CHAPTER TWO

Al Ghazâlî: LIFE and WORKS
Life and Works

Al-Ghazālī is one of the greatest personalities in Islam and ranks with the greatest thinker of the world.¹ He was a scholar of Sunni Islam belonging to the Shafi’i school of Islamic Jurisprudence and Ash’arite School of theology.² He was one of the great philosophers amongst Muslim philosopher and is considered to be the bed rock of medieval Islamic philosophy that makes western philosophy dumb for more than one hundred years. He received many title such as “Sharaf al- A’immah. Zayn al-Dīn, Ḥuṣayrī al-Islām (Proof of Islam).³

He was an Islamic theologian, Jurist, Philosopher, Cosmologist, mystic and a traditionist. His position as a theologian of Islam is undoubtedly the most eminent. His combination of spiritualization and Fundamentalism in Islam had such a marked stamp of his powerful personality that it has continued to be accepted by the community since his time.⁴

The literal meaning of “Ghazālī” is wearer or knit.⁵ According to the rule of pedigree, prevalent in Arabic language, the word (Ghazāl) was sufficient to denote. ‘Allāma Sam’ānī has written in “Kitāb al-insāb” that “Ghazāl” is the name of a village was its native. Hence Allāma Sam’ānī pronounces “Ghazālī” without any orographical sign (Tashdīd). The opinion of ‘Allāma Sam’ānī is opposed by some historian while some other historians have agreed with his view. Thus “Fayyūmi” narrated Sheikh Muhiuddin (who was grandson of Al-Ghazālī in the seventh generation) in his book “Miṣbah” that: “the name of my grandfather is without any orographical sign (Tashdīd)” but the scholars are of the opinion that the first view point is most reliable than the second because there is no such village named as “Ghazāl” in the district of Tus.⁶

His Early Life and Education

Al-Ghazālī was born in Tus in 450 A.H./1058 C.E. Tus was a city of Khurasan near Meshhad in Iran. However, there are no traces of this city in present day Iran because Tus was almost entirely destroyed by Chengez Khan during 1220 A.D.⁷ His full name was Abu Hamid Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Tusi al-Shāfi’i and was generally known by his Nisbah Al-Ghazālī.⁸ Al-Ghazālī was not the first scholar of his family. There had been one another Abu Hamid Al-Ghazālī (d. 435/1043 A.D.) his grand-uncle who was a theologian and Jurist. His family has always
been in touch with intellectuals of the time. Al-Ghazālī along with his brother Ahmad Al-Ghazālī got his early education from a pious Ṣūfī who was a close friend of his father. During his early life he was with his parents in Tus. He studies Qur’ān, Arabic grammar theology logic and Islamic law in the early years of his age. He was an exceptionally intelligent and motivated student. At the age of fifteen, following the general trend of the time, Al-Ghazālī, in 1073 A.D., travelled to Jarajan (A town on the shores of the Caspian sea some 500 kilometers from Tus) to complete his studies from one of the renowned scholars of the time Imām Abu al-Qāsim al-İsmā’i’ili (d. 1084 A.D.). While attending the lectures of his teacher in Jurjan, Al-Ghazālī penned down all his lectures. And it is said that on the way back to Tus, his notes was stolen by bandits. Al-Ghazālī followed them and appealed to their commander to return him the books. The bandit chief laughed and said, how can you claim to this knowledge we have taken it from you? How can you call this knowledge when it is so easily taken away? Go and think about this, and then the reader of the robbers ordered his man to return the notes to Al-Ghazālī. Al-Ghazālī took the robber’s words as an advice and returning to Tus. And he started memorizing all what he had written and it take to three years to complete it. In 470 A.H./1077 AD, Al-Ghazālī left for Nishapur and studied law and the prevalent subject of philosophy there in Nizamiyyah Madrasah under the guidance of the famous teacher, Imām al-Haramayn al-Juwayni stayed there until his death in (478 AH/1085 AD). During his stay at the Nizamiyyah Madrasah, Al-Ghazālī learnt and excelled in the Shāfi‘ite fiqh, comparative Jurisprudence (‘İlm al-Khilāf), fundamentals of Jurisprudence (usūl al-fiqh) fundamentals of religion (usūl al-Dīn), logic and philosophy. In the field of philosophy Al-Ghazālī read Al-Farabi (d. 345 A.H./950 A.D.) and Ibn Sina (Avicenna) (d. 429 A.H./1037 A.D.). There were four hundred students being thought under the supervision of Imām al-Haramayn of whom three were well distinguished namely, Kayya Harrasi, Ahmad Ibn Mohammad Khawafi, and Al-Ghazālī. Hence, Imām al-Haramayn often used to say, that Al-Ghazālī is like a deep Sea, Kayya Harrasi like a ravenous lion and Khawafi like a burning fire, but the equality and similarity of status of Kayya Harrasi and Ahmad Ibn Mohammad Khawafi with Al-Ghazālī can be accepted only to the days of their studentship. Because, the fact is that, the status and pre-eminence which Al-Ghazālī was blessed with, was really very high.

