

## İMÂM AL-ĞHAZÂLÎ AND THE DISCIPLINE OF TAŞAWWUF

*İmam Gazzâlî ve Tasavvuf İlmi*

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### Abstract

This essay gives a brief overview about Ğhazâlî's main works and principal opinions in the field of taşawwuf. In order to provide a better understanding of his approach, special attention is devoted to its different elements, thereby focussing mainly on his ontological, epistemological and anthropological views in this context. It is important to emphasize that Ğhazâlî systematically places the 'ashq concept within the discipline of taşawwuf and Islamic thought. This love, in turn, takes place within the framework of sayr al-sulûk which describes the journey towards God, encompassing different stages and dimensions. Also, his impact on the Islamic world as well as his present-day importance are presented.

**Keywords:** al- Ğhazâlî, Taşawwuf, Ontology, Epistemology, Love

### Öz

Bu makale İmam Gazzâlî'nin tasavvuf alanındaki en önemli eser ve görüşlerini ele almaktadır. Onun bu tasavvurunu daha iyi anlayabilmenin yolu; ontolojik, epistemolojik ve antropolojik açıdan ne dediğini anlamakla

yakından alakalıdır. Bu bağlamda Gazzâlî'nin tasavvuf ilmi ve İslam düşüncesi içerisinde aşk kavramına nasıl bir anlam yüklediği önem taşımaktadır. Tasavvuf ilminde aşk anlayışı farklı manevi merhaleleri aşarak Allah'a ulaşma yolculuğu (seyru sulûk) kapsamında yer almaktadır. Ayrıca Gazzâlî'nin İslam alemi üzerindeki etkisi ve güncel değeri üzerinde de kısaca durulacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Gazzâlî, Tasavvuf, Ontoloji, Epistemoloji, Aşk

### Introduction

While Imâm al-Ghazâlî was the head of the Nizâmîya-Madrasa, he experienced a spiritual crisis which led him to leave his position and quit Baghdad by using the pretext of the Islamic pilgrimage (al-Ghazâlî, 1988, XXI). Actually, this was the starting point of his search for the truth and the practiced form of *taşawwuf*, i.e. the 'lived' form of spirituality. Throughout his journey, Ghazâlî analysed different groups of thought as well as various sciences, e.g. the Mutakallimûn, Bâtiniya, Philosophers and Şûfis, and finally decided to embrace *taşawwuf* (al-Ghazâlî, 1988, XXI; Oberman, 1921, 17-18; Watt, 1963a, 47-48; Bouman, 1990, 14-15). The most important factor in this decision was that he found this discipline to be empowering to reach God by the pleasure of *hâl* (momentary state), *dhawq* (pleasure) and 'ashq (love) (al-Ghazâlî, 1988, 41; Watt, 1963a: 135; Bouman, 1990, 31-32). According to Ghazâlî, only in this manner, the knowledge of God can be attained; he is convinced that without 'ashq there cannot be *mashq*, i.e. experience (Güneş, 2011, 93-95).

### 1. Ghazâlî's Contribution to *Taşawwuf*

Ghazâlî provided major contributions in the field of *taşawwuf* such as his works *Ihyâ 'ulûm al-Dîn*, *Mishkât al-'Anwâr* and *Minhâj al-Qâsidîn* (Güneş, 2011, 104-116). In his works, he synthesized the inner and outer dimensions of knowledge, thereby criticizing the restriction of Islam to the outer dimension by *fuqahâ'* (scholars of Islamic law) and the neglect of inner actions (Oberman, 1921, 93-95). Moreover, he emphasized the importance of inner works like intentions and presented these as more important than outer actions (al-Ghazâlî, 1988, XXI; Bouman, 1990, 34-35). Probably his biggest contribution is that with this approach and

