AL-GHAZZALI'S CLASSIFICATION OF SEEKERS AFTER KNOWLEDGE

Basis of Classification

In the *Munqidh*, al-Ghazzālī divides the seekers after knowledge of his age into four classes, namely the *mutakallimūn*, the philosophers (*al-falāsifah*), Ta'līmites (*al-bāṭiniyah*, and the Sufis (*al-ṣufiyah*). The primary basis of the classification is methodological for he describes each intellectual school essentially in terms of its methodological claim to truth. He first conceived the idea of this methodological basis immediately following the resolution of his epistemological crisis. However, he did not put down that classification into writing until after he had completed his verification of the different methodological claims. In his view, the classification not only embraced the whole spectrum of Islamic epistemological thought, but exhausted all the possible avenues of knowledge open to man.[1]

Al-Ghazzālī claimed that his interest in the various classes of knowers was generated by his inner quest for the knowledge of the true reality of things. The highest of this knowledge, he says, is the knowledge of God.[2] Al-Ghazzālī excluded the jurists from the stream of seekers after knowledge of God. He recognized the jurists as the most important religious group from the point of view of the general welfare and goodness of the individual and the community in the life of the world.[3] The school of jurists as a whole could not be qualified as a class of seekers because they were not concerned with the knowledge of the true nature of things. There were individual jurists who sought after this kind of knowledge, but they did not do so as jurists. In relation to the path to God, the jurists are analogous to those who build and maintain houses of refuge and provide facilities along the way to Mecca to the pilgrimage."[4]

There is a similar fourfold classification of knowers by 'U Khayyām (d. 526/1131), al-Ghazzālī's older contempor Regardless of whether or not there was any influence of the one the other in relation to the classification,[6] it is significant that the thinkers share the idea of the methodological basis of classification and the view that the classification embraced the hierarchy of modes of knowing. For the two figures were of diffe intellectual perspectives and philosophical persuasions. Khay regarded himself as a Phythagorean[7] and a follower of philosophical school of Ibn Sīnā. He also described himself as a S But Pythagoreanism and Ibn Sīnā's Peripatetic philosophy under severe criticism from al-Ghazzālī. It seems that al-Ghaz and 'Umar Khayyām had adopted the same classification of know because of their common Sufi perspective. The Sufi perspecti thus presented as the most universal point of view that transcends comprehends all other points of view.[8]

8.2 Al-Ghazzālī's Views Concerning the Four Classes

I will now discuss al-Ghazzālī's treatment of each of the four cla of knowers. In this discussion, the emphasis is not on the doctrine each school, but rather on its epistemology and methodology.

8.2.1 The Mutakallimūn

Al-Ghazzālī's criticism of *kalām* is significant. For his authority that discipline was widely recognized. He had studied under greatest Ash'arite theologian of the day and mastered the work the most meticulous *mutakallimūn*. He himself became the lea theologian of his time with several excellent works on the subject his credit. In his description and criticism of the *mutakallimūn* Ghazzālī did not deal with the different schools of *kalām*.[9] W mainly attracted al-Ghazzālī was not the differences among t schools in matters of doctrine, but the common "methodolo stand" that they had adopted.

Al-Ghazzālī describes the *mutakallimūn* as those who cl themselves as men of independent reasoning and intellec speculation (*ahl al-ra'y wa'l-naẓar*).[10] This characterization of *mutakallimūn* as *ahl al-ra'y* was principally related to their gene

itive stand on the use of reason in understanding articles of faith. As a legal term in Islamic jurisprudence, *ra'y* connotes the use of son to produce a well-considered opinion or a sound judgement in l matters on the basis of explicit textual evidence. More precisely, term refers to the application of that method of reasoning called s (analogy) in connection with problems of law. According to Ibn ldūn, *kalām* borrowed this method of reasoning from *fiqh* and lied it to the domain of faith.[11]

There is some validity in the claim that the *mutakallimūn* were of sound reasoning if they are contrasted with those who had collectively called the *ahl al-taqlīd*.[12] These latter groups were posed to the use of reason in explaining religious beliefs. They demned rational discussion in matters of faith as innovation *ah*) and sin.[13]

Al-Ghazzālī approves of the aim of *kalām* and its role in society, ely the defense of the common religious beliefs of the community repelling errors and heresies and removing doubts and confusion ing to those beliefs." He even praised the *mutakallimūn*, ribing them as people who had been inspired by God "to mpion orthodoxy by a systematic discussion (*kalām*) designed to dose the deceptions introduced by the contriving innovators trary to traditional orthodoxy."[14] In *The Jewels of the Qur'ān*, al-zzālī claims that the science of *kalām* has its roots in the r'ān.[15]

However, al-Ghazzālī was highly critical of certain aspects of the thodology of *kalām*. He considers the methods of *kalām* to be ective both to satisfy his thirst for the knowledge of the reality of gs and to inflict intellectual defeat on the opponents of *kalām*. He tes:

> ....they [i.e., the *mutakallimūn*] relied on premises which they took over from their adversaries, being compelled to admit them either by uncritical accepance (*taqlīd*), or because of the Community's consensus (*ijma'*), or by simple acceptance deriving from the Qur'ān and the Traditions. Most of their polemic was devoted to bringing out the inconsistencies of their adversaries and criticizing them for the logically absurd consequences of what they conceded. This, however, is of little use in the case of one who admits nothing at all except the

philosophers. His portrayal of *kalām* as a discipline that had bec
influenced by *falsafah* was confirmed by later authorities
Shahrastānī, Maimonides, and Ibn Khaldūn.[17] Concerning prem
borrowed form the philosophers – on which the *mutakallimūn*
placed so much reliance in their demonstration of religious beli
al-Ghazzālī must have been referring to ideas and concepts relate
atomism. The doctrinal status of atomism within Ash'arite *kalām*
transformed by al-Bāqillānī from being a mere premise in suppor
certain religious beliefs[18] to being an essential part of the creed

Al-Ghazzālī criticizes the methodology of *kalām* from t
points of view. First, he criticizes *kalām* in his capacity a
mutakallim. In this capacity, we saw, he accepts the religious
intellectual perspective of that school,[20] and even affirms its nece
(*farḍ kifāyah*).[21] But he criticizes the inadequacy of
methodological tools to confront its intellectual opponents. Sec
he criticizes *kalām* from the point of view of a seeker after a di
spiritual experience of God and the inner reality of things.