During that time, it was an enable tradition among the reputed scholar that time when they had delivered their lessons, the most competent and able among students was
entrusted the responsibility of re-teaching them so that the lesson taught by the teacher is easily understood by the students. The student who acquired this status was called “mu‘ayyid” and Al-Ghazālī was also given the title of “mu‘ayyid” because of his hard work and studentship par-excellence.\(^\text{15}\)

**Religious Path of Al-Ghazālī**

Al-Ghazālī was a Sunni Muslim and his education and his association with the great scholars and intellectuals of time made him a true believer of Allah and a scholar of enormous importance. He belonged to the Shāfi‘i school of thought and compiled many books related science of jurisprudence and principles of jurisprudence.\(^\text{16}\)

During the period of Al-Ghazālī Mu‘tazilism was achieving its heights and the rational outlook they were giving to basic and fundamental principles of Islam (i.e., befitic vision, knowledge of omnipotent and self existent, eternality of divine attributes, precedence of divine epithets and the creation of deeds) were not sufficient to motivate Al-Ghazālī. At that time the only counterpart to Mu‘tazilism was Ash‘arism and Al-Ghazālī was to some extent following the principles of Abu‘l Hassan al Ash‘ari to reject the principles propagated by Mu‘atazilites. Al-Ghazālī was a scholar par-excellence and in now may was ready to compromise with the basic principles of Islam and if he found any one doing that he will not easily let him go and tried his best to make things clear to him as what Islam propounds and demands from a true believer. Whenever Al-Ghazālī was questioned about his following of any particular thought, his immediate reply comes, I follow the religion of rationale and proof and in matter of jurisprudence i am neither a follower of Hanafi School nor a conformist of Shafite School.

Apparently it seems that Al-Ghazālī was the follower of Shāfi‘i School of jurisprudence and intrinsically an abstinent mystic. Anyhow, he had a cogent believe in Islam. Perhaps, by amalgamation of Qur‘anic bases of jurisprudential rationales with mystical experiences; he evolved a constitution of his own. As the Islamic jurisprudence and its arguments were not devoid of mystical experiences, similarly his mysticism did not budge an inch from the obedience of Islamic jurisprudence and abstinence. If his religious tenets seem to be ostensible then the second surely could be considered as his spiritual believe.\(^\text{17}\)
Life as Teacher

After the death of al-Juwayni, Al-Ghazālī went to the Camp (Al-Mu'askar), to see Nizam al-Mulk\(^18\), whose court was meeting place for scholars. There, Al-Ghazālī debated with other scholars and won their respect. After about six years at Al-Mu'askar, Nizam al-Mulk assigned Al-Ghazālī to teach at the Nizamiyyah College of Baghdad. This college was founded by Nizam al-Mulk in 1065 AD. In a quarter of a century it had already become one of the most renowned centers of learning in the Islamic world. It was located on the eastern bank of the River Tigris, close to the wharf and market place. The college taught, law, theology, philosophy and medicine, and the professors were free to teach whatever they wished. The teachers normally gave lectures, which the students would write down as the lecturer spoke. This building was damaged during the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258 AD and now no longer exists.\(^19\)

Al-Ghazālī lectured there between 484 A.H./1091 AD and 488 A.H.1095 AD.\(^20\) This position won him prestige, wealth, and respect that even princes, kings and viziers could not match.\(^21\)

At the Nizamiyyah College, several hundred students used to attend the lectures of Al-Ghazālī. Some of those students become famous scholars, Judge and few became lecturers at the Nizamiyyah college of Baghdad, itself.\(^22\) Also scholar like Ibn ‘Aqīl\(^23\) (1040-1119) and Abu Al-Khattab, among the heads of the Hanblite school of Jurisprudence attended his lectures and incorporated them in their writing.\(^24\)

Al-Ghazālī investigated the teachings of Muslim philosophers such as al-Farabi (872 – 950 AD and Ibn Sīnā (980-1037 AD) (Avicenna). These scholars had studied the philosophy of the ancient Greeks, in particular the ideas of Aristotle and Plato, and attempted to apply it into Islam. For four years at Ghazali studied their ideas, even writing a book called ‘The Aims of the Philosopher’ (1094) where (Maqāṣid al-Falāsifah) he stated clearly what they thought. Al-Ghazālī always insisted that it was first of all necessary to understand what someone was saying, and understand it thoroughly, before you could reject it.\(^25\)

When Al-Ghazālī understood the philosopher, he wrote one of his greatest book, (Tahāfut al-Falāsifah). This book was written against the philosophers who were influenced to a great extent by Western philosophy. Among other things that the

\(\sim 36 \sim\)
Philosopher thought contrary to the Qur’an, was the idea that the universe was eternal, and therefore Allah had not created it. This proclamation in Al-Ghazâlı’s time was not falsifiable and there was no obvious way to tell if the sun had been rising each morning forever, or whether there had been a first sunrise. Taking their lead from Aristotle, philosopher in Muslim lands such as Ibn-sina (Avicenna) thought that the world was indeed eternal, co-existing with Allah and emanating eternally from him. Al-Ghazâlı set out to prove that this was wrong. The argument he used is simple:

1. Whatever begging to exist has a cause
2. The universe begging to exist
3. Therefore the universe has a cause.

The key part of this argument is the second point.26

By successfully refuting the arguments off the Arabic philosophers in the eyes of his contemporaries, Al-Ghazâlı permanently weakened the influence of Greek Philosophical thought in the Islamic world.

Al-Ghazâlı also inquired into the teachings of various Islamic sects, in particular a branch of the Ismailis called Batinites, who were lead by the notorious Hassan-ibn-Sabbah. The teachings of the Ismailis were particularly interesting to Al-Ghazâlı because they taught that sure knowledge was available, through their leader, the Imâm. They believed that he was divinely guided, and thus all he said and taught must be true. However, Al-Ghazâlı came to disagree, and he reserved some of the most severe rebukes in his books for them.27

**Journeys of Al-Ghazâlı**

In 488 A.H./1095 CE Al-Ghazâlı left Baghdad, and covering the following cities in chronological order. Damascus, Jerusalem, Hesron, Makkah and Madinah.28 It was nearly five hundred miles from Baghdad to Damascus, and Al-Ghazâlı probably covered much of that distance on foot. It was, however, common for scholars to travel in the Islamic world.29

Al-Ghazâlı stayed at Damascus for nearly two years. He used to spend his days in seclusion and isolation by locking himself inside the minaret of the mosque of Damascus.30 For the duration of his stay there, he kept himself busy purifying his soul, polishing and cleansing his heart to make remembrance (dhikr) of Allah.