interpretation, Ghazālī brought a close to the discussion about the relation between sharī‘a and taṣawwuf (Schimmel, 1995, 144; Oberman, 1921, 2; Watt, 1963a, 173-7; Anawati, 1983, 119-165). In concrete terms, he criticized the opinion that inner interpretations would conflict the outward dimension and demonstrated a harmonious relation between these two aspects, e.g. by comparing the sharī‘a to the outer shell of a walnut and taṣawwuf to its inner content. Moreover, he demonstrated the legitimacy of taṣawwuf by citing evidence from the Qur’ān and Sunna (al-Ghazālī, 2004, 3/22-24; Güneş, 2011, 240; Bouman, 1990, 159). By resolving the tension between the sharī‘a and taṣawwuf in his *Iḥyā*, Ghazālī showed that taṣawwuf is available for everyone and not only for specific groups (Güneş, 2011, 104-108; Bouman, 1990, 161; Anawati, 1983, 119-165).

Before Ghazālī, some Şūfis turned to agnostic perceptions of God and neglected the practical dimension which he criticized severely (al-Ghazālī, 2004, 3/58; Schimmel, 1995, 145-165; Güneş, 2011, 234; Anawati, 1983, 146; Watt, 1963b, 15; Grünebaum, 1963, 176; Shah, 2002, 134; Meier, 1999, 63; Arberry, 2001, 80). He also made a stand against Hellenistic and new-Platonian movements (Schimmel, 1995, 145). Overall, after Ghazālī, the Ahl al-sunna within Islam is noted to have accepted taṣawwuf to a great extent (al-Ghazālī, 2004, 3/58; Bouman, 1990, 43; Güneş, 2011, 236). Especially, ‘ulamā’ (scholars) and ṭarīqas/ṭuruq (spiritual orders) were influenced by his approach: After Ghazālī, many ‘ulamā’ turned to taṣawwuf as well as an increased demand for circles of “dhikr” and “samā’” occurred (Güneş, 2011, 246; Anawati, 1983, 119-165). By mentioning these highly important ṭarīqa-methods in his *Iḥyā*, Ghazālī, in fact, built a foundation of legitimacy for ṭuruq which employ these methods (Güneş, 2011, 246-249).

## 2. Ghazālī’s Ontological Concept

For understanding Ghazālī’s opinions in the field of taṣawwuf or Sufism, one has to primarily consider his ontological concept which mainly is defined by his perception of God as is the only true and eternal existence (al-Ghazālī, 1987, XXIV; Güneş, 2011, 130). In contrast to the Greek philosophical view of the eternity of the human soul (rūḥ), he assumes that this only applies to the divine soul. According to him, the human soul

only comes into existence together with the body (al-Ghazālī, 1987, XXIV; Güneş, 2011, 130). However, the soul also perishes with the death of the body and is only brought back to life through a new act of creation of God. This means that Ghazālī does not ascribe to the soul an independent existence, but one dependent on God (Güneş, 2011, 130).

He argues in this context by questioning that if the souls had been one joint soul before the creation of the bodies, how they eventually could have been separated. According to Ghazālī, it is inconceivable that the simple existence, which has neither mass nor measure, should become divisible. Furthermore, he argues that if the souls were one, all people would have to have the same knowledge or insights, especially since knowledge is one of the characteristics of the soul. For qualities that relate to the being itself also accompany it in every respect (al-Ghazālī, 1987, XXIV).

