellect only⁽⁴⁴⁾. What the heart really reveals, if purified, is the inner light that makes the process of Ta'wīl possible.

If purification of the heart leads to enlightenment which leads to Ta'wīl, it is the Ta'wīl process that makes purification of the heart the highest stage of the religious ritual of purification. According to Al-Ghazālī, the purification ritual includes four stages, every of which leads to a specific level of knowledge, and therefore leads to a specific level of meaning. The first stage of purification is that of the body from materialistic seen dirt. The second stage is that of the body members of committing any sin. The third is the purification of the heart of bad feelings and ideas and washing it up of bad attributes. The fourth and the highest is the purification of the "secret", i.e., the spirit which resides in the heart. The purification of the spirit is to clean it up of any worldly thing, thus, it will be only devoted to God. This is the stage of purification attained by the Prophets which enabled them to receive the light of knowledge directly from God⁽⁴⁵⁾.

This last stage of purification is the most important one. In favour of this stage, Al-Ghazālī

reduces the first stage of body purification to the degree that he claims that the Prophet and his companions did not bother that much about it as the contemporaries of his time did. Their most concern, according to Al-Ghazālī, was about the other higher stages of purification because they were peoples of Bāṭin not of Zāhir; they were peoples of the life-after not of this life⁽⁴⁶⁾. The ritual of fasting, Ṣiyam, also is divided to the same four stages⁽⁴⁷⁾.

It is worth mentioning here that these stages of purification and fasting and of other rituals, in the Sufi interpretation of religion, can be compared to the conception of purification in Buddhism with its importance to the inner life of the Buddhist monks. Although Al-Ghazālī attacks the jurists because they pay much attention to such trivial details in human life, he himself indulges to discuss very small details concerning the ritual of purification as the Prophet Muhammad used to practice it. He, however, justifies his indulgence on the ground that every movement of the Prophet, however trivial it might seem on the level of zāhir, has a hidden-bāṭin meaning and significance. It is, therefore, that every movement in the human life should be measured according to its inner meaning, otherwise the human action will be as meaningless as that of an animal⁽⁴⁸⁾. This conception also can be compared to that of “economy of force” and that of “observance of propriety” in the behaviour of the Samurai in the Japanese tradition, which has its roots in the Indian and the Chinese philosophies, and which is still realized in the Japanese way of behaviour and conduct in present days⁽⁴⁹⁾.

These four stages of purification on the ritual level are parallel and equal to the four levels of meaning which can be revealed of a text or a thing or an action. The discovery of these four stages of purification is in fact a process of Ta’wīl itself, through which four meanings have been revealed. It is like a closed circle we don’t know for sure where the starting point is; purification leads to understanding, i.e., to Ta’wīl, which also leads to more understanding of the stages of purification itself.

The first stage of purification, i.e., of the body from physical dirt, will lead to attain the literal meaning of the subject under consideration. This, therefore, will lead to another stage of purification, to the second stage of purifying the body members of committing any kind of sin, which leads, in its turn, to uncover the second level of meaning of the subject, i.e., the Bāṭin meaning. The third level of meaning, that of Ḥad, can only be attained after the third stage of purification is practiced, i.e., the stage of purifying the heart of all bad attributes. Moving to the fourth stage of purification, i.e., of the spirit of everything but God, which is the highest,

will lead to uncover the highest level of meaning, i.e., of Maṭla' ⁽⁵⁰⁾.

The heart is like a mirror, the more polished and cleaned the more clear it would reflect things. The purification of dirt is the ritual process through which it is cleaned, and knowledge, therefore, comes out of it like an image is reflected clearly on the surface of a very shining mirror⁽⁵¹⁾. When truth is revealed to the heart, the Sufi can comprehend and accordingly interpret. But the ability of comprehension and interpretation differs from person to person according to everyone's stage of purification. People, therefore, differ according to the level of meaning they are able to attain, but few who are able to attain the highest level, those are the people of fanā'.