~ 37 ~
When Al-Ghazālī left Damascus for Jerusalem, he continued to live in isolation. He used to enter the Dome of Rock (\textit{Gūnybad Al-Sakhrah})$^{31}$ where he locked himself. Then after visiting the tomb of Prophet Ibrahim (A.S.) in Hebron, he went to perform \textit{hajj} at Ka‘bah, in the Makkah and visited Madina, where Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) was buried.$^{32}$

Al-Ghazālī’s journeys had many conservancies. He wrote \textit{Iḥyā’ al-‘Uлūm al-Dīn} and \textit{Al-Risālah al-Qudsiyyah fi al-‘Aqā‘id}. In Hebron he pledged three things:

1. Not to accept money from any sultan.
2. Not to visit any of them.
3. Never to debate any person.

In 490 A.H./1097 A.D he return Baghdad and continued to live the life of a Šūfī in the \textit{ribat} of Abu Sa‘īd of Nishapur opposite the Nizāmiyya madrasa. He took up teaching again for a short time, expounding his \textit{Iḥyā’ al-‘Uлūm al-Dīn}. He then went to his birthplace, Tus, where he continued to live as a Šūfī and to write. It is apparently during this period that he completed the \textit{Iḥyā’ al-‘Uлūm al-Dīn} and several other works of a clearly Šūfī nature.$^{33}$

In 499 A.H./1105 A.D. at a request from the Vāzīr Fakhhr al-Mulk to teach at the Nizamiyyah of Nishapur. So in 1106/1107 AD, Al-Ghazālī started lecturing at the college in Nishapur and after that he retired one last time from public life and returned to home town Tus, where he built a lodge for the Sūfis (\textit{Khaṅqāḥ}) and a school next to his house. He had about one hundred and fifty students. Vāzīr Ahmad Ibn Nizam Al-Mulk (d. 544 A.H./1149 AD) came to convince Al-Ghazālī to continue his services as a teacher at Nizamiyyah of Baghdad after the death of its teacher, Al-Harasiyy (d. 504 A.H./1110 AD) who was Al-Ghazālī’s colleague during the days of Al-Ghazālī. But Al-Ghazālī rejected his offer.

**Teachers of Al-Ghazālī**

\textit{Abu’l Qasim al-Ismaili}

Ismail Ibn ma’sada Ibn Ismail Ibn Imām Abu Bakr Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim Ibn Imsil al-Ismaili. A scholar, Jurist and orator from Jurjan, bor in 407 AH, learned from his father and uncle al-Mufiadal. He traveled to many countries where he learned and taught.
He taught Ibn ‘adi’s book *al-Kāmil, Tārīkh Jurjān* and many other works. He died in Jurjan in 477 A.H.  

*Abu al-malik al-Juwayni*

Imām al-Haramayn ‘Abd al-Malik Ibn Abbdullah Ibn Yusef. A Sha’ī fi Jurist, learned in principles of Jurisprudence. He was born in Juwayin near Nishapur in 419 A.H. He had many famous students, among them Al-Ghazālī, al-Kiya and al-Khwafi of whom he was very proud of and used to say in rhyming prose: “Al-Ghazālī is deep sea, al-Kiya a brilliant lion and al-Khwafi a burning fire” some of his works are *al-Burhān, al-Waraqāt, al-Talkhīs, Shāmil fī usūl al-Dīn, al-Irshād fī Usūl al-I’tiqād, al- ‘aqīdah al-Nizamiyya, al-Tahthīb fī al-Mathhāb*, and *Ghiyāthu al-Umam, Mughīthu al-Khalq*, He traveled to Baghdad, Makkah, and Madina then returned to Nishapur where he died in 487 A.H.  

*Al-Faramidhi*

Abu Ali al-Fadil Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ali al-Faramidhi hails from Faramidh a village on outskirts of Tus. He was an aesthetic, Ṣūfī and an orator. He was born in 407 AH. He was a student and follower of Abu al-Qasim al-Qushari. Al-Ghazālī and many others learned from him. He died in Tus in 477 A.H.  

*Nasar al-Maqdisi*

Abu al-Fath Nasar Ibn Ibrahim Ibn Nasar al-Nabilsi al-Maqdisi, an Imām and Muhadith, was a Shāfi‘i Jurist born before 410 A.H. He learnt from many scholars and visited throughout the Muslim world such as, Damascus, Gaza, Jerusalem, and many others. He made Jerusalem his home for many years but moved to Damascus towards the end of his life where he lived for 10 years till his death in 490 A.H. He is author of many works including *al-Jujja, ala tarik al-Mahajja, and al-tahthīb fī al-mathhāb*.  