Ghazālī states that man was made out of two elements: The physical form (khalq) and the spiritual form (khuluq) (Dalkılıç, 2004, 230; Umaruddin, 1988, 137). The first is the body, which consists of earth or clay and is subject to natural laws, and the second is the spirit, i.e. the soul. He compares the relationship between these two elements to that between a craftsman and his tools (Güneş, 2011, 141; Bouman, 1990, 95). Moreover, Ghazālī explains – based on a prophetic saying that reads “God created man in his own image.” (al-Ghazālī, 1996a, 206; Gramlich, 1984, 654; Ritter, 1995, 505) – that only man is worthy to be a representative of God on earth because of his special closeness to Him. This similarity with God is not to be understood materially because the image of God in this context does and cannot refer to the physical form of man. It rather refers to the true essence of humans, namely the soul, because it is the soul that resembles God in its essence (dāt), its attributes (şifāt) and its actions (ʿafāl) (al-Ghazālī, 1996b, 356; Güneş, 2011, 141). In this sense, the soul is a metaphysical being that God breathes into every embryo. Since, on the other hand, the soul only acquires a personality in connection with a body, it is in a sense created after the body. Thus, the Ghazālīan view combines the thesis of the philosophers of the soul being something eternal, not something created, with the theologian thesis of the soul being something created in retrospect (al-Ghazālī, 1996b, 356; Dalkılıç, 2004, 228; Güneş, 2011, 141;

al-Ghazālī, 2003, 55). Ghazālī based his study of the soul on the teachings of Sufism. By defending his view that the soul is a metaphysical being, he opposed the Islamic theologians and by claiming that it is also something created, he opposed the Islamic philosophers (Dalkılıç, 2004, 231; Güneş, 2011, 142).

Moreover, Ghazālī's understanding of the soul is that it is the source of good (khayr), since mercy arises from it whereas the nafs and the body are conversely sources of evil. The bad is directed to the bodily instincts, in them desire (shahwa) is born. By nature, the soul always commands the good, while the instinctive soul always wants the bad. The desires (hawā') direct the body and the mind is ('aql) responsible for the well-being of the soul (rūḥ). The cognition (ma'rifa) is located between the desire and the mind, which are in a permanent state of struggle. The soul and the nafs are in a permanent state of struggle for the domination of the heart (qalb) (Güneş, 2011, 137; as-Sulamī, 1998, 308). If the nafs wins the battle, the gate to knowledge is closed to the heart. However, if the soul keeps the upper hand, the heart is enlightened by the 'light of God', which leads one to knowledge (Burckhardt, 1976, 26-27; Meier, 1957, 170). The soul remains after death and when it is purified, it possesses the true knowledge of things. The purification of the soul is done by directing it to knowledge/insight (Watt, 1963a, 37; Güneş, 2011, 137).

### 3. Ghazālī's Epistemological Concept

Directing the soul to knowledge or insight leads to the question how this ought to be done according to Ghazālī. Therefore, his epistemological concept shall be presented.

To this end, it is important to know that he states that the cognitive faculty is characteristic for humans and distinguishes them from animals, the free will is also based on this ability. According to al-Ghazālī, true knowledge is like a light given directly by God (al-Ghazālī, 1987, 54). He sees God as manifest or apparent in Himself and for Himself but in order to know Him one needs the light. Light in this context always means something that leads to the right path. Whoever turns away from this straight path is in darkness (al-Ghazālī, 1996c, 26). In the *Mishkāt*, Ghazālī treats

the contrast between light and darkness. The darkness of which he speaks is explained in the Qur'ân as follows: "Or [they are] like darkneses within an unfathomable sea which is covered by waves, upon which are waves, over which are clouds - darkneses, some of them upon others. When one puts out his hand [therein], he can hardly see it. And he to whom Allah has not granted light - for him there is no light." (Qur'ân, 24:40). Al-Ghazâlî understands this abyssal sea to be the world with its ominous dangers whereby the waves represent the dark dangers of the soul (al-Ghazâlî, 1996c, 27; Güneş, 2011, 143).