— 6 —

The process of Ta'wīl is applied also, in the Sufi system, to secular texts, especially poetic texts, as well as to religious texts. Sufis, however, do not refer to the process applied to poetry as Ta'wīl; they instead use the term samā', which literally means "hearing", to convey a process of comprehension and interpretation. The term "samā'" also means the hearing of poetry recited or sung by a beautiful human voice with musical instruments accompanying. It is supposed to evoke the inner emotions of the participant, and thus to help him expressing them. But Al-Ghazālī has first to defend the validity of samā' against the jurists who calim its prohibition. In this defence, it seems that Al-Ghazālī holds great consideration and respect for poetry and musical arts, but we have to stay away of such conclusion. Samā' was prohibited by jurists because they identified it as "amusement" and "past time", but Al-Ghazālī's defence is based on the nonexistence of any specific text in revelation which conveys its prohibition⁽⁵²⁾. Samā', according to him, is not prohibited as long as it does not involve any prohibited action like drinking wine or enjoying women's presence⁽⁵³⁾.

In this connection, Al-Ghazālī numerates seven ways of samā' which are allowed and not forbidden, of which the highest, and the most significant, is that of the Sufi who attained the highest degree of knowledge and thus sees nothing but God and hears nothing but from God⁽⁵⁴⁾. This highest level of samā' is that which counts, because the hearing from God means realizing the real meaning of what is heard, the real meaning which conveys the truth hidden in words and sounds.

It is not only revelation that conveys truth, but any text also can convey truth if it is interpreted through the Sufi experience. Since the Sufi experience is personal, the interpretation of a text will vary according to the Sufi's personal level of knowledge. Like the four stages of purification which apply to four levels of interpretation and meaning in the process of Ta'wil, The process of samā' also involves four kinds, and every kind applies to a specific level of meaning of the text heard as follow:

The first kind of samā' is that of ordinary people who only enjoy musical rhythms without being aware of the text recited, thus, they understand nothing. This kind is the lowest because it is enjoyed by animals as such. The enjoyment of such kind of samā' is attainable by any living being because it depends on life only. It is not difficult for us to compare this kind of samā' to the first stage of purification.

The second kind of samā' is that of understanding the text, but the meaning is applied only to a beloved woman, whether real or imagined. This is the samā' of the people of desires and worldly concerns whose hearts are not purified enough. In this kind of samā', there is understanding of the meaning, and there is also a degree of Ta'wil, but a degree which Al-Ghazālī condemns as an interpretation meant only to satisfy personal opinion and desire. So, whether the text concerned is the revelation or poetry, this kind of Ta'wil or samā' is prohibited⁽⁵⁵⁾.

The third kind of samā' is that of the Sufi who is in the first stages of his practice. It means that his state of knowledge is not stable because he is gradually moving from state to state in accordance with his stage of practice⁽⁵⁶⁾. In this kind of samā', the meaning which poetry conveys to the Sufi varies according to his own state, because these stages and states of the Sufi experience are always in mutual interaction, i.e., a specific stage of practice leads to a specific state of knowledge, according to which the Sufi moves to another stage of practice etc.. Al-Ghazālī states that the meaning which is conveyed to the heart of the Sufi does not necessarily be close to the meaning which was originally intended by the poet in composing his poem, because any discourse has so many variations of meaning. These variety or multiplicity of meaning is what makes it possible for the Sufi to apply the poem to his state. This process is termed as "tanzil" which means revelation also. It is then that the Sufi reveals, by samā', what is hidden in his heart and applies it to poetry⁽⁵⁷⁾.

The fourth kind of samā' and the highest is that of the Sufi who fulfilled all stages and states and

left them behind to be unified with truth. This is the fanā' state where all dichotomies disappear including that of the subject-object. In this kind of samā', nothing is realized or considered but God; He is the Speaker and the Listener. The Sufi in this samā' is like the women who cut their hands instead of the apples when they saw Joseph's very beautiful face⁽⁵⁸⁾. It means that he realizes nothing but God, he even does not realize the process of realization itself, because he is completely absorbed in the scene. It is in this kind of samā' that everything, words, sounds, or movements are from God, the only existing reality as Al-Ghazālī states it⁽⁵⁹⁾.

It is worth noting that not all genres of poetry can be subject to samā', it is rather love poetry which expresses feelings and emotions of the heart. It, therefore, helps the Sufi to reveal into it his own feelings and emotions, since the Sufi experience is also based on love⁽⁶⁰⁾.