*Abul Fityan al-Ru‘asi*

Uman Abdul Karim Ibn Sa’adway al-dahistani a Hafiz and Muhadith was born in dahistan in 428 A.H. He learned from many scholars in many cities throughout the Muslim world, such as Nishapur, Baghdad, Dahistan, Damascus, Egypt, Haran. He died in Sarkhas in 503 A.H.
Pupils of Al-Ghazālī

Al- Ghazālī had many pupils, he himself described in a letter, that numbered around one thousand of whom, some were much renowned and famous such as Mohammad Ibn Tumrat who founded a pompous empire in Spain after extirpating “Tāshiqs” from the land and ‘Allāma Abu Bakr, a well reputed and renowned scholar. The list of some of his distinguished students is as under:

- **Qaḍi Abu Naṣr Ahmad Bin Abdullah**: He was born in 444 A.H. and died in 544 A.H. received the education of jurisprudence in Tus.
- **Abu Al Fataḥ Ahmad Bin Ali**: He thought numerous science at Madrasah Nizamiyyah, he died in 518 A.H.
- **Abu Manṣur Mohammad Bin Iṣmā’īl**: 
- **Abu Sa’yed Mohammad Bin As’ad**: He received the knowledge of jurisprudence from Al-Ghazālī
- **Abu Ḥāmid Mohammad Bin Abdul Malik**: He studies the science of jurisprudence under the supervision of Al- Ghazālī and the science of ḥadīth under the apprenticeship of Hafiz Hamid.
- **Abu Sa’yed Mohammad Bin ‘Ali Kurdi**: 
- **Abu Sa’yed Mohammad Bin Yaḥyā Nishapuri**: Renowned scholar, who wrote the first explanatory comment on the book of Al- Ghazālī “Bāsit”
- **Abu Al- Fataḥ Naṣr Ibn Mohammad**: He studies the science of mysticism from Al-Ghazālī.
- **Abu Ṭāhir Imām Ibrāhim**: it is said that Al-Ghazālī was very fond of him and was also the student of Imām al-Ḥarmayn
- **Abdul Ḥassan sa’d al-Khayr bin Mohammad al-Balnasi**: A well known and renowned traditionalists and a famous traveller received the knowledge of jurisprudence from Al- Ghazālī. He died in 541 ah
- **Abu Ṭālib Abdul Karīm Rāżi**: He memorised “iḥyā’ al-‘ulūm a- din” by heart. He died in 528 A.H.
- **Abu Manṣur Sa’yed bin Mohammad**: he was also appointed as the teacher of the Nizimiyyah.
- **Abu Al-Ḥassan bin Mohammad Juwayni Sufi**: He received the knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence from Al- Ghazālī in Tus.

~ 40 ~
➢ **Abu Al Ḥassan Ali bin Mazhar:** He was one of the renowned pupils of Imām Ghazālī. Hafiz Ibn e-Asakir a great traditionalist obliged his apprenticeship. He died in 532 A.H.

➢ **Abu Al Ḥassan Ali Bin Muslim:** He was a very conspicuous person, received education from Al- Ghazālī in Damascus.

**Death of Al-Ghazālī**

Al-Ghazālī died on Monday, the 14th of Jumādī al-thānī, 505 A.H. /Dec. 18th, 1111 C.E.). His brother Ahmad, who was there at the end, said this about the way he met his death.

“On Monday, at dawn, my brother performed the ablution and prayed. Then he said, ‘Bring me my grave-clothes, ‘and he took them and kissed them, and laid them on his eyes and said, ‘I hear and obey to go in to the king.’ And he stretched out his feet and went to meet Him, and was taken to the good will of Allah Most High.” He was buried at Tabran, the citadel of Tus.  

**Descendants of Al-Ghazālī**

Al- Ghazālī was survived with no male offspring. He had only some daughters whose number could not be determined with certainty. One of his daughters was Sal-Al-Mana whose lineage of pedigree seems to be very long. Fayyami, has narrated Shaykh Mujaddid al-Dīn in regard to the pedigree of Imām Al-Ghazālī in the book “Kitāb al-Miṣbāḥ” and mentioned that Shaykh Mujaddid al-Dīn was one of the off springs of “Sal al-Mana” in the sixth generation.

**Works of Al-Ghazālī**

Al-Ghazālī lived nearly 55 years and he began to write books from his early age when he was 20 years old. He traveled for nearly 10 to 11 years, and spent his time in reading, writing and teaching. Besides this he had to reply to thousand letters which came from far and near for his decisions and opinions. He himself mentioned the number of his works “more than 70” in one of his letter to Sultan in the last years of his life. He wrote more than 70 books on Islamic sciences, early Islamic Philosophy, Kalām and Sufism. His influence on Persian literature was also great. He Himself wrote Kīmiyā-e-Saʿādat in Persian which influenced to a great extent the minds of Maulānā Rūmī, Shaykh Saʿdī, Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār, Shīrāzī, Hāfiz, and other poets and Sūfis.
Al-Ghazālī’s contribution and accomplishments extend over various fields of learning, ethics, logic, theology, Jurisprudence, Sufism, Tafsīr (Qur’ānic commentary) Ḥadīth (Tradition of the prophet) and Kalām.

During this period, Al-Ghazālī wrote at least twenty books, many of these writings were lost or remain in manuscript form, covered several subjects including jurisprudence (fiqh), debates (Munāzarah) in fiqh, fundamentals of jurisprudence (usūl al-fiqh), philosophy, politics, and creed (‘Aqidah). Al-Ghazālī’s works in jurisprudence and the related subjects show his contributing interest in this field, an interest which apparent in his days of studentship.

Al-Ghazālī wrote several books on fiqh, according to the Shāfi‘i school, during the time regarded by Maurice Bouyges as the first period of his public teaching (478-488 A.H/1085-1095 C.E) these books which were considered his first writings, include Al-Bāṣīṭ, Al-Wāṣīṭ Al-Wājiz. These three books of Al-Ghazālī were practically the same as one another. The first in the series was Al-Bāṣīṭ. Realizing that book included unnecessary details and examples which made it difficult for student to read, Al-Ghazālī decided to write a shorter version which he called Al-Wāṣīṭ. According to him, Al-Wāṣīṭ which was written as a text book is half the size of Al-Bāṣīṭ. Later Al-Ghazālī wrote a further abridgment which he named Al-Wājiz.