Ghazâlî represents two different ways to acquire knowledge. One is the human (insânî) and the other the divine (rabbânî) of which the first way is known to every rational person. It encompasses two different ways of learning: ta'allum, i.e. the external acquisition of knowledge, and tafakkur, which denotes a state of intense reflection that goes beyond the human limitations in ta'allum. This is superior to all scholars and philosophers, both in terms of the learning process as well as the sustainability of learning. If one calls science a seed, ta'allum would be the will to bear fruit from the potential of science, i.e. to implement it in reality. The scholar is like its grower and the learner is comparable to the earth sown with knowledge (Güneş, 2011, 148). According to Ghazâlî, one who strives for knowledge can acquire more knowledge in one hour of tafakkur than another in one year of ta'allum if the light of reason gains the upper hand over the senses. Moreover, he indicates that no one can learn everything. Therefore, after having acquired a basic grade of knowledge, one should recognize the relevant interrelations through tafakkur and obtain results (al-Ghazâlî, 2001, 67-68).

He sees divine knowledge as conveyable through revelation. Since the mediators are exclusively prophets, the knowledge in this context can be called prophetic knowledge ('ilm nabawî). Pious scholars are excluded from this kind of knowledge. Nevertheless, they are capable of kashf: Through inspiration (ilhâm) they can gain an inkling of otherwise hidden knowledge. Ghazâlî calls this knowledge al-'ilm al-ladunnî. Here again, he sets up two subgroups. Revelation (waḥy) means revelation of the hitherto unknown while ilhâm is its indication whereby in the latter no mediator between God and man is involved (al-Ghazâlî, 2001, 63-67; Güneş,

2011, 149). These types of knowledge cannot be attained by the mind, at least not securely: The reasoning of the mind about divine topics is considered speculative because this branch of knowledge lies beyond its capacity of comprehension (al-Ghazālī, 1988, 56-57; Bouman, 1990, 43; Güneş, 2011, 152-153).

Ghazālī defines the heart as the organ of kashf (insight) since it can only be attained by a purified and sound heart (Nicholson, 2002, 37; Güneş, 2011, 157). In order for the heart to be ready for kashf, it has to free itself from the veil of heedlessness which is to be done through the big jihād, i.e. the battle against one's self, and thereby opening the heart to discover spiritual secrets. Furthermore, he defines the heart as the place of belief (Schimmel, 2002, 22).

#### 4. Ghazālī's Anthropological views

Ghazālī states that man is created from two things: One is the outer shell, which is called the body and can be seen with the outer eye, whereas the other part is the inside, which can only be seen by the inner eye and is called heart (qalb), mind ('aql), soul or spirit (nafs). The inner being is considered the true being, while everything else follows it. This part can be called the heart as well (al-Ghazālī, 3/2004, 6; al-Ghazālī, 1996a, 37). When Ghazālī talks about the heart, he means the true essence of man, but not the biological organ (al-Ghazālī, 2004, 3/4). So, the true essence of man is that in which his perfection and nobility is composed (al-Ghazālī, 1996a, 50).

According to Ghazālī, man has several qualities that are united in his inner being: Partly those of cattle, partly of predators, partly of devils and partly of angels (al-Ghazālī, 2004, 3/14; al-Ghazālī, 1996a, 35). In this context, Ghazālī asks the question which of these qualities are part of the true substance of man and which are originally foreign to him (al-Ghazālī, 1996a, 35-36). Also, he asks how to know that he is to unfold the qualities of the angels within himself and not the other ones. His answer to this question is that this can be seen by realising that man represents something more noble than cattle and predators. Since everything for which there is an ideal perfection, which is the highest level it can reach, is created for that

level of perfection (al-Ghazālī, 1996a, 48-49). While man possesses animal qualities such as eating, drinking and reproduction, he also possesses reason with which he can recognize God and perceive God's wonderful work and free himself from the violence of anger and desire. This again is a quality of the angels and through these qualities man rules over the cattle and the beasts of prey and they are subservient to him together with all that is on earth (al-Ghazālī, 1996a, 48-49; Güneş, 2011, 176).

