

# الغزالي

Abū Ḥāmid

AL-GHAZĀLĪ

(1058-1111)





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An exhibition held in the Humanities &  
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Sean Swanick

Curator



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# Preface

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How is it that associated with almost every great man or woman, there almost always tends to be some whiff of scandal, controversial behaviour, inconsistency? But then, are we really surprised at this, for, after all, did not the great American poet, Ralph Waldo Emerson<sup>1</sup> say that

“a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think today in hard words, and tomorrow speak what tomorrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said today?”

And, it also happens that such great people often are misunderstood. But, again Emerson chastens us when he says

“Is it so bad, then, to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood.”

So it is with the brilliant man who is the object of this exhibit, al-Ghazālī. Coming at the

end of a period known as the “Golden Age of Islam,” around the year 1000 A.D., he has been accused of closing off a period of unprecedented cultural, intellectual, scientific, and technical activity that greatly influenced the development of European civilization in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance. Some say he tried to undo the philosophical work of other brilliant scientists of the Islamic Golden Age such as Avicenna, whose canon on medicine became, in translation from Arabic, the standard for European medicine up to the beginnings of modern Western medicine in the 17th century. He seemed to preach a severe form of Islam, but himself became a Sufi. He renounced state-supported work claiming that he could not devote himself to it due to the corruption present in state-supported institutions, but then later went back to it. He seems to have been misunderstood in his comments on the philosophy of Avicenna and other philosophers and held responsible for a perceived fossilization of Islamic thought from the tenth century on, fossilization that some claimed stopped the Islamic world from developing. Modern scholarship, some of which will be seen in this exhibit, shows a different light on this, that al-Ghazālī to be a far more complex and subtle man than he had appeared to be. The leitmotif of this exhibition is then to show in a visual and appealing way something of the real nature of this unusual man and to give a glimpse through calligraphic examples of the beauty of Islam.

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<sup>1</sup>Ralph Waldo Emerson, American essayist and poet, *Self-Reliance*, 1841

**Dr. Marion Finley, Jr.**, Adjunct Professor,  
Université du Québec à Montréal

# Introduction

The present booklet documents the exhibition of *Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (1058-1111): Celebrating 900 Years* held in the McLennan Library of McGill University between 15 August 2011-31 March 2012. The exhibition celebrated the life and works of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, a philosopher, theologian, jurist and Sufi.

McGill University Library contains approximately 500 works by al-Ghazālī, held in the Islamic Studies Library and Rare Books and Special Collections. Together the collection offers the researcher the significant works of al-Ghazālī, as well as unique manuscripts, and lithographs. Four manuscripts were purchased by the late Orientalist and Ismaili scholar, Dr. Wladimir Ivanow in the 1920s for Dr. Casey Wood. These manuscripts were purchased while Dr. Ivanow was living in Lucknow, India. Moreover, rare lithographs were also incorporated into the exhibition, for example al-Ghazālī's work, *Zād-i ākhirat* (Provision of the hereafter) which is a unique holding to McGill University.

The complex, multi-disciplinary nature of al-Ghazālī and his works provided staff with the opportunity for collaboration across the McGill campus. Of particular importance to the development of the exhibition and its intellectual content were Dr. Yazid Said, a visiting scholar at the Faculty of Religious Studies and the Institute's M.A. student, L.W.C. (Eric) van Lit. Both of these individuals provided wonderful feedback, assistance, and their own expertise in developing the ideas, concepts and content of this exhibition. The Islamic Studies staff, in particular Anaïs Salamon, Charles Fletcher and Steve Millier, were gracious in offering assistance throughout. Moreover, the staff of Rare Books and Special Collections, particularly Dr. Richard Virr,

Sharon Rankin and Donald Hogan were kind in offering their various expertise in helping organize and shape the exhibit. A special thank you also goes to Dr. Marion Finley, Jr., Dr. F. Jamil Ragep, Dr. Robert Wisnovsky, Heather Empey, Eliza Tasbihi and Jennifer Garland each of whom provided insights and feedback in the development of the exhibition and booklet.