The fourth book that Al-Ghazālī wrote on jurisprudence during this period was Khulāsāt al-Mukhtaṣar. This book was simply an abridgment of the Mukhtaṣar of Al-Muzaniyy (d.264 A.H/878 C.E) Al-Murtaḍā Al-Zubaydiyy stated that Al-Ghazālī did not work directly on the original book of al-Muzaniyy, but rather on an intermediate work which was also an abridgment written by al-Juwani (d.438 A.H/1047 C.E) father of Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwani, teacher of Al-Ghazālī. According to Al-Ghazālī this book was his smallest contribution to jurisprudence.

During the time which al-Ghazālī spent as a teacher at Nizāmiyya, he wrote four books on debates in the field of jurisprudence, al-muntaḥal fī ‘ilm Al-Jadal, Ma‘āKhīḍh al-Khīlāf LubāB al Nazār and Taḥṣīn al Ma‘āKhīḍh were all written as a result of a trend dominant in his time. The fact that Al-Ghazālī wrote many books on debate, and that he spend much time in debating others at the “camp” of Nizam Al-Mulk, shows his personal interest in debates which could not be considered, strictly speaking, part of his quest for knowledge. Al-Ghazālī held that unless the debating parties adhered to etiquettes of debate (AdāB al-MunāZarah) as he outline in his books.
On Usūl al-Fiqh, Al-Ghazālī wrote two books during the same period: Al-Mabādī Wa’l- Ghāyār and Shīfa’ al–Ghālīl fi al–Qiyās w’l-Ta’līl. The first book was lost, and what little information there is about it comes from two references in other writing of Al-Ghazālī. There are many manuscripts of the second book, Shīfa’ al–Ghalīl fi al–Qiyās w’l-Ta’līl which was edited by Ḥamad al-Kābīsī. During that period Al-Ghazālī wrote several books on logic. He wrote May’Ar al-’Ilm fi Fan al-Manṭiq (the criterion of knowledge in the art of logic) Mīhāk al-’Nazar fi al-Manṭiq (the touch-stone of reasoning in logic) and MiZān al-’Amal (The Balance of Action).

At the end of Nizāmiyyah in Baghdad in 488 A.H./1095 C.E. he returned to the Nizāmiyyah of Nishapur in 499 A.H./1106 C.E. This period was marked by a long journey in which Al-Ghazālī left Baghdad for Damascus from where he went to Jerusalem, then to Hebron for a short visit and eventually to Makkah and Madīnah before he decided to return to his home.

Al-Ghazālī wrote 28 books, letters and treatises of which of four were written in Persian: Kimyā-i-Sa‘ādat (the alchemy of happiness) Zād Akhraz, Ayyuha al-Walad (O child) and Al- Tibr al- Masbāk fi Naṣiḥat al Mulūk (The Golden Ingot for Advising Kings) the latter two are translated into Arabic. Among these twenty eight books two are in manuscript form, five lost and another two of have issues regarding their authenticity.


During the period of (499-503.H/1106-1110 C.E) Al-Ghazālī wrote four books. His autobiographic work Al-Munqīd min al- Ḍalāl (Deliverance from Error), a ruling (Fatāwa) on Divorce Ghāyat al Ghawr fi Dirayat al-Dawr, al-Mustasfa min ‘Ilm al Usūl (The Chosen from the Science of the Fundamentals Of Jurisprudence), and a defense of Iḥyā’ which he called Al-Imla fi Ishkālāt al-Iḥya (The Dictation on the Problem of the Revival)

From the public teaching at Niẓāmiyyah of Nishāpūr until his death in (505.A.H./1111.C.E), during that period, Al-Ghazālī wrote three books: Al-Durrah al

~ 43 ~
LIST OF HIS BOOKS

_Fiqh_ (Jurisprudence)
- _Al-Wāsit_,
- _Al-Bāsit_,
- _Al-Wājiz_,
- _Bayān-Al-Qawlayn li ’l Shafi’i_,
- _Khulāsah Al-Rasā ’il_,
- _Ikhtisār-Al-Mukhtasar_

_Uṣūl-i-Fiqh_
- _Tahṣīn-al Mākhaz_,
- _Shifā-al- ‘Alīl_,
- _Muntahī fi ‘ilm al-Jadal_,
- _Mustaṣfā_,
- _Mākhaz fi al-Khalāfyāt_,
- _Mufaṣṣal-al-Khilāf fi usūl-al- Qiyās_

_Logic_
- _Mi’yār al- ‘ilm_,
- _Mahk al-Nazr_,
- _Mīzān al- ‘Amal_

_Philosophy_
- _Maqāsid al-Falāṣfah_,
- _Tahāfut al-Falāṣifah_,
- _Al-Munqidh min al- Dalāl_,
- _Al-Jām al- ‘Awām_,
- _Al-Iqtiṣād fi al- ‘A’tiqād_,
- _Mustaẓharī_,
- _Faḍā ‘ih al-Imāmiyyah_,
- _Ḥaqīqat al-Rūh wa Qistās al-Mustaqīm_,
- _Mawāhim al-Bāṭiniyyah_

~ 44 ~
Iḥyā’ ʿUlūm al-Dīn (Revival of the Religious Sciences)

This is well known book of Al-Ghazālī written in Arabic. It is divided into four volumes each containing ten chapters. The first part of it deals with knowledge and the requirement of faith, rituals, purity, prayer, charity, fasting, pilgrimage, recitation of the Quran, etc. Part two concentrates mostly on people and society. The manners relating to eating, marriage, earning a livelihood, friendship etc. part three and part four are dedicated to the inner life of the soul and discuss first the vices that people must overcome in themselves and then the virtues that they must strive to achieve. Hundreds of editions of this book have been published in many languages.