According to al-Ghazzālī, the *mutakallimūn* were ortho
because they subordinated reason to revelation. But the use of rea
in *kalām* had not been exercized to the fullest extent possible. He
much scope for improvement in *kalām's* methodology. He was
against the borrowing of premises from the opponents of *kal*
What he was against was the uncritical acceptance of premises by
mutakallimūn. For example, the premises they used to demonstr
fundamental religious beliefs like the divine creation of the wo
were not at all primary and self-evident truths. Moreover, th
proofs involve tedious arguments.[22] Al-Ghazzālī criticized
contemporary *mutakallimūn* for being too closely bound in th
views to previous authorities in *kalām*, like al-Ash'arī and
Bāqillānī, even in matters relating to premises and proofs.[23]

Al-Ghazzālī found defects in the *mutakallimūn's* use
syllogism.[24] To remedy this defect, he wrote several works
Aristotelian logic in a manner that had not been attempted before

Ṭūsī was seen as advocating this new approach of *kalām*.[26]

From the point of view of his quest for a direct experience of God
for knowledge of the true nature of things, al-Ghazzālī sees
erent limitations in the methodology of *kalām*. As a science, *kalām*
oes not concentrate on the intuitive knowledge (*kashf*) of
ities."[27] He acknowledged the fact that some of his predecessors
ong the *mutakallimūn* had sought to defend orthodoxy "by the
dy of the true natures of things" like the study of substances and
cidents and their principles. However, their discussion of the
ject was not thoroughgoing, because "that was not the aim of their
n science."[28]

In al-Ghazzālī's view, the methodology of *kalām* was comprised
faith (*īmān*) and ratiocination tainted by false syllogism,[29] The
mises of *kalām* were mainly accepted on the basis of faith. For al-
hazzālī, faith implies a particular level of knowledge and certainty.
is of a lower grade than scientific knowledge (*'ilm*) based on
deictic demonstration (*al-burhān*), and much more so than
stical experience (*dhawq*).[30] At the level of faith, and even of
ocination, one does not know the truth directly or with
mediacy. In the *Mishkāt* al-Ghazzālī speaks of faith as a degree of
t and false syllogism as a veil of darkness. There, he identifies the
akallimūn with the best group "among those veiled by mixed light
darkness."[31]

Al-Ghazzālī accepts the fact that some people might find their
rst for knowledge and certitude quenched by the science of *kalām*.
as far as he is concerned, *kalām* could not deliver the certitude
he sought. Al-Ghazzālī seems to be asserting that the spiritual and
intellectual needs of man are not the same for all individuals.

2.2 The Philosophers

To establish himself as a respected critic of *falsafah*, al-Ghazzālī
lized that it was necessary and sufficient for him to claim that he
read and understood al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, for these two

thinkers were the most well-known Muslim philosophers.[23] The ex-
tent of his acquaintance with the philosophic works of the tw
thinkers could not yet be established. What is certain is that Ibn Sin
exercized a far greater influence upon him than did al-Fārābī.[33] I
appears that al-Ghazzālī was also familiar with some of the writing
or doctrines of other schools of Muslim philosophy. The Peripatetic
were not the only disciples of Greek learning among Muslims. Th
Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' (The Brethren of Purity) claimed themselves a
followers of the tradition of Pythagoras and Nicomachus.[34] Ismā'ī
philosophy was closely related to Hermetic-Pythagorean school o
Greek philosophy.[35] Al-Ghazzālī knew well the *Rasā'il* (Epistle) o
the *Ikhwān*.[34] His cosmological formulations in *al-Risālat al-
ladunīyah* betray a strong influence of the *Ikhwān'* cosmology. There
are a few indications[37] that al-Ghazzālī had some knowledge o
Ismā'īlī philosophy.

Al-Ghazzālī describes the *falāsifah* as those who claim that they
are "men of logic and apodeictic demonstration (*ahl al-manṭiq wa
burhān*)."[38] This description fits well the Peripatetic school, bu
excludes the Hermetic-Pythagorean schools, since their methodolog
cal approach is primarily based upon a metaphysical and symboli
interpretation of things. Yet al-Ghazzālī includes the ethical writing
of the *Ikhwān* in his discussion of the ethical sciences of the
philosophers.[39] By implication, he identifies the *Ikhwān* with the
above methodological claim as well.

Al-Ghazzālī appears not to be concerned with the division o
Muslim philosophers into the different schools, having different
methodological approaches to the sciences. Similarly, he did no
make a careful distinction between the different schools of Greek
philosophy.[40] His general characterization of Muslim philosophers,
whether they are followers of Aristotle or of other Greeks, is that they
rely on reason to know all things and that, consequently, *falsafah*
ought to be identified with rational truths or human wisdom rather
than with revealed *ḥikmah*. It is on the basis of this presupposition
concerning *falsafah* that al-Ghazzālī carried out his criticism of the
philosophers.

Al-Ghazzālī extended his criticism of Muslim philosophers to
their Greek "masters." He recognized only one stream of theistic
Greek philosophy, and Aristotle as the peak of its achievement.[41] He

identifies the fundamental method of Greek philosophy with the
logical and rational methods systematized by Aristotle. He seems to
accept Aristotle's refutation of Plato, Pythagoras, and other Greek
philosophers by means of this "philosophic" method as decisive and
consequently to entertain the view that to demonstrate the
incoherence of Aristotelianism is to descredit the methodological
claims of philosophy as such.[42]

Al-Ghazzālī denies the "philosophic" method of its competence
to comprehend metaphysical truths. A significant part of the philo-
sophers' knowledge concerning such things as prophecy and spiritual
psychology is simply borrowed truths taken over from prophets and
saints.[43] Al-Ghazzālī attempts to prove this limitation of the
"philosophic" method by means of that method itself. He maintains
that the metaphysical sciences of the philosophers are plagued with
errors and inconsistencies[44] precisely because in this domain "they
could not carry out apodeictic demonstration according to the
conditions they had postulated in logic."[45] These errors and
inconsistencies, says al-Ghazzālī, show that it is not possible to arrive
at certainty of metaphysical truths through the "philosophic"
method.

Al-Ghazzālī's portrayal of the philosophers' methodology needs
closer examination. For there seems to be a discrepancy between his
portrayal and the actual methodology of the philosophers. In *al-
Risālat al-làdunīyah* al-Ghazzālī indirectly acknowledges that the
philosophers may have a direct experience of metaphysical truths
when he refers to their rational soul as being of the same substance as
the "spirit" or "heart" of the Sufis.[46] But nowhere did he ever come
to regard supra-rational experience as a major element in the
methodology of the philosophers. We do know, however, that the
philosophic or demonstrative method as understood, for example, by
al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā is inseparable from metaphysical or
intellectual intuition.[47]

Al-Ghazzālī's critique of the philosophers' methodology
appears to be motivated by "certain theological and perspectival
interests." First, he "wishes to reserve for the Sufis the monopoly of
spiritual knowledge."[48] To minimize the importance of supra-rational
experience in the philosophers' methodology is to help guarantee a
greater glory for the method of the Sufis. At the same time, it helps to

diminish an image of superiority of the philosophers in the eyes of certain segments of the community. One of al-Ghazzālī's declared aims in the *Tahāfut* is in fact to "disillusion those who think too highly of the philosophers and consider them to be infallible."[49] Second, he wishes to defend the theological perspective that makes reason subservient to revelation. Since that perspective assigns metaphysical truths to the realm of revealed faith, the claim of reason to comprehend those truths independently of revelation must be denied. The denial of the claim is sought to be affirmed by emphasizing the negative aspects of reason.