**Sean Swanick**, Islamic Studies Liaison Librarian.  
Curator *Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (1058-1111): Celebrating 900 Years*, McGill University



Éminent philosophe, théologien, juriste et mystique musulman Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (1058-1111) a profondément marqué la vie intellectuelle musulmane et reste à ce jour l'une des plus grandes figures de la pensée musulmane.

Originaire de la ville de Tūs, dans le Khurāsān, en Iran, il reçut une éducation religieuse, juridique et philosophique très complète, notamment auprès d'al-Juwaynī<sup>2</sup>, à Nishāpūr, ville connue alors pour son excellence académique. En 1085, il rejoignit la cour de Nizām al-Mulk, administrateur de la Province du Khurāsān, qui le nomma Professeur à la prestigieuse Nizāmiyah (Université religieuse) de Baghdād, en Irak. Ses interventions dans les controverses et débats religieux de l'époque, le rendirent célèbre à travers le Monde musulman. En 1095, une crise existentielle le poussa à abandonner sa prometteuse carrière académique pour se mettre à la recherche

<sup>2</sup>Imām al-Haramayn al-Juwaynī (1028-1085) est un célèbre théologien musulman de l'époque.

« d'une position intellectuelle et d'une règle de vie plus satisfaisantes »<sup>3</sup>. Cette quête dura onze ans pendant lesquels il vécut en ermite, dans le dénuement le plus total, consacrant tout son temps à la méditation. Dans des écrits postérieurs, il fait mention de voyages en Syrie, en Palestine et peut-être même en Égypte durant cette période. Vers la fin de cette retraite spirituelle, al-Ghazālī embrassa le mysticisme soufi, qui devint alors son mode de vie. Et dans le souci de transmettre sa connaissance de la théorie et de la pratique du soufisme, il créa à Tūs un ermitage dédié à la formation de jeunes élèves. En 1106, il reprit brièvement le professorat universitaire à la Nizāmiyah de Nīshāpūr, avant d'abandonner définitivement et de retourner à Tūs où il mourut en 1111.

La vie et l'œuvre de ce personnage atypique, prolifique et brillant, suscitent jusqu'à aujourd'hui l'intérêt des plus grands spécialistes en théologie, philosophie et droit musulman : le legs intellectuel et spirituel d'al-Ghazālī est considérable. Pour ne citer qu'un exemple, le rôle qu'il aurait joué dans la redéfinition du raisonnement individuel (ijtihād<sup>4</sup>), et du déclin

intellectuel que cela aurait engendré, est au cœur d'un débat scientifique encore vivace.

Ce livret présente une exposition intitulée *Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (1058-1111): Celebrating 900 Years [Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (1058-1111): Célébration du 900e anniversaire]*, qui s'est tenue à la Bibliothèque McLennan de l'Université McGill du 15 août 2011 au 31 mars 2012. La réalisation de l'exposition a été une occasion unique de redécouvrir et d'explorer les collections de la Bibliothèque d'Études Islamiques et de la Bibliothèque des Livres Rares et Collection Spéciales : un corpus de près de 500 ouvrages, incluant plusieurs manuscrits et lithographies dont McGill possède l'unique copie. En outre, l'exposition et le présent livret sont le résultat d'une collaboration exceptionnelle entre étudiants, chercheurs et bibliothécaires à travers le Campus de McGill. Que tous ceux qui y ont participé en soient ici remerciés.

**Anaïs Salamon**, Head of the Islamic Studies Library, McGill University

<sup>3</sup>Montgomery Watt, W. *Al-Ghazali*. Encyclopédie de l'Islam. Leyde: Brill ; Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose S. A., 1965.

<sup>4</sup>Ijtihād est un terme utilisé en droit islamique pour désigner l'usage du raisonnement individuel pour apporter

une solution personnelle à des problèmes juridiques. Pour certains chercheurs, al-Ghazali est responsable de la « fermeture de la porte de l'ijtihād » équivalant à imposer une acceptation inconditionnelle de la doctrine.