Characteristics of Iḥyā’ ʿUlūm al-Dīn

The main points highlighting the peculiarity of Al-Ghazālī’s Iḥyā’ ʿUlūm al-Dīn are as follows.

The most peculiar feature through which Iḥyā’ ʿUlūm has received a wide range of readership is that it is an expression of the blend of both wisdom and sermon. Facts and concepts have been revealed and expressed in such ways that address the levels of both a
layman as well as an intellectual. On one hand, the text is easily comprehendible and on the other hand, the author has duly kept the higher standards of academics in consideration.

During the times of Al-Ghazālī, the subject of philosophy and its allied branches were highly dealt with by the scholars, who used to express the philosophical concepts in very subtle and almost incomprehensible manner. Even, Bū ‘Alī Sīnā had turned it into a subject like magic. Either people were incompetent to unveil the philosophical concepts in an easily comprehendible way or sometimes they did not intend to do so, a trend that was going on from the times of Greeks. However, credit goes to Al-Ghazālī for being the first person to deal with such complex concepts and unveil them in very simple ways. He explored the intricacies of moral philosophy in a very lucid and clear way.

Al-Ghazālī put forth directions of understanding religion as well as philosophy and compiled his Iḥyā’ al-‘Ulūm al-Dīn that solved all the complexities between religion and philosophy, thus, establishing a mediate between the two. Henry Louis writes in his History of Philosophy that:

If the Iḥyā’ al-‘Ulūm would have been translated into French in the times of Descartes, then everyone would have told that Descartes has stolen the concepts of Iḥyā’ al-‘Ulūm.

The reason for its being a peculiar treatise is that its every word has a penetrating effect and thus, it revolutionizes its reader.

Though the subjects dealt in this book were not something novel yet in its foreword Al-Ghazālī mentions that its peculiarity lies in the following facts:

1. Interpretation of intricate issues of the previous texts.
2. Classification of scattered themes and subjects.
3. Summary of the lengthy topics.
5. Interpretation of complex and subtle issues that had never been dealt with before.

Al-Ghazālī, with a sincerity and honesty accepts that while compiling Iḥyā’ al-‘Ulūm he had referred to and utilized the earlier treatises. Such works include, Al-Risālah
**al-Qushayriyah** by Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, **Quwvat al-Qulūb** by Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī and **Dhārī’ah ilā ‘Ilm al-Sharī‘ah** by Rāghib al-Isfahānī.

Al-Ghazālī was also well versed with the subject of moral philosophy of the Greek philosophers besides being familiar with the works of Bū ‘Alī Sina, Ibn Miskawayh and epistles of **Al-Ikhwān al-Ṣafā**. However, the comparison between such works and Al-Ghazālī’s *Iḥyā‘ al-‘Ulam* is that of a drop of water with a pearl. :^5^7

**Maqāṣid al-Falāsafah**

This book was written in the beginning of his life. The fundamental purpose of this book was to explain the ideas and thoughts of philosophers both Greek and Muslim. It gives little criticism to philosophy and presenting the basic theories in philosophy, mostly influenced by Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) works.

**Taḥafat al-Falāsafah**

His most famous philosophical work, “The in coherence of the philosophers” marked a turning point in Islamic philosophy in its rejectionist approach towards Aristotle and Plato. The book took aim to reject the approach of the philosophers ‘the Falāsafah’, from the 8\(^{th}\) to the 11\(^{th}\) century (most notable among them Ibn Sīnā and al Fārābi ) who drew intellectually upon the ancient creek.

Taḥafat al-Falāsafah is famous for proposing and defending the Ash’arite theory of occasionalism, He argued that because Allah is usually seen as rational, rather than arbitrary. His behavior is normally causing event in the same sequence can be understood as natural outworking of that principle of reason which we then describe as the laws of nature, properly speaking, however, there are no laws of natures but laws by which Allah chooses to govern his own behavior, in other words, his rational will.

**Al-Bāṣīṭ**

This book is on ‘*Ilm al-Usūl*, Al-Ghazālī has explained and Justified many principle of Shāfi‘i Jurisprudence.

**Al-Wāsīt**

This is the comparative shorter work of Al-Ghazālī on *fiqh*. The most important feature of this book is that it presents a comparative perspective.
Al-Muṣṭasfā min ʿIlm al-Usūl

This is the last work written by Al-Ghazālī, on fiqh. Since this was written toward the end of his life. This book contains final opinion of Al-Ghazālī in this field. Moreover, this book is considered as one of the four greatest works written in the field of ʿIlm al-Usūl.

Mishkāt al-Anwār

Al-Ghazālī wrote Mishkāt al-Anwār towards the end of this period of seclusion. The Mishkāt was written as a reply to someone who asked him to disseminate the secret of divine illumination, along with the interpretation of the verses of light.

Al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl

Al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl is the autobiographical work of Al-Ghazālī. He wrote this book towards the end of his life. In it, Al-Ghazālī recounts how, once a crisis of epistemological skepticism was resolved by “a light which Allah most High cast into my breast... the key of my knowledge,” he studied and mastered the arguments of Kalām, Islamic Philosophy, and Ismail’s.