In fact, al-Ghazzālī belongs to that category of Muslim thinkers who "have emphasized the negative aspect of purely human reason as veil and limitation and its inability to reach the divine verities."[50] In contrast, philosophers like al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā have sought to reach transcendent truths through reason itself, and to make use of logic and the rational faculties of man to lead man above and beyond these faculties and planes. The philosophers do not deny the fact that there is a negative aspect to reason when the latter is dimmed by the passions of the animal soul. The philosophers' reason (*'aql*) that seeks to reach the divine truths found in revelation is not one that is obscured by the passions, but rather one that is wholesome and balanced (*salīm*). It is in this connection that al-Fārābī makes the assertion that the power of the rational faculty becomes sharpened when man purifies his soul and directs his desire toward the Truth instead of the sensual pleasures.[51]

Third, al-Ghazzālī wishes to draw the "legitimate" boundaries of *falsafah*, that would be acceptable to orthodoxy defined by *kalām*. The believers, he says, should not entertain any negative attitude or prejudice toward the philosophical sciences except with regards to the errors and "heresies" that he has enumerated in the *Tahāfut*. Thus, he reproached those Muslims who opposed the legitimate philosophical sciences – that is, those which are not in conflict with any religious principle – just because these sciences have been ascribed to the philosophers.

Al-Ghazzālī's conception of "legitimate philosophy" is elaborated in his account of the six philosophical sciences in the *Munqidh*.[52] The mathematical sciences, he says, are purely quantitative or exact sciences which "do not entail denial or

affirmation of religious matters" because "they concern vigorously demonstrated facts."[53] Al-Ghazzālī's philosophy of mathematics does not embrace the symbolic and metaphysical meanings of numbers as emphasized, for example, by the *Ikhwān*. Seen as qualities and symbols, numbers and figures are not neutral with respect to spiritual truths, but rather lend support to them. The *Ikhwān* affirmed the view of Pythagoras that "the knowledge of numbers and of their origin from unity is the knowledge of the Unity of God". Further, "the knowledge of the properties of numbers, their classification and order is the knowledge of the beings created by the Exalted Creator, and of His handiwork, its order and classification."[54]

Al-Ghazzālī considers the logical sciences to be philosophically and religiously neutral as well.[55] These sciences are merely methodological tools that may be used by philosophers and the *mutakallimūn* alike. In his view, there is no necessary connection between the theory of causality of the philosophers and their method of demonstration. Al-Ghazzālī rejected their theory of causality, but accepted their demonstrative method as an important tool for the attainment of rational certainty in many of the sciences.

The natural sciences too generally fall within the domain of "legitimate philosophy."[56] It is in metaphysics, political philosophy, and ethics that much of the redrawing of "boundaries" needs to be done. This redrawing of the "boundaries of philosophy" is to a certain extent reflected in al-Ghazzālī's classification of the sciences treated in the next chapter. Politics and ethics are incorporated into the religious sciences. "Legitimate philosophy" is enumerated as the intellectual sciences. One important consequence of al-Ghazzālī's treatment of the confrontation between *kalām* and *falsafah* is that the pursuit of philosophy in the Sunni world became inseparable from *kalām*. *Kalām* became more philosophized.

8.2.3 The Ta'līmites

The question of al-Ghazzālī's acquaintance with the teachings of the Ta'līmites is problematic. On the one hand, he never mentions by name the sources with which he claims to be acquainted, whether written or oral. On the other hand, his claim of a sound knowledge of Ismā'īlism is not truly reflected in his exposition and critique of their

doctrines. In the *Muniqdh*, he mentions, in addition to "their writings,"[57] two oral sources. One of these oral sources is an associate "who frequented my company after he had affiliated himself with them and professed their doctrines."[58] The other source is referred to simply as "one who claimed to know some of their lore."[59] In Islamic tradition authentic oral sources are certainly important especially in the case of an esoteric movement like Ismā'īlism or Sufism. However, in the case of the sources cited by al-Ghazzālī, it is not possible to determine their authenticity or to estimate their worth, since he neither identifies them nor specifies their peculiar doctrines.

All that al-Ghazzālī relates to us is that the substance of what he learned from the second source is Pythagoreanism, which he describes as "the feeblest of all philosophical doctrines."[60] The second source is likely authentic. For there was an important link between Ismā'īlism and Pythagoreanism. By al-Gazzālī's time, Ismā'īlism had absorbed into its esoteric teachings much of what has been called "Oriental neo-Pythagoreanism."[61]

In *al-Mustaẓhirī* al-Ghazzālī is likewise content to tell us that he had read books about Bāṭinism, without mentioning their authors. Only in the *Iḥyā'* al-Ghazzālī mentions explicitly that one of the major sources of his knowledge of Ismā'īlism is al-Bāqillānī's work on the refutation of the Bāṭinīs.[62] According to al-Walīd, al-Ghazzālī had written *al-Mustaẓhirī* by "simply gathering together all the accusations in the different heresiographers, without ever referring to an authentic Ismā'īlī source."[63] Al-Walīd's criticism is to a large extent valid. Badawī has shown that *al-Mustaẓhirī* relies quite substantially on al-Baghdādī's *al-Farq bain al-firaq* (Schisms and Sects).[64] But Badawī also thinks that al-Ghazzālī was acquainted with Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ's *The Four Points*.[65] It appears that *The Four Points* is the only Ta'līmite writing known by name, with which al-Ghazzālī was likely acquainted.

Al-Ghazzālī describes the Ta'līmites as those "who claim to be the unique possessors of *al-ta'līm* and the privileged recipients of knowledge acquired from the Infallible *Imām*."[66] To understand the Ta'līmites as a distinct class of seekers after the Truth within Islam, it is necessary to know their fundamental doctrine of esotericism which has given rise to the appellation *al-bāṭinīyah* itself. Al-Walīd summarized the doctrine as follows:

> If one should call us that (i.e., *Bāṭinīyah*), it is because we believe that for every exoteric meaning (*ẓāhir*) of the Holy Book, there is an esoteric sense (*bāṭin*) which is its true meaning. That is our firm belief, and the very form of our divine service. And it is also that to which the Book of God refers, that to which the Messenger of God called men, and that for the sake of whose transmission (*ta'līm*) he has established his *wasi* (spiritual successor) and the Imāms who are his successors. We shall set forth the proofs verifying all that when .....it will be necessary to demonstrate the bases of the esoteric (*ta'wīl*).[67]

The Ta'līmites, thus, believe that the Qur'ān contains knowledge of the true reality of things, which constitutes the essence of prophetic knowledge. The key to that knowledge is the application of the esoteric method of *ta'wīl* to the Qur'ānic verses. Moreover, the Ta'līmites believe that that knowledge can only be acquired through the spiritual and divinely guided teaching (*ta'līm*) of the Imāms who are the inheritors of the Prophet's esoteric function of interpreting the inner meaning of the Qur'ān. In Ismā'īlism, and indeed in Shi'ism in general, this esoteric function is called *wilāyah*.[68] Belief in the superiority of the esoteric over the exoteric constitutes the necessary ideational basis of the religious community.