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It seems that Al-Ghazālī, unlike other Sufis, hesitates to apply the conception of multiplicity of meaning to the Qur'an as he applies it to poetry. If poetry is subject to tanzīl, the Qur'an is only subject to Ta'wīl with its four limited levels of meanings which can not be compared to the infinite levels of meaning involved in tanzīl. In order to defend this view, Al-Ghazālī has to compare man's discourse to God's words, and in this comparison the inconsistency and the contradictions of his system is clearly revealed. First of all, the Qur'an, as he says, does not apply to the different states of man, therefore, it is not appropriate to interpret it according to any specific state. The Qur'an is intended to be a model for all peoples to follow, not to be subject to personal interpretation. It is here we are listening to one of the jurists whom Al-Ghazālī attacks very severely; it is the orthodox view that he refuses to accept because it fixes the meaning of the Qur'an⁽⁶¹⁾. He, however, tries to apply the process of samā' to some verses of the Qur'an though it is very a poor interpretation⁽⁶²⁾.

The second difference between God's words and poetry is that the Qur'an is well known text which is always read and heard. It is a text to which all Muslims are used, and with which they are very familiar, which means that it is very difficult to apply new meanings to it. Poetry, on the other hand, is always new and fresh, and so able to affect the heart and evoke feelings and emotions. We need not to comment on such a view which contradicts both orthodox and mystical views as well as theological and philosophical views concerning the Qur'an.

The third distinction Al-Ghazālī mentions is that of the metrical and rhythematical nature of poetry which he thinks has a special effect on the heart⁽⁶³⁾. This idea would have been a real contribution to the field of literary criticism if it had been elaborated, but it is only mentioned as an argument to defend the process of samā' as applied to poetry, which was a practice already settled long before Al-Ghazālī's time. Had he elaborated the idea of the effect of meter and rhythm over the heart, he would have realized that the Qur'an has its own kind of rhythm which has been referred to in almost every commentary of the Qur'an. The distinction between poetry and the Qur'an in favour of the last was established before Al-Ghazālī.

Abdul-Quāhir al-Jurjāni, who defended the study of poetry as the only way to discover the i'jāz of the Qur'an, found himself obliged not to consider rhythm and meter as essential parts of poetry⁽⁶⁴⁾. Although Al-Ghazālī seems to be going the opposite way of his predecessors, i.e., defending poetry in comparison to the Qur'an, he considers poetry as one of the unnecessary subjects to study or to learn because it is not one of the religious sciences⁽⁶⁵⁾.

The fourth distinction is that of what Al-Ghazālī believes to be the liberty one has in reciting poetry in terms of punctuation. The Qur'an, as he supposes, should be recited and punctuated according to certain specific fixed rules, and any violation of these rules is prohibited. Since punctuation affects the meaning and changes it sometimes, it is poetry then that should be subject to the process of samā', not the Qur'an⁽⁶⁶⁾. It seems very clear in this point how for Al-Ghazālī is from the real nature of the Qur'an in specific and of any linguistic text in general. Although any text has a fixed word-order, its interpretation might vary according to the reader's punctuation and his grammatical articulation of the word-order. As for the Qur'an, the possibilities of its punctuation and of the grammatical articulation of its word-order are infinite in some verses. Good examples of this are the first verses of the second Surah and that of the seventh verse of the third Surah.

In the fifth distinction, Al-Ghazālī moves to discuss the effect of music which can accompany the recitation of poetry and which is prohibited to accompany the recitation of the Qur'an. Al-Ghazālī believes that the rhythm and melody created by musical instruments add to the effect of poetry over the heart, and thus help to evoke more emotions to be expressed. Because people are used to correlate music with entertainment and past-time, God's words should be glorified of such abuse⁽⁶⁷⁾.

As for the sixth reason, for not applying *samā'* to the Qur'an, he says that if a poem or a poetic verse is not affecting the heart, the reciter can change the poem and recite a more effective one according to the listeners' request, a process which is inappropriate to be applied to the Qur'an. Al-Ghazālī goes on to explain that the Qur'an contains different subjects, each of which fits a specific state of the human heart, i.e., the verses which deal with the subject of God's mercy fit the state of fear, while those which deal with the subject of God's punishment fit only the state of imperiousness. With the Qur'an, nothing can be omitted, and it is even not accepted to ask the reciter to change the verses recited. Once more, Al-Ghazālī mentions the liberty of *tanzīl* as opposed to the restrictions of *Ta'wīl*; *tanzīl* means to apply poetry and its meaning to the personal Sufi's state of the heart, while *Ta'wīl* is confined to the four levels of meaning mentioned before and is not a matter of free personal interpretation. Since the Qur'an is the expression of God's intention, it should be understood according to certain specific linguistic, grammatical, and rhetorical rules. Having these rules applied, the Sufi might search for other hidden levels of meaning which should not violate the first literal or metaphorical meaning. With poetry, on the otherhand, it has been mentioned before that the Sufi does not have to consider the literal meaning intended by the poet⁽⁶⁸⁾.