Ghazālī's idea of man's relationship with his Creator can be summarised as follows: Man should know himself and God, this world and the world beyond. He should preserve discipline and morals in daily life, replace bad character traits with good ones, he should love God and serve Him in a proper way. The origin of the love for God is the inner bond of man with God, which is the highest form of love. The path to God means giving up all worldly things and living in the remembrance of God. Man can get close to God and become like him but he cannot become one with God (Bock, 1991, 302-307; Güneş, 2011, 177).

### 5. The Concept of 'Ashq by Ghazālī

In Ghazālī's perspective, the reason for the entire existence lies in 'ashq which means that he views the whole creation as a manifestation of God's love (Takım, 2007, 119-123; Güneş, 2011, 178). This in turn, means that no existence could be without 'ashq which attributes to it an extreme importance. Therefore, the essence of taşawwuf lies in loving God and his creation and thus, loving creation for the sake of God. The love of God poses one of the most important maqāmāt (stations) of taşawwuf and the end station of the sayr al-sulūk (journey to God) (Smith, 1983; Güneş, 2011, 178). In order to develop this type of love, ma'rifa (the knowledge of God) is necessary which cannot be reached by the five senses only, one rather needs a sixth sense, which according to Ghazālī is qalb (heart), 'aql (mind) or nūr (light) (Bouman, 1990, 145; Umaruddin, 1988, 59).

According to Ghazālī, man needs love to recognize the true nature of things. Without this love a heart is sick. He believes in an interaction between body and soul and emphasizes with great emphasis the fact that the habits of one affect the habits of the other. The mental state of a person

affects his body and vice versa, regardless of what that state may be (Bouman, 1990, 145). For this reason he has studied love in all its facets and causes as well as from a psychological perspective.

For Ghazālī, the love of God represents the highest goal of a believing person. All stations are either the consequence or the preliminary stage of the love of God (Güneş, 2011, 178). It is considered the ultimate goal, after which there is no other goal that is not a consequence of it, such as longing, intimacy and contentment. Apart from that, one of the great merits of Ghazālī's in this respect is that he presented all the testimonies about love that have been collected so far in a systematic manner, based on Qur'ān and Sunna (Güneş, 2011, 178).

Ghazālī describes the love for God as follows:

Allāh has made 'ashq the last and highest of states (ḥāl). States like yearning, submission and contentment which emerge after reaching the state of 'ashq are no more than a result and the output of it. Since there is no state, e.g. hope, patience and zuhd, that would not be part of the branch of 'ashq (al-Ghazālī, 4/2004, 392; Gramlich, 1984, 631; Bouman, 1990, 257).

In this context, Ghazālī's most special quality is that he determines 'ashq in the light of Qur'ān and Sunna and places the understanding of 'ashq in a more systematic way than before in the discipline of taṣawwuf and Islamic thought (Güneş, 2011, 179).

For proving his concept of 'ashq from a Qur'ānic perspective, Ghazālī cites two verses:

O believers, whosoever of you turns from his religion, God will assuredly bring a people He loves, and who love Him, humble towards the believers, disdainful towards the unbelievers, men who struggle in the path of God, not fearing the reproach of any reproacher. That is God's bounty; He gives it unto whom He will; and God is All-embracing, All-knowing (Mā'ida, 54).

... Yet there be men who take to themselves compeers apart from God, loving them as God is loved; but those that believe love God more ardently. O if the evildoers might see, when they see the chastisement, that the power altogether belongs to God, and that God is terrible in chastisement (Baqara, 165).