Al-Ghazzālī's account of the Ta'līmite doctrine of esotericism is in general agreement with al-Walīd's.[69] Al-Ghazzālī, however, also understood the appellation *al-bāṭinīyah* in a pejorative sense.[70] The Ismā'īlīs were called Bāṭinīs, he says, because they wanted to do away with the prescriptions of the *Sharī'ah* and to base all their actions on the esoteric meanings. Al-Walīd rejected this accusation and went at great length to defend the Ismā'īlīs against charges of infidelity to the *Sharī'ah*. Like his critique of the philosophers, al-Ghazzālī's critique of the Ta'līmites is coloured with several sectarian considerations. His defense of theological and perspectival interests, namely Sunnism and Sufism, may be best illustrated by referring to his generalized judgment on the Ismā'īlīs concerning the *Sharī'ah* and his critique of *ta'līm*.

In *al-Mustaẓhirī* al-Ghazzālī associates with Ismā'īlism various religious and spiritual movements like the *Qarāmiṭah* (Carmathians), *Khurramīyah* (or *Kurramidīnīyah*) and Bābakīyah.[72] He uses the term Bāṭinīs to refer collectively to the Ismā'īlis and these different movements. Among the Bāṭinīs associated with Ismā'īlism in one

way or another, there were definitely those, such as the Qarāmites, who in the name of esotericism considered the abandonment of adherence to the *Sharī'ah* admissible.[73] Al-Ghazzālī, however, generalizes this tendency among certain Bāṭinīs to the whole of Ismā'īlism.

In my view al-Ghazzālī's generalization has to do with the purpose for which *al-Mustaẓhirī* was composed.[74] The work was written under the order of the Sunni Caliph with the aim of refuting Ismā'īlī doctrines, whose socio-political order is represented by the Fāṭimid Caliphate, and with the aim of belittling their religious significance before Sunni orthodoxy. In this polemic it matters little to al-Ghazzālī that the Fāṭimid Caliphate succeeded in maintaining an equilibrium between the esoteric and the exoteric. What is emphasized is the threat perceived to be inherent in Bāṭinism as a whole to the supremacy of the *Sharī'ah* as the ideational basis of the Islamic community.[75]

In the *Munqidh* al-Ghazzālī does not discuss at all the significance of the term *bāṭin* for the Ismā'īlī methodology. The doctrine of *ta'wīl* is not even mentioned. Instead, he deals exclusively with the idea of *ta'līm* and infallible teacher (*al-Imām al-ma'ṣūm*) and its implications for the independent use of reason. In *al-Mustaẓhirī* however, he offers a critical discussion of the Bāṭinīs' method of *ta'wīl* as applied to the Qur'anic verses and their use of numerical and alphabetical symbolism.

In Ismā'īlism, *ta'wīl* and *ta'līm* or *Imāmah* are two doctrinal principles with which the idea of *bāṭin* is inseparably linked. In the perspective of Ismā'īlism, and of Shi'ism generally, the Imām is, next to the Prophet, the supreme authority on the *ta'wil*. The Arabic term *ta'wīl* means literally to take something back to its beginning or origin. In the technical sense used in both Shi'ism and Sufism, *ta'wīl* means the symbolic and esoteric interpretation of the Qur'ān.[76] It is the process of penetrating into the inner (*bāṭin*) meaning of the sacred text. The two meanings are not unrelated, since to penetrate into the inner mysteries of the Qur'ān is precisely to reach back to its Origin which is the most inward.[77]

In several of his works,[78] al-Ghazzālī defends the notion of *ta'wīl* as the process of penetrating into the deep and hidden meanings of Qur'ānic verses, in a manner that implies a significant change in his attitude toward *ta'wīl* from the position he adopted in *al-Mustaẓhirī*.

The idea of the inner meanings of the Qur'ān finds strong support, he says, in numerous *ḥadīths*, the sayings of the Prophet's companions, and the sayings of early Muslims.[79] In support of *ta'wīl*, al-Ghazzālī refers, among others, to the well-known prayer of the Prophet for Ibn 'Abbās, in which he asked God to "bestow upon the latter the understanding of the religion and teach him the *ta'wīl* of the Qurān."[80]

Al-Ghazzālī argues further that the secret meanings of the Qur'ān are unveiled only to those established in the esoteric sciences (*'ulūm al-mukāshafāt*) and those possessed of purified souls.[81] He identifies these "men of understanding" with the Sufis whose *ta'wīl*, he says, must not be equated with the explanation of the Qur'ān by personal opinion *(ra'y)* prohibited by the Prophet. Al-Ghazzālī possibly realized that in accepting the Sufi idea of *ẓāhir-bāṭin* distinction and the related doctrine of *ta'wīl* he had in fact embraced the Ismā'īlī understanding of these doctrines as well. It is significant that in the *Iḥyā'* his criticism of the Bāṭinīs concerning *ta'wīl* no longer pertains to the method of *ta'wīl* as such, as in *al-Mustaẓhirī*, but is directed toward certain of their interpretations and at their use of *ta'wīl* as proof of the idea of the infallible Imām. Al-Ghazzālī, in conformity with his Sunni perspective, rejects that there is a necessary link between *ta'wīl* and the *Imāmah*.

In the *Munqidh* al-Ghazzālī excludes *ta'wīl* from the methodologies of both the Ta'līmites and the Sufis, because I believe he later realized that *ta'wīl* was not unique to either group. However, to exclude *ta'wīl* and the idea of the *bāṭin* from a discussion of Ismā'īlī methodology means that the initiatic and supra-rational character of *ta'līm* could hardly be appreciated. This character of *ta'līm* is further eclipsed in al-Ghazzālī's discussion, since he opposed the Shi'ite doctrine of extending the prophetic quality of *iṣmah* (purity and infallibility) to the Imāms. *Ta'līm*, as understood by the Ismā'īlīs themselves, derives its significance as a method of knowing the Truth from the belief that the Imām carries within himself the "Muhammadan light" which is identified with the source of all prophetic knowledge. It is by virtue of this light that the Imām gains his authority as the interpreter of the Divine Law and the religious sciences.[82]

In his exposition of *ta'līm* al-Ghazzālī's approach is not that of

an independent scholar who stands above the Sunni-Shi'ite division but rather that of a defender of the Sunni perspective. He presents the Ismā'īlī claim concerning the Imām's quality of inerrancy in spiritual and religious matters but remains silent on the question of the "Muhammadan light" as the spiritual basis of that quality. Al-Ghazzālī wishes to reserve this prophetic light for the Sufi saints. By virtue of carrying the prophetic light within their own beings, the Sufi saints possess the knowledge of the inner meaning of revelation.