All these distinctions between God's words and man's discourse lead Al-Ghazālī automatically to emphasize the theological conception of the absolute distinction between God and Man in all aspects, that leaves nothing in common, a conception which contradicts completely the Sufi system. The Sufi system is based on the idea that God created man on His own Image, which opens the door to the mystical experience of knowing and unifying with the Attributes of God, and, therefore, makes the process of *Ta'wīl* possible. Al-Ghazālī, however, maintains the Ash'arait's conception of the Qur'an as the Eternal Attribute of God, a conception which leads him to say that it is not accessible to man⁽⁶⁹⁾.

Although his aim was only to maintain the validity of *samā'*, he almost destroyed any possibility of understanding the Qur'an, not to mention the application of the *Ta'wīl* process to it. It is a conclusion Al-Ghazālī will not accept because he did not realize the contradictory conceptions and ideas he insisted on holding together, that of Ash'arait's theology and that of Sufism. While the later is an internal experience that enables man attain the truth by the inner light of heart casted to him by God, the first is a highly institutionalized interpretation of religion. To hold them together is in fact to try to have fried ice.

It seems that Al-Ghazālī's personal crisis, which he thought he solved by adopting the Sufi path, did not reach an end, for he choose a specific Sufi solution, i.e., to escape finding any real solution but giving up the world of social and political struggle in favour of self-struggle for purification and self-salvation. It was in fact an ego-centric solution that both reduces people to be neither capable of attaining truth nor able to understand revelation, and makes few others the learned men who attain truth and understand revelation. This division of people is the only justification of all Al-Ghazālī's contradictions.

God spoke to man through the Prophet to make man's life better, to enable him carry out his mission as God's vicegerent on earth. In this connection, the Qur'an argues man and even persuades him to learn and obtain all the kinds of sciences needed for him to establish the society of God, which is based on justice, equality and liberty. Any interpretation theory of revelation should have this aim as its basic priority.

نظرية التأويل عند الغزالي

للدكتور نصر أبو زيد

تكتسب دراسة فكر الامام الغزالي أهميتها من حقيقة أنه مفكر تجاوز اطار عصره وظروفه ليظل مؤثرا في فكرنا الديني الحديث تأثيرا ملموسا على جميع المستويات الرسمية والشعبية والاعلامية . وليس التركيز على "نظرية التأويل" عنده الا محاولة لاكتشاف المحاور الأساسية لفكره ، ومن ثم لدوره في الثقافة الاسلامية قديما وحديثا ، ذلك أن "التأويل" يكشف لنا عن طبيعة "المشروع" الفكري الذي حاول الغزالي تقديمه حلا لمعضلات الواقع الاسلامي في عصره كما فهمها وكما تعرضها كتاباته .

لقد كان مشروع الغزالي في جوهره "احياءيا" يفترض في الواقع "انحرافا" عن معايير "الشريعة" ، لذلك لا بد من العودة الى "المعنى الحقيقي" للدين . ولا تتأتى هذه العودة الا باحياء "علوم الدين" التي اندثرت تحت وطأة ازدهار "علوم الدنيا" . وليس هذا التعارض الحاد الذي نجده في فكر "الغزالي" بين "الدين" ، و"الدنيا" الا تعبيرا عن "أزمة الواقع" التي تجلت على كافة المستويات الاقتصادية والاجتماعية والسياسية ، والتي انتهت بسقوط

بغداد تحت أقدام المغول وتحول الخلافة الى مجرد رمز "دينى" تاركة قيادة شؤون "الدنيا" لمن يمتلك القوة والسلطة و"الشوكة" .