## 6. Reasons and Signs of 'Ashq

In order to be able to imagine the love for God concretely, according to Ghazālī the prerequisites or the causes of love towards God should be known (Gramlich, 1984: 636). Therefore, Ghazālī identifies five reasons for 'ashq:

1. Love of oneself: Every being primarily loves its own self. This love for oneself means that in nature every being has a tendency to maintain its own existence and a reluctance to be destroyed. It is also due to the nature of the lover that he loves what is good for him. After all, he prefers his ego and what maintains his existential continuity? The one who has to endure too much pain in life loves death only if through it the suffering ceases. Just as the preservation of existence is loved so the perfection of existence is loved. Also, his possessions, his family and his friends are loved because they are a means of preserving and perfecting the existence (al-Ghazālī, 2004, 4/397-398; Gramlich, 1984, 636-639; al-Ghazālī, 1996a, 183-184).
2. Love of someone who benefits oneself: According to Ghazālī man is a servant of beneficence and it is due to the nature of the heart that they love who does them good and hate who harms them. The love of the benefactor is an unchangeable natural disposition. On closer inspection, this love also goes back to the first cause for the benefactor contributes by various means to the preservation and perfection of existence. Thus, the love of a benefactor changes according to the increase or decrease of the benefaction (al-Ghazālī, 2004, 4/398; Gramlich, 1984, 639; al-Ghazālī, 1996a, 186).
3. Love of something for the sake of its essence: This is true love. This includes the love of beauty, for all beauty is loved and for the sake of that beauty itself. No man will deny that beauty is loved by nature. Therefore, if it proves that God is beautiful, it is necessary to love him for his beauty and majesty (al-Ghazālī, 2004, 4/398; Gramlich, 1984, 640; al-Ghazālī, 1996a, 187).

4. Love of something for its beauty: In this context, one should abandon the idea of what people usually call beauty because it is not limited to what the eye perceives. According to Ghazālī, the truth is rather that the beauty of something consists in the fact that the perfection corresponding to its nature and possible to it appears. For every being there is a perfection corresponding to it but it does not have to be perceived exclusively with the senses. Bravery and piety are examples for this. Such qualities are perceived with the light of the inner eye. All these qualities can be objects of love and the one who bears them is loved by everyone who is able to perceive these qualities (al-Ghazālī, 2004, 4/399; Gramlich, 1984, 641; al-Ghazālī, 1996a, 189).
5. Love that develops from a secret bond between the lover and the beloved: Sometimes love develops between two people without beauty or a good to be gained being the cause but only as a result of the kinship of the spirits (al-Ghazālī, 2004, 4/401; Gramlich, 1984, 643; al-Ghazālī, 1996a, 192).

According to the respective rank of these five causes, ‘ashq acquires an according shape and in Ghazālī’s perspective these five reasons only unify in God. This in turn, justifies or shows that only God is worthy of true love (Ritter, 1995, 505; Umaruddin, 1988, 124).

Furthermore, Ghazālī states in his *Ihyā* that ‘ashq is characterized by the following ten signs (Güneş, 2011, 186):

1. The wish for meeting the beloved and entering into paradise which leads man to not being afraid of death because of his perception of it as a door to his beloved. A potential fear can only exist because of does not feel sufficiently prepared for the encounter with the creator yet.
2. Restraining one’s own desires for the sake of the beloved; this is accompanied by carrying out voluntary forms of worship in order to increase the closeness towards the creator.
3. The constant remembrance of God with the heart and tongue; Ghazālī equates the love for the creation with the love for the creator because it is His creation.
4. The occupation with constant and righteous worship and obedience to God in order to increase the closeness to him.
5. Not to sorrow about losing anything other than God but about every moment that is not marked by the remembrance of God.

6. The transformation of worship from being a burden into being pleasant.
7. Loving and hating for God and thereby showing mercy to the His loved ones and treating His enemies with rigour.
8. Being inbetween fear and hope; Ghazālī sees both elements as connected to each other and attributes to God the love for the one that serves him due to fear and love.
9. Protecting the love for God in one's heart and not to demonstrate it in public due to the risk it could evoke arrogance.
10. Being content with God (al-Ghazālī, 2004, 4/439-449; Gramlich, 1984, 695-713).

All of these are the signs and fruits of love defined by Ghazālī. In short, all the beauties of religion and all noble traits of character are considered to be the fruits of God's love. But what does not come from love is obedience to lust which is considered a bad trait (al-Ghazālī, 2004, 4/451; Gramlich, 1984, 716; Güneş, 2011, 187).