Al-Ghazzālī presents *ta'līm* as something essentially opposed to *ijtihād* (the exercise of personal judgment) and the use of logic and reason. He admits the necessity of an infallible *Imām*, but this Imām is none other than the Prophet and his complete teaching is to be found in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* (prophetic traditions).[83] While individual *ijtihād* may not be free from error, the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* as interpreted collectively by the *'ulamā'* constitute sufficient guides for the Islamic community. From the point of view of Shi'ism, however, *itjihād* is not incompatible with the idea of guide from the Imām. On the contrary, for the Shī'ites, a true *mujtahid* (he who can exercise his religious opinion) is one who is in inner contact with the Imām.

Al-Ghazzālī's omission of the initiatic and supra-rational character of *ta'līm* has greatly diminished the significance of the Ismā'īlī methodology as a means of attaining knowledge of the true reality of things. What he had emphasized instead is the relation of *ta'līm* to exoteric knowledge, which helps to bring into focus the Sunni-Shi'ite theological division, but which is of little relevance to his quest for the inner knowledge of things.

8.4 The Sufis

Al-Ghazzālī describes the Sufis as those who claim that they alone enter into the Divine Presence, and as men of mystic vision (*mushāhadah*) and illumination (*mukāshafah*).[84] The Sufi is thus presented as an intimate witness of God. The Sufi way of witness is described as authentic vision and the unveiling of the mysteries. According to al-Ghazzālī, to witness the Divine Presence is to attain the highest possible state of spiritual experience.[85]

The Sufi's mystic vision refers to sapiential knowledge, that is, realized knowledge that is inseparable from the transformation of the

knower's being. Certitude derived from realized knowledge is the highest kind of certitude, which in Qur'anic terminology is called *ḥaqq al-yaqīn* (the truth of certainty). To perceive a truth inwardly through contemplation (*mushāhadah*) is to see through the eye of the truth of certainty, since "contemplation is more real and clearer than seeing with the (physical) eye."[86] Realized knowledge is free from error and doubt, because it is not based on conjecture or mental concepts but on the heart's direct vision of spiritual truths. In the Sufi perspective, the heart (*qalb*) is the real key to sapiential knowledge.[87]

The Sufis, says al-Ghazzālī, maintain that "the heart possesses an organ of sight like the body, and outward things are seen with the outward eye, and inward realities with the eye of the heart."[88] The knowledge gained through the vision of the eye of the heart (*'ayn al-qalb*) has the immediacy and directness of sensual knowledge but concerns the spiritual world. This spiritual knowledge identified with the heart is what the Sufis call presential knowledge (*'ilm ḥuḍūrī*). The other kind of knowledge gained by the mind through the help of intermediary concepts is called attained knowledge (*'ilm ḥuṣūlī*).[89]

According to al-Ghazzālī, although the heart of every man is created to know the "invisible divine world," what we find generally is that "man has veiled it by his lusts and worldly preoccupations and he has ceased to see with it."[90] In other words, the eye of the heart is blinded by passion so that there is a veil between the heart and the spiritual world. What the Sufis seek to do is to remove the veil from the heart. In Sufism there is a whole science associated with this goal, comprising theory as well as practice.[91]

The purification of the heart with the view of being totally absorbed in the remembrance (*dhikr*) of God and of attaining annihilation (*fanā'*) in God is what characterizes the Sufi methodology. The science to which this methodology belongs al-Ghazzālī calls *'ilm al-mukāshafah* (the science of the unveiling of the divine mysteries).[92] The purification of the heart, when it is efficacious, results in a transmutation of the very substance of the soul of the adept so that he becomes an accomplished Sufi.[93] In his newly realized mode of being he becomes a witness (*shāhid*) to the Divine Truth.

Al-Ghazzālī calls the Sufis masters of states (*arbāb al-aḥwāl*).[94] The Sufis are concerned with the different spiritual states and stations

which the adept must experience before he can reach the Divi Presence. According to al-Ghazzālī, when the Sufis experien *mushāhadah, mukāshafah,* and *dhawq* they see even when awake "t angels and the spirits of the prophets and hear voices from them a learn useful things from them."[95] Then their state ascends from t vision of forms to "stages beyond the narrow range of words." The experiences, says al-Ghazzālī, are in reality "the first stages pass through by the prophets."[96]

Al-Ghazzālī maintains that pure Intellect, which is immanent the heart of every man, is actualized at different degrees and different modes only in those who follow the way of Sufism. Since t Sufi carries within his own being the prophetic light, he experienc directly the reality of prophecy (*ḥaqīqat al-nubuwwah*). Says Ghazzālī, "What became clear to me of necessity from practicing t Sufi way was the true nature and special character of prophecy."

Although sapiential or presential knowledge is gain independently of reason, it is by no means irrational. The role reason with respect to supra-rational reality is to acquaint us with t reality, to give assent to its truth, to understand it, and to certify " own blindness to perceiving what the 'eye' of prophecy perceives." Al-Ghazzālī is here affirming the traditional view that the heart intellect is the principle of reason.

Since al-Ghazzālī was himself a distinguished Sufi, he was ab to give an authentic and authoritative account of the Su methodology. As far as the way to the knowledge of the true reality things is concerened, al-Ghazzālī considers the Sufi method the mo excellent of methods, and the Sufis the most excellent of the knowe of the Truth. For he himself found the light of certainty in t spiritual path of the Sufis.

8.3 Significance of the Classification

The empiricists, that is, those who maintain that the sourse of a knowledge is sensual experience, are not included in t classification. They were almost non-existent in Islamic Societ Movever they could not be qualified as seekers after the Truth an knowledge of the inner reality of things.

Al-Ghazzālī's study of the methodological claims of the fou classes of knowers enables us to establish his epistemologic

rspective. While affirming the superiority of the Sufi mode of owing to all other modes, he remained attached to the *kalām* rspective. His internal criticism of *kalām* was aimed at refining the ional methods of that science. As a defender of *kalām*, he bordinates reason to revealed faith. As a Sufi, he subordinates ason to mystical intuition (*kashf*) and *dhawq*. The consequence in ch case is the superiority of the religious sciences to the intellectual ences.

ENDNOTES

Chapter 8

speaking of the four classes, al-Ghazzālī says: "The truth cannot be outside these classes. These are the people who tread the paths of the quest for truth. If the truth not with them, no point remains in trying to apprehend the truth." See McCarthy, *edom and Fulfillment*, p. 67

The Jewels of the Qur'ān (p. 43), for example, al-Ghazzālī writes: "The highest and blest knowledge is the knowledge of God because all other forms of knowledge are ght for the sake of it and it is not sought for anything else. The manner of pression in regard to it is to advance from divine works to divine attributes, and from divine attributes to divine essence: thus there are three stages. The highest of e stages is knowledge of divine essence and it is not possible for most people to derstand this."