Minhāj al-‘Abidīn

This book Minhāj al-ʿabidīn (The Course for the Worshippers), is the last work known to be written by Al-Ghazālī at the end of his life. According to Al-Ghazālī, this book was written in the same spirit of the Iḥyāʿ ʿulūm al-dīn, like Iḥyāʿ. Minhāj al-ʿabidīn was written to explain the path to the hereafter. Al-Ghazālī describes seven obstacles that face the person who treads this path. According to him, the arrangement of the contents of this book was an inspiration from Allah.

Kīmiyāʾ al-Suʿādat

It is Al-Ghazālī’s own Persian version of Iḥyāʿ ʿulūm al-dīn, but a short shorter work. It is one of the outstanding works of 11th century in Persian literature. This book was published several times in Tehran by the Iranian scholars. It has been translated to English, Arabic, Turkish, Urdu and other languages.

Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk: (The Counseling of Kings)

Written for the most probably Sultan Ahmad Sanjar ibn Malik Shah. The book consists of two parts. It contains the stories of pre-Islamic kings of Persia, especially
those of Khurasan. *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* was early translated to Arabic under the title *Al-Tibr al-Masbuk fi Nasihat al Muluk*.

**Zād-e-Akhirāt : (Provision for the Hereafter)**

This is most important book of Al-Ghazālī. The greater part of it consists of the Persian translation of one of his Arabic books, *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah*. It contains in addition the same contents as *Kīmiyā-e Sa’ādat*. This book was written during the last years of his life.

**Pand–Nāmah**

It was another Persian work by Al-Ghazālī, which is his opinion in Persian illustrated with Qur’ānic verses and Aḥādīth.

**Faza’ilul-anam min Rasa’ili Hujjat Al-Islam**

It is the collection of letters in Persian that Al-Ghazālī wrote in response to the kings, ministers, jurists, and some of his friends, after he returned to Khurasan. This collection was gathered by one of his grandchildren after his death, under five sections. The longest letter is the response to objection raised against some of his statements in *Mishkāt al-Anwār* and *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*. The first letter is the one which Al-Ghazālī wrote to Sultan Sanjar presenting his excuse for teaching in Nizāmiyyah of Nishapur, followed by Al-Ghazālī’s speech in the court of Sultan Sanjar. Al-Ghazālī make an impressive speech when he was taken to the king court in Nishapur in 1106 C.E, given very influential counsels, asking the sultan once again to excuse him from teaching in Nizāmiyyah. So the sultan was so impressed that, he ordered Al-Ghazālī to write down his speech. So it would be sent to all the religious scholar of Khurasan.

**Iljam al awam an ilm al kalam**

Al-Ghazālī wrote *Iljam Al’Awam ’An ’Ilm Al-Kalām* (preventing the common people from engaging in the science of Kalām) in order to explain the creed of the first generation of Muslims regarding divine attributes, and to prove that their position is right and that any other position is an innovation. He held that this is necessary to avoid questions of anthropomorphism. This book was understood as a criticism of Kalām and metaphorical interpretation of divine attributes which forms the essential stand of the later generation of Ash’arites including Al-Ghazālī.

**Poetry of Al-Ghazālī**

Under the aegis of the Seljūq rulers, Persian poetry had reached the zenith of its development in the times of Imām al-Ghazālī and the poetry had influenced every corner
of the then society. Though, Al-Ghazālī was not a poet, yet the poetic atmosphere overwhelmed his thoughts and prepared him to take part in this literary arena also. Two genres of poetry were highly entertained during those days including the encomium (Qaṣīdah) and Quatrain or clerihew (Rubā‘ī). The encomium had been limited for the expression of praise and flatter, which could not befit an intellectual like Al-Ghazālī, who obviously exhibited proclivity towards the art of quatrains (Rubā‘yāt). Ḥaḍrat Sultān Abū Sa‘īd Abū Sa‘īd Abī al-Khayr and ‘Umar Khayām like personalities also had adopted quatrains to express the mystic concepts and other realities. In addition, ‘Umar Khayām, the famous poet, was a contemporary of Al-Ghazālī and both derived the mystic quest from the same fountain. Thus, under such circumstances, Al-Ghazālī also used to express his thoughts and views via poetry and that too in the form of quatrains. His quatrains have been reported in Majm‘a al-Fuṣahā and Rawḍāt al-Jannāt.

In the above verses though the thoughts of Al-Ghazālī have been derived from Socrates yet the way he has put it is superb and elegant.

Al-Fārābī says:

Though Al-Ghazālī’s quatrain is of low standard than Al-Farabi’s yet its style is more delicate and clearer than Bū ‘Alī Sīnā’s.

~ 50 ~
In an another poetic attempt of Al-Ghazālī it becomes clear that the people advocating of only the temporal affairs of religion (Arbāb-i Zāhir) remain devoid of knowing the reality.

Similarly, the significance of Divine love has been expressed as:

Al-Ghazālī had expressed deep mystical concepts and realities though Persian poetry in such a way that befits his stature. However, his Arabic couplets, which can be traced in some writings, are having more affinity towards the Iranian standard of poetry than the Arabic one.60
**Time line**

1058- AD  Al-Ghazālī born in Tus (Today in Iran)

1073- Al-Ghazālī travels 500 kilometers to Jurjan to study Law

1078- Al-Ghazālī goes to Nizammiyah Madrasah in Nishapur to study law and philosophy

1085- Al-Ghazālī arrives at the court of Nizam Al-Mulk

1091- Al-Ghazālī becomes the principle at the Nizamiyah College in Baghdad

1092- Nizam al Mulk is assassinated

1092- Malik Shah, sultan of the Seljuq dynasty dies

1095- Al-Ghazālī breaks down and becomes incapable of speech

1095- Al-Ghazālī leaves Baghdad

1095- Al-Ghazālī arrives in Damascus. He starts writing *Iḥyā’ al-‘Ulūm al-Dīn* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences)