## 7. Ghazālī's Thoughts about Sayr as-Sulūk

The love for God that has been portrayed takes place within the so framework of sayr as-sulūk which means the journey of a seeker (sālik) to God under the supervision of a guiding teacher (murshid) which is understood as indicated by the prophetic transmission: "My statements are the shari'a, my behaviour is ṭarīqa, my state is ḥaqīqa (Schimmel, 1995, 148)." Again, Ghazālī employs his walnut-comparison in order to demonstrate that shari'a, ṭarīqa and ḥaqīqa are in each other and without one another cannot be achieved (Shah, 2002, 245-246).

In general, this journey of sayr al-sulūk is seen to encompass four dimensions or stages: Firstly, the sayr ilā Allāh which means the travel of man from his self to the self of God. Secondly, the sayr fī Allāh, i.e. the inner journey of someone which begins with a gnostic journey and ends in indefinable knowledge. The sayr ma'a Allāh is the third dimension in this context and determines the journey with God and the corresponding dissolution of one's existence in God's self. Lastly, the sayr 'an Allāh, i.e., the return from God to one's self takes place (İz, 2001, 171-172).

Throughout this journey different dimensions are experienced which are demonstrated in the *Iḥyā*. The first is defined as the dimension of (‘ālam

al-mulk) which requires being human and fulfilling every obligation of the religion. This is followed by the state (maqām) of the angels which someone can achieve by purifying the heart and nafs (evil soul). Thirdly, the state of jabarūt is experienced which for which the ma‘rifa Allāh (knowledge of God) has to be realized. Lastly, man experiences the state fanā’, i.e. the absolute dissolution of the servant in God (Güneş, 2011, 187; Shah, 2002, 293).

Within this journey Ghazālī differentiates between maqām and ḥāl. Thus, maqām defines the constant state of a person that results from his efforts whereas ḥāl describes a momentary state that results from God’s grace and mercy (al-Quṣhayrī, 2003, 57; Schimmel, 1995, 149; Nicholson, 2002, 72). In the Ghazālīan approach, there are three conditions for the particular maqāmāt: ‘ilm (knowledge), ḥāl (momentary spiritual state) and ‘amal (action) (Nicholson, 2002, 72-73; Gramlich, 1984, 5; Güneş, 2011, 211; Umaruddin, 1988, 175). Only by raising these to a certain level, the next respective maqām can be reached. Nonetheless, maqām and ḥāl cannot be differentiated in an absolute manner since with every maqām a ḥāl occurs: A momentary ḥāl turns into a constant maqām when it becomes continuous (Güneş, 2011, 212).

## 8. Ghazālī’s Impact on the Islamic World

Ghazālī’s impact on the Islamic geography was great; many ‘ulamā’ read his works and commented on them. For example, Ibn Rušhd wrote a commentary on his work about qiyās (Ibn Rušd, 1994) and Ibn al-Jawzī wrote a summary of the *Ihyā* (Badawī, 1977, 114; Güneş, 2011, 249). Also after his death, Ghazālī’s works and ideas were still a big source of inspiration for many works in the later period. Especially, the development of ṭuruq as well as their founders were highly influenced. To demonstrate this impact some examples are to be mentioned: ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī touches on the Ghazālīan thought in his books (Çınar, 2003, 151; Güneş, 2011, 249). ‘Aḥmad Rufā‘ī (570/1882) compares the seeker (murīd) and the spiritual guide (shayḥ) to a garden and a gardener which Ghazālī also does (Smith, 1983, 205; Güneş, 2011, 249). In his ‘Awārif, Suhrawardī, presents taṣawwuf in a systematic manner which shows that he was influenced by the *Ihyā* (Smith, 1983, 207-209; Güneş, 2011, 250). Ibn ‘Arabī presents Ghazālī as the leading figure and pioneer of taṣawwuf and his understanding of taṣawwuf evokes the content of the *Mishkāt*. Furthermore, his

understanding and epistemology of the 'the inner eye/the eye of the heart' evokes the Ghazālian approach as well (Smith, 1983, 211-213; Güneş, 2011, 250). Other thinkers who were highly influenced by his works are Mawlāna Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī, 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī (656/1258) and al-Subkī (771/1370) who told his students to read the *Iḥyā* frequently (Smith, 1983, 216; Güneş, 2011, 250).