In *The Book of Knowledge* (p. 47), al-Ghazzālī enumerates the content of the owledge of things "as they really are" attained through *kashf*. He mentions the owledge of God as the highest.

The Jewels of the Qur'ān, p. 40

Ibid, pp. 41-2.

Khayyām's classification has been studied by Nasr in his *Science and Civilization in* , pp. 33-8. Although al-Ghazzālī and Khayyām have the same fourfold ification, their detailed exposition of each class is different. A comparative study the two classifications has not yet been undertaken.

According to al-Bayhaqī, who knew Khayyām personally and whose father was a friend of the latter, al-Ghazzālī and Khayyām knew each other. See M.Meyerhof, al-Bayhaqī's *Tatimmat Siwān al-hikma:* Biographical Work on Learned Men of ," *Osiris*, 6(1948), p. 173.

Khayyām, who was ten years older than al-Ghazzālī but who survived the latter's th by twenty years, may have already composed his *Risālat-i wujūd*, which contains fourfold classification, by the time al-Ghazzālī pursued his studies at Naishapur. by the time Khayyām was twenty-six (467/1074), he was already an accomplished thematician. It is possible that al-Ghazzālī 's theoretical acceptance of a similar fold classification was inspired by Khayyām. But since we do not know exactly Khayyām's above treatise was composed, it is also possible that al-Ghazzālī 's ification was his original idea.

Khayyām, *Risālat-i wujūd*, quoted by Nasr, *op. cit.*, p. 34

[8]A 'perspective' or 'point of view' that sees all things "as they really are" is in reality one perspective among several perspectives. It comprehends all perspectives. The of a similar term is only meant as a comparison.

[9]His description and criticism of the *mutakallimūn* applies to all schools. However, praises one group, without mentioning its name, for having "ably protected orthod and defended the creed (*al-'aqīdah*) which had been readily accepted from prophetic preaching." See McCarthy, *op. cit.*, sec.23, p. 68.

There is no doubt that al-Ghazzālī has the Ash'arites in mind since in several of works such as *The Golden Mean in Belief* and the *Tahāfut* he expresses his disapprov of many of the theological views of the Mu'tazilites, the other major school of Su *kalām*.

[10]McCarthy, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

[11]The main characteristic of this method, as it was used in *fiqh*, is that it is based upon mere likeness between things, unlike the philosophic use of analogy which is bas upon an equality of relations.

[12]These include the literalists (*al-ẓāhiriyah*), the traditionists (*al-muḥaddithūn*) and anthropomorphists (*al-mujassimiyah*).

[13]Al-Ash'arī wrote a special work against the *ahl al-taqlīd*, entitled *Istiḥsān al-Khaw 'ilm al-kalām* (*Justification of Engaging in the Science of Kalām*) explaining necessity of justifying religious beliefs on rational grounds in the light of newly ari problems relating to those beliefs. See M.A Hye, "Ash'arism," *A History of Mus Philosophy*, I, pp. 224-5

[14]McCarthy, *op. cit.*, sec.22, p. 68

[15]*The Jewels of the Qur'ān*, pp. 37-42. *Kalām* is there described as one of three infer sciences of the pith of the Qur'ān, the other two being jurisprudence and the scien concering "the knowledge of the stories narrated in the Qur'ān and of what is related the prophets, to the deniers of God and to His enemies." *Kalām* concerns "God arguments with the infidels and His dispute with them." (p. 38)

[16]McCarthy, *op. cit.*, sec.23, pp. 68-9

[17]For a detailed analysis of the accounts of *Kalām* given by these three figures, s H.A.Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalām*, pp. 3-58

[18]Al-Ash'arī, al-Bāqillānī's teacher, used the theory of atoms as the basis of monstration of the creation of the world and hence also of the existence of God *Ib* pp. 40, 386.

[19]According to al-Bāqillānī, the demonstrations of the articles of faith or the premi upon which the demonstrations are based "hold the same position as the articles faith themselves" and are "next to the articles of faith in the necessity of believ them." *Ibid.* p. 40

[20]More precisely, we are speaking here of the Ash'arite theological perspective. T perspective depicts the unlimitedness of divine omnipotence to which all other Div Qualities are subordinated. The overwhelming motive, if not the only one, for God actions, according to the Ash'arites, is "what He wills" and "because He wil Applied to God's activity in nature, this activity gave rise to that important idea kno as *occasionalism* which has been defined as the belief in the exclusive efficacy of God whose direct intervention the events of nature are regarded as the overt manifestati or occasion. Occasionalism implies a substantial discontinuity of things and hence denial of causality, a view shared by al-Ghazzālī.

For a metaphysical critique of the religious and intellectual perspective Ash'arism, see F.Schuon, *Islam and the Perennial Philosophy*, Suhayl Academ Lahore 1985, chapter entitled *Dilemmas within Ash'arite Theology*, pp. 118-51

M. Fakhry, *Islamic Occasionalism*, London, 1958; and S.H.Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought*, pp. 61-3.

On the *farḍ kifāyah* status of *kalām*, see *The Book of Knowledge*, pp. 53-4. The ncept of *farḍ kifāyah* as applied to knowledge is treated in the next chapter.

Tahāfut, p. 202.

In his *Fayṣal al-tafriqat bayn al-islām wa'l-zandaqah* (*The Clear Criterion for inguishing between Islam and Godlessness*), al-Ghazzālī criticizes those who imed that "deviating from the doctrine of al-Ash'arī by even so much as a palm's dth is unbelief (*kufr*) and that differing from him in even a trivial matter is error and dition." McCarthy, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

In the same work (p. 149) al-Ghazzālī criticizes al-Bāqillānī for having included emises and proofs used in the demonstration of religious beliefs as an integral part of e creed.

McCarthy, *op. cit.*, sec.26, p. 70

This was claimed by al-Ghazzālī himself. See *The Jewels of the Qur'ān*, p. 39; and *hāfut*, p. 10.

Ibn Khaldūn refers to this approach as the method of the later *mutakallimūn*. See *The uqaddimah*, III, p. 41

The Jewels of the Qur'ān, p. 38

McCarthy, *op. cit.*, sec.24, p. 69

Ibid., sec.26, p. 70

Ibid., secs.98-9, pp. 95-6; also *Mishkāt*, pp. 148-9

Ibid., pp. 168-9; W.H.T.Gairdner, "al-Ghazzālī's *Mishkāt al-anwar* and the Ghazali-oblem," *op. cit.*, p. 125.

says al-Ghazzālī, "....one cannot recognize what is unsound in any of the sciences ess he has such a grasp of the farthest reaches of that science that he is the equal of most learned of those versed in the principles of that science; then he must excel him attain even greater eminence so that he becomes cognizant of the intricate ofundities which have remained beyond the ken of the acknowledged master of the ence. Then and then only, will it be possible that the unsoundness he alleges will be n as really such....." McCarthy, *op. cit.*, sec.25, pp. 69-70.