# The Exhibition

The exhibition marks a distinctive anniversary of one of the foremost thinkers, teachers and writers of Islamic thought and life. *Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (1058-1111): Celebrating 900 years* offered the student, researcher, academic, and the general public an opportunity to see the breadth and depth of this celebrated philosopher, theologian, jurist and Sufi. The exhibition also highlighted McGill University Library's collections showcasing some of the rare manuscripts, lithographs and decorative arts. Moreover, it offered the visitor the opportunity to see some of the important artefacts and pictures of Muslim life and of the Islamic world.

The exhibition celebrates the renowned thinker al-Ghazālī, who passed away in his hometown of Tūs, Iran in 1111 A.D. Al-Ghazālī lived a pious life, contemplating various aspects of God, Islam and religion in general. In short, al-Ghazālī was in search of the *truth* and went to great lengths in his studies, and writings to discover this. His *Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn* (The Revival of the religious sciences) was his magnum opus. It was written in 40 volumes and covers almost every aspect of Muslim life from dietary habits to esoteric psychology. This work is often noted as being the second most read work by a Muslim after the Qurʾān.

Al-Ghazālī was an avid traveller having lived in or visited at least twenty cities in the Middle East. Much like al-Ghazālī's travels, his writing and thought evolved over time as he challenged many different aspects of Islam, being Muslim and living a virtuous and pious life. His early years were marked by his attraction to philosophy, particularly Greek philosophy and the writings of Aristotle on logic. However, later in life he wrote a critique of philosophers in his *Tahāfut al-falāsifah* (Incoherence of the

Philosophers). This one example in his thinking illustrates that al-Ghazālī was searching for the *truth*. In searching for the *truth*, as Dr. Eric Ormsby has noted, his career may be divided into five stages: Early years (1058-1085) in which his first writings on law appeared; the public decade (1085-1095) in which al-Ghazālī began teaching at the *Nizāmiyah madrasah* (religious university) in Baghdād and wrote on law, philosophy and logic, polemic and dogmatics; The crisis and withdrawal from public life (1095-1106), when he embraced Sufism and lived in seclusion performing the *Ḥajj* (pilgrimage) in 1096 and composed the *Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn*; and his second public period (1106-1109) in which he returned to teaching this time in Nishāpūr, Iran and wrote his autobiography, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* (The Deliverance from Error) and, the final period of his life covering 1109-1111 in which he, again retreated to seclusion but continued writing on eschatology and theology.<sup>5</sup>

This exhibition illustrates the impact al-Ghazālī has had on both Islamic and general intellectual thought throughout the ages. Each case represents a different perspective of al-Ghazālī's influence. The first case, entitled *The Institute of Islamic Studies' Ph.D. and M.A. Theses: al-Ghazālī* represents the intellectual output of students and professors of the Institute of Islamic Studies in its 59 years of existence. The second case, entitled *Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn* is centred on al-Ghazālī's magnum opus, *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*. The third case, entitled *The Life and Publications of al-Ghazālī* offers many of his publications while also illustrating his travels, in particular of his time in Damascus, Syria. Finally, the fourth case, entitled *Influences of*

<sup>5</sup>Ormsby, Eric L. *Ghazali: the revival of Islam*. Oxford, England: Oneworld, 2008, pp.24-25.

*al-Ghazālī* illustrates the influences of al-Ghazālī and those whom he influenced. Overall, the exhibition demonstrated through publications, writings, and commentaries the magnitude al-Ghazālī had on the evolution and development of Islamic and intellectual thought.

The exhibition booklet is enhanced by five essays that further highlight al-Ghazālī's importance and contributions to the evolution of thought and intellectualism. The first essay by Dr. Yazid Said entitled *Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's (d.1111) legacy*, details the importance of al-Ghazālī. The second essay by Dr. Jamil Ragep entitled *Al-Ghazālī and Science* enlightens the reader on al-Ghazālī's impact on the history of science. In a similar manner, Dr. Robert Wisnovsky's article, *Al-Ghazālī and Philosophy* provides the reader with an overview of al-

Ghazālī's impact on philosophy, particularly in the medieval world. L.W.C. (Eric) van Lit's article, entitled *Ghazālī on zombies and what to do when you drop your cellphone in the toilet*, explores the language used by al-Ghazālī. Finally, Eliza Tasbihi in her essay *The concept of Divine Love according to al-Ghazālī* explores one of the volumes from the *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*. Each of these essays speaks to the scholarship of al-Ghazālī, his distinct nature of investigating the intellectual currents of his time, the impact this has had on scholarship and general thought since.