### 9. Contemporary Importance of the Ghazālian Approach to Taşawwuf

The present-day or current importance of the Ghazālian approach to taşawwuf is mainly given in the comprehensive, holistic and balanced comprehension as well as in the methods of thought and knowledge it offers. In concrete terms, it provides a godly perspective on existence, knowledge and man and a multifaceted perspective on the relation between man and nature. Also, it protects from taking reductionist one-sided stands, thereby making it possible to grasp things in six ways. Furthermore, it builds and maintains the balance between the Islamic sciences as well as it is committed to resist against atheism, deism and other modern thoughts which Ghazālī judges to be dangerous. The Ghazālian approach aims at educating virtuous people as a counter reaction to the moral decline (Güneş, 2011, 256).

### 10. Concluding Remarks

First and foremost, Ghazālī is known and appreciated for having synthesised the inner and outer dimensions within the framework of Islam, i.e. the shari'ah and taşawwuf. As a consequence, he enhanced the legitimacy of taşawwuf in the Ahl al-sunna. Since his approach have received such enormous approval, it is important to take a closer look at its different elements.

The basis of his views is his ontological concept, which is characterised by the fact that he defines God as the only true and eternal existence and regards all other existences in dependence on it. In contrast to the views of the philosophers and theologians of the time, he sees the human soul as created and at the same time eternal. Nevertheless, man has a special significance in this context since he can act as His vicegerent on earth because of the similarity or connection of his soul with God.

Furthermore, the purification of the soul takes place by leading it to knowledge/insight. This in turn, leads to Ghazālī's epistemological concept: He distinguishes between two different forms of knowledge which are the human (insānī) and the the divine (rabbānī) knowledge. The first form is known to every rational person whereas the divine knowledge can only be mediated by prophets, who receive it by revelation, and indicated by pious scholars, who are able to gain an inkling of it by kashf. This knowledge cannot be attained by the mind, at least not securely: The reasoning of the mind about divine topics is considered speculative because this branch of knowledge lies beyond its capacity of comprehension.

Another central element of the Ghazālīan approach are his anthropological views. He states that man is created from two things: The outer body and the inner heart which summarises the heart (qalb), mind ('aql) and soul or spirit (nafs). The inner being is considered the true essence of man is that in which his perfection and nobility is composed. But in this inner being unites animalistic as well as angelic qualities of which man has to unfold the latter. Due to this quality man is legitimised to reign over all that is on earth. Furthermore, Ghazālī describes the relationship between God and man as defined by the love of man towards his creator that is due to the inner bond between them. Thus, man can come closer to God but cannot become like him.

Ghazālī describes this love in more detail by presenting it as the cause of existence or creation as a manifestation of divine love. To develop this love is considered the highest goal of man. It is important to emphasize that Ghazālī systematically places the 'ashq concept within the discipline of taṣawwuf and Islamic thought. Among other things, this can be seen in the fact that he lists various concrete reasons and signs for this love. This love, in turn, takes place within the framework of sayr al-sulūk which describes the journey towards God encompassing different stages and dimensions.

All in all, Ghazālī's approach had an enormous impact on the Islamic world: Numerous scholars read and commented on his works. Up until this day, he did not lose any of his significance because he provided a comprehensive, holistic and balanced comprehension approach to taṣawwuf as well as to the methods of thought and knowledge it offers.

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