M.E.Marmura has shown that the *Mi'yār al-'ilm* is heavily indebted to Ibn Sīnā's position of logic in his *al-Shifā'* (or its summary in *al-Ishārāt wa'l-tanbihāt*). See Marmura, "Ghazali and Demonstrative Science," in *Journal of the History of losophy*, 3:2 (Oct.1965), pp. 183-204; also his "Ghazali on Ethical Premises," in *The Philosophical Forum*, new series, 1:3 (1969), pp. 393-403; and "Ghazali's Attitude to e Secular Sciences and Logic," in G.F.Hourani, ed., *Essays on Islamic Philosophy d Science*, pp. 100-11.

Similarly, M.A.Sherif has shown that al-Ghazzālī 's *Mizān al-'amal* draws much its materials from various works of Ibn Sīnā. See Sherif, *Ghazali's Theory of Virtue*.

Al-Ghazzālī's commentary on the Light-Verse of the Qur'ān was very likely pired by Ibn Sīnā's commentary, since the *Kitāb al-ishārāt wa'l-tanbihāt* (*The Book Directives and Remarks*) in which his commentary is found was known to al-azzālī. Similarly, al-Ghazzālī's *Risālat al-ṭair* (*Treatise of the Bird*) was very likely pired by Ibn Sīnā's work of the same title.

S.H.Nasr, *IICD*, p. 37

Among the outstanding figures of Ismā'īlī school of philosophy were Abū Ya'qūb al-ijistānī, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and Nāṣir-i Khusraw.

Nasr, *IICD*, p. 36

For these "indications" see my discussion of al-Ghazzālī's acquaintance with ā'ilism in the next section (8.2.3).

[38]McCarthy, *op. cit.*, p. 67

[39]*Ibid.* secs. 56, 58, p. 80

[40]In the *Tahāfut* he states clearly that he is not concerned with the fine distinctions that exist among the philosophers. In the *Munqidh* he gives a threefold 'theological' division of the Greek philosophers into the Materialists (*al-dahriyūn*), the Naturalists (*al-tabī'iyun*) and the Theists (*al-ilahiyun*). Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were theistic philosophers who "never denied the validity of the religious laws." On the contrary, "they believed in God and had faith in His messengers" as well as believed in the Last Day. See McCarthy, *op. cit.*, secs. 29-33, pp. 71-2; and *Tahāfut*, p. 3

[41]Says al-Ghazzālī: "It was Aristotle who systematized logic for the philosophers and refined the philosophical sciences, accurately formulating previously imprecise statements and bringing to maturity the crudities of their sciences....Then, Aristotle refuted Plato and Socrates and the Theists who preceded him in such thorough fashion that he disassociated himself from them all." McCarthy, *op cit.*, sec.33, p. 72

[42]*Ibid.* sec.78, p. 89; *Tahāfut* p. 4

[43]McCarthy, *op. cit.*, sec.58, p. 80. In making these assertions, al-Ghazzālī is implying two things. One is his denial of the possibility of these truths being known outside the prop' etic experience of which the Sufi *dhawq* is a stage. The other is that these "borrowed" truths cannot be characterized as philosophical doctrines.

[44]In the *Tahāfut* al-Ghazzālī enumerates twenty problems, drawn mainly from the metaphysical sciences, in which he seeks to show that the philosophers' views are in error, self-contradictory and incoherent (pp. 11-2). He brands the philosophers with infidelity on three questions: (1) their view of the eternity of the world, (2) their assertion that "Divine Knowledge does not encompass individual objects," and (3) their denial of the resurrection of bodies. As regards the rest of the problems, al-Ghazzālī considers the views of the philosophers as innovations (pp. 249-50).

[45]McCarthy, *op. cit.*, sec.46, p. 76

[46]*al-Risālat al-ladunīyah*, p. 194.

[47]This fact was amply demonstrated in my discussion of al-Fārābī

[48]F Schuon, *Sufism: Veil and Quintessence*, p. 117

[49]*Tahāfut* p. 8

[50]Nasr, *Sufi Essays*, p. 55

[51]I have referred to this view of al-Fārābī in chapter three.

[52]The six philosophical sciences are the mathematical, logical, natural, metaphysical, political, and the ethical. See McCarthy, *op. cit.*, secs. 37-60, pp. 73-81

[53]*Ibid.* sec. 37, p. 73

[54]Nasr, *Science and Civilization in Islam*, p. 155

[55]McCarthy, *op. cit.*, sec. 43, p. 74.

[56]Al-Ghazzālī accepts the natural sciences of the philosophers except with regards to a number of "errors" he identifies in the *Tahāfut*

[57]McCarthy, *op. cit.*, sec. 61, p. 82

[58]*Ibid.* sec. 63, pp. 82-3

[59]*Ibid.* sec. 78, p. 89

[60]"Aristotle had already refuted him (Pythagoras) and had even regarded his teaching as weak and contemptible." *Ibid.*

[61]Nasr, *Science and Civilization in Islam*, p. 37. Al-Ghazzālī 's reference to the link between Ismā'īlism and Pythagoreanism raises the question of the possibility of his familiarity with the writings of the Ismā'īlī philosophers. The integration of Pythagoreanism into Ismā'īlism was achieved at the hands of philosophers like al-Sijistānī, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, and Nāsir-i Khusraw.

[62]Al-Ghazzālī mentions the title as *Kashf al-asrār wa hatk al-astār (The Unveiling of Secrets)*.

[63]H.Corbin, "The Ismā'īlī Response to the Polemic of al-Ghazālī," *op. cit.*, p. 70

[64]See the introduction to his edition of the *al-Mustazhirī*, Cairo, 1964, p. (d).

[65]In a debate that took place in Transoxiana in the sixth/twelfth century between a certain Sharaf al-Dīn al-Mas'ūdī and Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, the former brought up the question of al-Ghazzālī 's refutation of *The Four Points* for the latter's comments. Rāzī, who apparently was well-versed with that work, did not dispute al-Ghazzālī's acquaintance with it but accused al-Ghazzālī of having misunderstood al-Ṣabbāḥī's arguments. See P.Kraus, "The *Controversies* of Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī," *Islamic Culture*, 12:2(April, 1938), pp. 147-8.

[66]McCarthy, *op. cit.*, p. 67

[67]H.Corbin, *op. cit.*, p. 79

[68]For a detailed discussion of this concept, see Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam*, pp. 161-2

[69]For al-Ghazzālī 's account, see McCarthy, *op. cit.*, sec. 17, p. 181.