لم يكن الحل — أو بالأحرى "التأويل" — الذى قدمه الامام حلا فعليا للأزمة بقدر ما كان انحيازاً لأحد طرفى التعارض على حساب الطرف الآخر . ومن الطبيعى أن يكون "الدين" الذى انحاز له الغزالي "دينا" لا مكاناً للدنيا فيه . من هذا المنطلق يتم التركيز على الفترة الأولى من الوحي — القرآن المكي — على حساب القرآن المدنى . وحين يتعرض الغزالي لآيات التشريع المدنية يقوم بتأويلها لتناسب مفهومه للدين . فى هذا المفهوم تتحدد مهمة الزواج بشكل قاطع فى حماية الانسان من الزنا ، ولذلك يعنى الغزالي الانسان القوى الارادة القادر على التغلب على شهوته من تحمل عبء تبعات الزواج ، لأنها تبعات قد تؤدى الى استغراق الانسان فى شؤون الدنيا .

يتحول "الاسلام" فى "تأويل" الغزالي الى طريق للخلاص الفردى ، ويتحول تاريخ المسلمين الى صراع ضد "الشیطان" ووساوسه ، ويتحول مفهوم "الجهاد" الى جهاد النفس والشیطان . وتتحول معركة الصراع فى الواقع الى صراع داخلى بين الروح والنفس ، وتتركز غاية الوجود الانسانى فى الانتصار على النفس وتحقيق الخلاص الفردى . لذلك لا نعجب أن يختفى مفهوم "الأمة" من كتابات الغزالي بالمعنى الاجتماعى والسياسى لتحل محله شائعية "العامّة" و"الخاصة" ، أو "أهل الدنيا" و"أهل الآخرة" . والغريب أن يضع الغزالي "الفقهاء" فى عداد عامة أهل الدنيا، ويضع "علم الفقه" فى اطار علوم الدنيا .

هذا التعارض بين "الدنيا" و"الآخرة" يعبر عن نفسه فى فكر الغزالي وفى تأويله فى شكل عديد من التعارضات بين عالم الملك وعالم الملكوت ، بين الروح والجسد، بين الظاهر والباطن . . . الخ . ومن هذا المنطلق يتسع التأويل عند الغزالي ليكون آلية تطبيق على الأحكام الشرعية والفرائض والسُنن، كما تطبق على النصوص اللغوية خاصة القرآن والشعر . وفى كل هذه التأويلات يكون المعنى الباطنى العميق هو الحقيقة التى تتزيا برداء من المعنى الظاهر، تماما كما أن "الآخرة" هى الهدف و"الدنيا" طريق لها ومعبر يؤدى اليها . وادا كان الغزالي يقسم "الطهارة" الى مستويات أربعة تبدأ بالطهارة من النجس وتنتهى الى طهارة "السر"، فان هذه المستويات الأربعة تتوازي مع المستويات الأربعة فى تأويل النص الدينى — القرآن والحديث النبوى — التى تبدأ من "الظاهر" وتنتهى الى "المطلع" مروراً بمستوى "الباطن" و"الحد" . وهذه المستويات من المعنى والتأويل لا يصل اليها الا أهل الآخرة الذين تخلوا عن الدنيا وانتصروا فى صراعهم ضد الشيطان وضد النفس وضد الدنيا .

وإذا كان الغزالي في مفهومه للتأويل يقصره على هذه المستويات الأربعة التي توقف عندها القدماء، فإنه في مفهومه "للسماع" — تأويل الشعر — يجعل امكانيات المعنى امكانيات لانهائية ولا يقصرها على هذه المستويات الأربعة . وحين يقارن الغزالي بين القرآن والشعر من منظور مستويات المعنى يبدو كما لو كان في جانب الشعر على حساب القرآن، مخالفاً بذلك ما استقر عليه الوعي الديني من تفوق النص الديني على النصوص كافة تفوقاً يصل الى حد "الاعجاز" .