1096- Al-Ghazālī visits Jerusalem and lives there for a number of months

1096- Al-Ghazālī completes the *hajj*, (the pilgrimage to Makkah)

1096- Al-Ghazālī finishes *Iḥyā’ al-‘Ulūm al-Dīn* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences)

1096- 1106- Al-Ghazālī wanders from town to town and shrin to shrin

1106- Start teaching at the Nizamiyyah Madrasah in Nishapur

1111- Al-Ghazālī died in Tus, his home town
Endnotes & References:

10 *Ibid.*, p. 21
11 Allama Shibli Nomani *op.cit.*, p. 4
12 Imām al Harmayn Zia’ul-din Abdul- Malik ibn Yousf al Juwayni al Shafi’i. He was born 1028 C.E in a village on the outskirts of Nishapur called Bushtaniqn in Iran and died in 1085 C.E, he was a Persian Sunni Shafi’i Faqih and Mutakallim. His name is commonly abbreviated as al Juwayni; he is also commonly referred to as Imām al Harmayn.
13 Abu Nasr Mohammad bin Mohammad al Fārābi was born in 872 C.E in Farab. He was known in west as Alpharabius. He was a renowned philosopher of the Islamic golden age. He wrote in the areas of political philosophy, metaphysics, ethics and logic. He was also a scientist, cosmologist and a music scholar.
14 Abu Ali al-Husain ibn Abdullah ibn Al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Sīnā was born in 980 C.E, he was a Persian polymath who is regard as one of the most significant thinkers and writers of the Islamic golden age. He has been described as the “father of early modern medicine”.

~ 53 ~
17 Ibid., p. 37
18 Nizam al-Mulk was born in Tus in 1018 C.E and by 1063 C.E he had risen to become vizier to the Seljuq sultan, serving first Alp-Arslan (1030-1072 C.E) and the Malik-Shah (1055-1092 C.E). As a vizier, he represented the sultan throughout his lands. Nizam al-Mulk was also a scholar and he did his best to support education by building many Madrasahs indeed, it was said he instituted Madrasahs in every city of Iraq and Khurasan.
19 Albert, Edoardo, *op.cit.*, p. 33
20 Al-Subkiyy, *op.cit.*, pp. 196-197
22 Al- Sharbsiyy, Ahmad, *Al-Ghazālı̄*, Beirut: Dar al Jil, 1975, p. 32
23 Abu al Wafa Ali ibn Aqil ibn Ahmad al Baghdadi was an Islamic theologian from Baghdad, Iraq.
24 Al- Sharbsiyy, Ahmad, *op.cit.*, p. 3
25 Edoardo Albert, *op.cit.*, p. 36
26 Ibid., p. 38
27 Ibid., p. 41
29 Edoardo Albert, *op.cit.*, p. 51
30 Al-Ghazālı̄, *op.cit.*, p. 138
31 This “Rock” is located in the yard of Al-Aqsa Masjid in Jerusalem. There is a Masjid built on that location and it is called Dome of the Rock.
32 Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was buried in the Prophet Masjid (Masjid Nabwi) in Madinah. This Masjid was built by Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) so it called Masjid Nabwi.
33 Al-Ghazālı̄, *op.cit.*, p. 139
34 http://www.ghazali.org/site/teachers.html
36 Ibid
37 Ibid
38 Ibid
39 Allama Shibli Nomani, op.cit., pp. 35-37
40 B. Macdonald Duncan, op.cit., p. 107
41 Allama Shibli Nomani, op.cit., pp. 34-35
42 Al-Ghazālī, Iḥya Ulum-Id-Din, (Trans Enghlish: Maulana Fazlul Karim), Vol. 1, New Delhi: Kitab Bahavan, 1982, p. 8
43 The writing were lost including Al-Muntahal fi Ilm al Jadal , Ma’akhidh al Khilaf, Tahsin al-Ma’akhidh, al-Mabādi’ Wa al-Ghayat, Hujjat al Haq and Qawasim al Batiniyah. The Manuscripts comprise Al Basit , Khulasat al- Mukhtasar Wa Naqawat al Mu’tasar, Shifa’ al-Ghalil fi Qiyas Wat-Talil Fatawa, Ghayat al Ghawr fi Dirayat Al Dawr and Al-Ma’arif al- Aqiyah wa Lubab al Hikmah al Ilahiyah.
45 Ibid., p. 46
46 Abu Ibrahim Ismail al-Muzaniyah, a Companion of Al Shafi. The full title of his Book is Mukhtasar min Ilm al- Imām al Nafis Muhammad ibn Idris.
47 Al Ghazali, op.cit., p. 95
48 Qadri Hafiz Tuqan, Al-Ulum Indal Arab, Buirut: Dar Iqra, 1983, p. 189
49 Mustafa Abu Sway ,op.cit., 1996, p. 60
50 Al Ghazali, op.cit., pp. 81-82
51 Mustafa Abu Sway ,op.cit., 1996, p. 60
52 Mustafa Abu Sway, op.cit.,1996, p. 101
53 Ibid., p. 102
54 Ibid., p. 102
55 Ibid., p. 135
56 Ibid., p. 151
57 Allama Shibli Nomani, op. cit., pp. 60-64
58 Ibid., p. 50
59 This a new master piece of Iran which has been written on the line of Ibn Khalkan

~ 55 ~
60 Ibid., p. 52