[70]During the early history of Islam, the word *bāṭin*, which occurs many times in the Qur'ān, simply means inwardness. Al-Hasan al-Baṣrī (d.110/728) is known to refer to the Sufis as *ahl al-bāṭin* (people of inwardness). Later, however, when the Shi'ites came to emphasize the fact that everything has an outward (*ẓāhir*) and an inward (*bāṭin*) aspect, the appellation *al-baṭinīyah* was given to the Ismāīlis in a pejorative sense. See *Ibid.* p. 182

[71]Al-Walīd cites letters of various Fāṭimid Imāms, including al-Ḥākim, the sixth Fāṭimid Caliph, which command the *dā'īs* and the believers "to remain attached to all the obligations of religious practice" and which warn them that "whoever abandons the practices imposed by the *Sharī'ah* is at the same time abandoning Religion and thus becomes an unbeliever." See H.Corbin, *op. cit.*, p. 89

[72]McCarthy, *op. cit.*, p. 182. For al-Walīd's reply to al-Ghazzālī's attempt to connect Ismā'īlism to these various movements, see Corbin, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-7.

[73]M.H. Tabātabā'ī, *Shi'ite Islam*, trans. S.H.Nasr, SUNY Press, Albany, 1975, p. 80.

[74]The highly polemical and political nature of this work was referred to in the previous chapter.

[75]McCarthy, *op. cit.*, p. 182

[76]For a more detailed treatment of *ta'wīl*, see Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam*, pp. 58-61, and S.M.N.al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam*, ABIM, Kuala Lumpur 1980.

[77]*Ta'wīl* for Sufism, or Shi'ism, does not possess the same meaning as it does in Mu'tazilite theology and in jurisprudence. It has nothing to do with the debate between the Ash'arites and Mu'tazilites over the literal meaning of the Qur'ān versus rational interpretation of it. *Ta'wīl* in the sense used by the Sufis and Shi'ite sages is the penetration into the symbolic–and not allegorical–meaning of the text which is not a human interpretation but reaching a divinely pre-disposed sense placed within the Sacred Text through which man himself becomes transformed. The symbol has an ontological reality that lies above any mental constructions. Man does not make symbols. He is transformed by them. And it is as such that the Qur'ān with the worlds of meaning that lie hidden in its every phrase transforms and remakes the soul of man." Nasr, *op. cit.*, p. 61

[78]See, for example, *al-Risālat al-ladunīyah*, p. 190; and M.A.Quasem, trans., *The Revelation and Interpretation of the Qur'ān: al-Ghazzālī's Theory*, 1982, chapter 4.

[79]For example, he quotes the prophetic *hadīth*: "The Qur'ān has an outward aspect, an inward aspect, a limit and a prelude." He also quotes the saying of a certain religious scholar that "for every Qur'ānic verse there are sixty thousand understandings

(comprehensible to man)." See Quasem, *op. cit.*, p. 87; (cf. *al-Risālat al-ladunīyah*, p. 354, where al-Ghazzālī quotes the following *ḥadīth*: "There is not a verse of the Qur'ān but has a literal sense and an esoteric sense, and its esoteric sense includes another esoteric meaning up to seven esoteric meanings.")

[90] Quasem, *op. cit.*, p. 91

[91] *Ibid*, p. 102

[92] Nasr, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-3

[93] McCarthy, *op. cit.*, sec.64, p. 83 and sec.68, p. 85

[94] *Ibid*, p. 67

[95] This state of experience, says al-Ghazzālī, is beyond the ability of words to express. He thinks that such terms as *ḥulūl* (indwelling), *ittiḥād* (union) and *wuṣūl* (arrival or connection) should not be used to describe this state of spiritual experience, because they convey misleading ideas about God-man relationship in that state. For him, the scriptural symbolism of the servant's "nearness *(qurb)* to God" is the most apt to be used. See *ibid*, sec.96, p. 95, and pp. 355-60.

[96] *The Book of Knowledge*, p. 141

[97] In both the Qur'ān and *ḥadīths* there are numerous references to the heart as being the seat of intelligence and knowledge. The Sufi doctrine of the knowledge of the heart is in fact developed on the basis of this teaching contained in the Qur'ān and *ḥadīths*. Concerning the heart as the instrument for the attainment of supra-rational knowledge, al-Ghazzālī writes:

> ....then know that that which seeks to press toward God in order to attain a place in His neighbourhood is the heart and not the body. And by the heart I do not mean the palpable matter of flesh but one of the mysteries of God which the bodily senses fail to perceive; a spiritual substance (*laṭīfah*) from God, sometimes indicated by the word spirit (*rūḥ*) and at times by the calm soul (*al-nafs al-muṭma'innah*).

See *The Book of Knowledge*, pp. 141-2.

[98] *al-Risālat al-ladunīyah*, p. 198

[99] Al-Ghazzālī's distinction between the two kinds of knowledge (*ibid*, pp. 360-8) will be treated in the next chapter. He identifies presential knowledge with *al-'ilm al-ladunī* of the Qur'ān (XVIII:64).

[100] *Ihyā'*, IV, 430, quoted by M. Smith, *al-Ghazzālī the Mystic*, p. 198.

[101] McCarthy, *op. cit.*, sec. 80, p. 90

[102] *The Book of Knowledge*, p. 142

[103] McCarthy, *op. cit.*, sec. 82, p. 90

[104] *Ibid*, sec. 83, p. 90

[105] *Ibid*, sec. 96, pp. 94-5.

[106] *Ibid*, sec. 97, p 95.

[107] *Ibid*, sec. 101, p. 96

[108] *Ibid*, sec. 124, p. 102

CHAPTER 9

AL-GHAZZĀLĪ'S CLASSIFICATION OF THE SCIENCES

My study of al-Ghazzālī's classifications of the sciences is based on two main sources: *The Book of Knowledge* of the *Iḥyā'* and *al-Risālat al-ladunīyah*. I have also made significant use of his two other works, namely, *The Jewels of the Qur'ān* and the *Mīzān al-'amal*. Al-Ghazzālī refers in these works to four different systems of classification:

(1) division into theoretical and practical sciences[1].
(2) division into "presential" (*ḥuḍūrī*) and attained (*ḥuṣūlī*) knowledge[2]
(3) division into religious (*shar'īyah*) and intellectual (*'aqlīyah*) sciences[3]
(4) division into *farḍ 'ayn* (obligatory on every individual) and *farḍ kifāyah* (obligatory on all) sciences.[4]

Of the four systems, the one that receives the most extensive treatment from al-Ghazzālī is the division into the religious and the intellectual. His discussion of it incorporates the first and the fourth systems as well. The division into presential and attained knowledge is treated separately. According to al-Ghazzālī, all four systems of classifications are valid even though they do not have the same degree of validity. Each classification is based on a particular aspect of the relationship between man and knowledge as well as on a particular perspective of looking at that relationship. The more fundamental and universal the aspect or perspective in view, the greater will be the validity of the resulting division. Before going into a detailed discussion of al-Ghazzālī's treatment of these classifications, the basis of each as he has defined it should be explained.