وليس هذا التناقض في فكر الغزالي وفي مفهومه للتأويل الا نتيجة لتناقض موقفه من الواقع وادراكه . ان الغزالي المفكر في دفاعه عن "العقل" ازاء "فضائح الباطنية" يقصر دور العقل على اثبات النبوة والوصول الى مصداقية الوحي ، وفي دفاعه عن حق الأمة في "الاختيار" ازاء مفهوم "الوراثة" عند الشيعة ، يقصر هذا الحق على "تأييد" الحاكم القائم بالأمر والممسك بزمام السلطة فعلاً . هذا المفكر يهاجم "الشيعة" لايمانهم بعصمة الامام، ولكنه حين يتحدث عن الخليفة العباسي يكاد ينسب اليه كل الصفات التي تنسبها الشيعة الى امامهم المعصوم . وهذا التناقض الفكري عبر عن نفسه بشكل بين في محاولة الغزالي الجمع بين الفهم "الأشعري" للدين ، وهو الفهم الذي تبنته السلطة السياسية ودافعت عنه ، وبين التفسير "الصوفي" الذي كان يمثل دين الفقراء والعامّة . ولكن هذين النسقين الفكريين ظلا منفصلين في نظام الغزالي، وفي انفصالهما — وتناقضهما — تكمن علة هذا التردد في فكر الغزالي وفي نظريته في التأويل .

ولعلنا بعد هذا العرض ندرک سر الانتشار الذي يحظى به فكر الغزالي وتحظى به كتبه في العالم الاسلامي، انه المفكر الذي يتمسك بالفهم الأشعري الذي يبرر كل شيء ، ومن خلاله تستطيع أي سلطة وأى نظام سياسي تبرير وجودهما وتقويته . وهو — في نفس الوقت — المفكر الذي يقدم للعامّة — دون احساس بالتناقض — فلسفة للهروب من الدنيا والاعتصام بالآخرة حيث تتحقق قيم العدالة والتكافؤ والسلام والحرية .

(1) The concept of revelation, Wahy, includes these four aspects, God, the Prophet, the Holy Spirit and the people. The Qur'anic verses that include the word signify the meaning of "communication" and "transmission" . See: Mu'jam Alfaz al-Qur'an, Vol. 2, pp. 831-833, 2nd edition, General Egyptian Book Organization, 1970. And Toshihiko Izutsu, Revelation As A Linguistic Concept in Islam, Studies in Medieval Thought, Vol. V, 1962, The Japanese Society of Medieval Philosophy.

(2) L. Zolondek, Book XX of Al-Ghazālī's Iḥyā' Ulūm Al-Dīn, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1963, introduction, p.1.

(3) Fazal-Ul-Karim, Imam Ghazali's Iḥyā' Ulam-Id-Din, The Book House, Pakistan, 1963, introduction, pp. 7-8.

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- (4) See *Ihya' 'Ulūm Al-Dīn*, the Arabic Text, Al-Ḥalabī's Library Cairo, Vol. I, pp. 5, 17-18, 19-20, 56.
- (5) *Al-Munquidh Min al-Ḍalal*, ed. Abdul-Ḥalīm Mahmūd, Modern Books Library, Cairo, 5th edition, 1358 H., p. 125.
- (6) *Faḍā'iḥ al-Baṭiniyyah*, ed. Abdul-Rahmān Badawī, The National Library for Publication, Cairo, 1964, p.3.
- (7) *Faḍā'iḥ*, pp. 80-83, 178-192. And See also *Munquidh*, pp. 112, 120.
- (8) See *Munquidh*, p. 138. And *Faḍā'iḥ*, p. 64. In *Ihya'*, Vol. I there are too many references to corruption in society almost in every aspect of life.
- (9) See *Ihya'*, Vol. I, P. 114.
- (10) Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, Macmillan International College Editions, 10th edition, 1970, p. 484.
- (11) pp. 176-182.
- (12) Vol. II, p. 138.
- (13) *Ihya'*, Vol. I, p. 333, Vol. II, p. 244.
- (14) *Ihya'*, Vol. I, p. 60 of the Arabic text, P. 74 of the English translation by Fazal-ul-Karim, op. cit.
- (15) See *Ihya'*, Vol. III, pp. 2-25.
- (16) *Ihya'*, Vol. I, pp. 20-50.
- (17) *Quran*, 11, 30.
- (18) *Ihya'*, Vol. I, p.6
- (19) Cf. Al-Suyūṭī, *Al'itquān fi Ulūm al-Qur'an*, Al-Ḥalabī Library, Cairo, 1951, The First Category, pp. 6-12.
- (20) *Al-Quasas Surā*, 67
- (21) *Ihya'*, Vol. II, pp. 84, 108
- (22) *Ihya'*, Vol. IV, PP. 185-200. Also see Vol. III, pp. 96-225
- (23) *Ibid*, Vol. II, pp. 20-36
- (24) See The *Surā of Joseph*, 6, 21, 36, 44-45, 100-101, where the meaning is to interpret dreams. *Sūra of Cave*, 78-82, where the meaning is to interpret actions. As for the interpretation of a linguistic text, *Kitab*, see *Sūra of 'Imran Family*, 7, of 'A' rāf, 52-53, and the *Sūra of Unis*, 37-39.
- (25) *Ihya'*, Vol. I, pp. 49, 81; Vol. II, p. 179.
- (26) *Ihya'*, Vol. I, pp. 81, 122-123.
- (27) *Ihya'* Vol. I, pp. 49-51, 81
- (28) *Ihya'* Vol. I, p. 101
- (29) *Ihya'* Vol. I, p. 58
- (30) *Ihya'*, Vol. I, pp. 70-71
- (31) *Ihya'*, Vol. I, pp. 107-114
- (32) *Faḍā'iḥ al-Baṭiniyyah*, pp. 53, 60-61, 117-119, 155
- (33) *Al-Munquidh*, p. 56
- (34) *Ihya'*, Vol. I, p. 74
- (35) See Nasr Abu Zaid, *The Philosophy of Hermeneutics: A study of Ibn Arabi's Hermeneutics of the Qur'an*, Beirut, Dar al-Tanwir, 1983, the First Section.
- (36) *Ihya'*, Vol. I, pp. 284, 289, Vol. II, pp. 278, 288
- (37) *Ihya'*, Vol. I, pp. 114-115
- (38) *Ihya'*, Vol. I, pp. 78-79
- (39) *Ihya'*, Vol. I, p. 94.
- (40) See Zolondek, p. 11