**Sean Swanick**, Islamic Studies Liaison Librarian  
Curator *Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (1058-1111): Celebrating 900 Years*, McGill University Library

# Essays

## Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī's (d.1111) legacy

Imām al-Ghazālī, as *Hujjat al-Islam*, the defender of Islamic teaching, was a true giant of medieval Islam, whose influence was multitudinous on the history of Islamic thought, disclosing ways by which the Muslim mind was capable of interpreting the Qurʾān and the ḥadīth, and the extent by which the subsequent tradition was able to systematize a coherent salvation history. As a scholar, a theologian, a jurist and a Sufi, he has long been praised for his contribution to the process whereby classical Sunnī Orthodoxy was established, bringing together different strands of knowledge.

Ghazalian teaching has been to a certain extent left aside by some parts of modern Islam today, despite being the normative source of learning in pre-modern Islam. Modern Islamic brotherhoods tend to prefer Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), who held a much more rigorous approach to Orthodoxy and lacks al-Ghazālī's ambiguity in expressing matters relating to Muslim Truth. He was known in medieval Europe as Algazel through the Latin translation of some of his work on philosophy, which became accessible to thinkers and teachers like Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), Robert Grosseteste (d. 1253), and Hugo of St. Victor (d. 1141). Similarly, Maimonides and some of his students were heavily indebted to al-Ghazālī's work. Though his writings on philosophy, especially his *Maqāṣid al-falāsifah*, and *Tahāfut al-falāsifah*, were accessible to the West from early on, his magnum opus, *Ihyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, *The Revivification of the Religious Sciences*, seems to have been unknown and only in the last century was this work available in translation in the various European languages.

His legacy attracts today not only many other Muslim thinkers, but many non-Muslim scholars in both the East and West. Part of that attraction comes from the subtlety and ambiguity of al-Ghazālī's masterful synthesis of different sources of knowledge. Prof. Eric Ormsby (until recently of McGill University) speaks of al-Ghazālī's customary 'sly eclecticism'. Ebrahim Moosa speaks of 'bricolage' in al-Ghazālī's text. Such observations implicitly point that the complexity evident in al-Ghazālī's text are an exposure not of inconsistency as much as of a depth that reflects al-Ghazālī's own questioning of the religious tenets of his time, producing the kind of language born out of his decades-long task, in reaction to the centuries-long formation of Islamic Orthodoxy. At one level, al-Ghazālī acknowledges that this is a task, which every century the community has to undertake.

As such, his story becomes very significant for research and study. There have been a number of attempts to try and provide a detailed account of his own story from birth in Persia in 1058 to his upbringing under a Sufi master after becoming an orphan, his education in Nishāpūr under Imām al-Juwaynī (d. 1085), and his sources of knowledge in the Islamic disciplines, his rise to power and close association with the camp court of the powerful Saljuq vizier Nizām al-Mulk (d. 1092) and appointment as professor of the Nizāmiyah college in Baghdād in 1091, then his desertion of this prestigious position, his wondering and extensive travel around the Middle East followed by his subsequent return to teach and retire back in his own home town where he established a *khanqah* or hermitage to train young disciples in the theory and practice of Sufi life until his death nine hundred years ago in 1111. Scholars have always found it difficult to answer all the questions and gaps

arising from his story. The most recent study of Frank Griffel, *al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology* (2011), points to the significance of sources such as al-Ghazālī's own students and his later Persian letters to shed more light on some questions raised from his earlier career. The most dramatic moment of his life is the crisis, which beset him around 1095, marking a moment of shift. Again, scholars tend to argue that this crisis does not lend itself to clarity, though its effects on al-Ghazālī's inner journey are evident with the abundant level of complexity in his ideas.