- (41) Iḥya', Vol. I, pp. 140-141
- (42) Surah of The Table, 82
- (43) Iḥya', Vol. I, p. 267
- (44) Iḥya', Vol. I, p. 86, Vol. II, the book of the wonders of the heart
- (45) Iḥya', Vol. I, pp. 125-126
- (46) Iḥya', Vol. I, pp. 25-26
- (47) Iḥya', Vol. I, p. 235
- (48) Iḥya', Vol. I, pp. 140-141
- (49) Inazo Nitobe, Bushido; The Soul of Japan, Tut Books, Tokyo, 7th edition, 1983, pp. 50-60
- (50) Iḥya', Vol. I, p. 170
- (51) Iḥya', Vol. II, p. 288
- (52) Iḥya', Vol. II, p. 268
- (53) Ibid, p. 282
- (54) Iḥya', Vol. II, pp. 273-277
- (55) Iḥya', Vol. I, p. 292. See also Fuda'ih, pp. 117-119
- (56) See Iḥya', Vol. IV, pp. 1-349, for detailed description of stages and states.
- (57) Iḥya', Vol. II, p. 289
- (58) The Surah of Joseph, 31
- (59) Iḥya', Vol. II, p. 288
- (60) Iḥya', Vol. II, p. 295
- (61) See Iḥya', Vol. II, pp. 245-256
- (62) Iḥya', Vol. II, p. 295
- (63) Iḥya', Vol. II, p. 296
- (64) Dalā'il al'i' jāz, The Commercial Library, Cairo, The introduction.
- (65) Iḥya', Vol. I, p. 35
- (66) Iḥya', Vol. II, p. 296
- (67) Iḥya', Vol. II, pp. 296-297
- (68) Iḥya', Vol. II, p. 297
- (69) Iḥya', Vol. II, p. 297.

[Postscript]

1. For the translation of the Qur'anic verses quoted, it has been depended on: Abdullah Yusif Ali's Text, Translation and Commentary, Dar al-Kitab al Mīsrī and Dar al-Kitab Allubnani, 3rd edition.

2. For the English translation of Al-Ghazālī's Iḥya', we could not depend on it except in one case, see note 14, because it is not a full translation as the translator himself says in his introduction:

“unnecessary arguments of different sects prevalent nearly one thousand years ago, some matters not needed at the present time and some sayings of some sages of less reputation have been omitted in the present English version”, p. 2.

3. It is my pleasant duty to acknowledge here that my colleague, Mr. Y. Takashina (Assistant Professor of Arabic Department) has helped me typewriting English and Arabic summaries, and seeing the typescript go through the press.