In his reflections about his own story in *al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl*, al-Ghazālī tells how in his youth, a thirst to get at the truth of things was a habit and an object of his striving. It was an urge, a natural feature, *fiṭrah*, which God had implanted in his heart, independent of his volition and efforts. So, whilst he does not seem to accept blindly any tradition, he was a man who sought the truth and became active in different spheres, studied many traditions either to find support for his own convictions, or to abandon them.

But, if there is a level of consistency throughout his text, it is to be found in the formulation of an epistemology founded on the conception of Sufi *dhawq* or 'taste', based upon what he describes as a divinely-inspired introspection, a matter that suggests a close convergence with Christian mystical tradition, as found in the writings of Thomas Aquinas and Aegidius Romanus (d. 1316) among others. This makes him very important for the history of Western thought as well. For this legacy affects his philosophical and legal thought, all of which has political bearings not only on his own context but also of relevance to so much current political and legal discussions.

Huge amount of work has been written to answer the complex relationship he develops with the Arab philosophers who came before him. Whilst there are clear philosophical trends

in his thinking, he speaks with a concern for *kashf*, unveiling, that is the fruits of God's own free gift of light, and not of his own rational making. His epistemology of 'taste' allows al-Ghazālī to show what he perceived to be the dangerously speculative nature of philosophical premises. In this way, he anticipates much of our current discussions on the problems arising from modern positivism. He may not support the equal value of any discourse only because he believed it leads to an ideological ignorance. He does not believe that a universal statement about the world or the human condition can be reached by purely inductive methods, because such arguments cannot transcend the context in which they are made. Therefore one needs Revelation not simply as a limiting source of one's enquiry, but as the basis of what allows human beings to come to terms with greater learning and growth of true humanity in a way that they would not be able to do with their own rational powers. In this way, he would also be in agreement with Christian thinkers, except that both would have a different understanding what the content of that Revelation entails.

The philosophers were not the only group to confront his critique. Whilst he was an expert in *kalām*, dialectical Islamic theology, he criticized its uses among the 'awāmm, the simple believers, and was critical of the *mutakallimūn* and their claims of knowledge. As a jurist, he speaks of *fiqh* as it relates to spirituality with a comprehensive vision that is not simply limited to the establishment of jurists. Therefore, whilst scholars may have a fair number of reservations about al-Ghazālī's overall presentation, his characterization of *truth* is suggestive of his concern to look for meaning beyond self-assertive religiosity, allowing him to remain within the broad Ash'arī School of theology, albeit in a qualified manner. Thus, he excelled in all the traditional Islamic disciplines and expressed his understanding of them in his books, refuting some of them after exposing

their teachings, whilst in his *Ihyā'* expressing clearly his Nomo-centric Sufism.

This masterful synthesis of qualified Ash'arism together with his Shāfi'i legal allegiance and his Sufi sensitivities as reflected in his later texts on *kalām*, especially *Faysal al-Tafriqah*, reflects how his theological commitment and his controversial positions in politics at the time belong somehow together. From the standpoint of the vizier Niẓām al-Mulk, supporting al-Ghazālī meant enhancing the Ash'arī-Shāfi'i-Sufi synthesis, to which the Sultan, for reasons of state, was committed. Al-Ghazālī, in his turn, helped allay the suspicion towards Sufism felt by many Sunnite scholars, by the conduct of his own life, and by the quality of his own writings.

Scholars have often reflected on the untidy nature of al-Ghazālī's medieval society with its political and religious and social disintegration. For some, a sound critique of this medieval context is certainly not to be found with al-Ghazālī's religious sensitivities. Modern scholarship has often been reluctant to locate the provenance of justice in God. This is perhaps because it assumes that even to consider the initiative and sovereignty of God would necessarily limit the options of the investigation. Therefore, some Western Muslim and Western non-Muslim scholars deny that al-Ghazālī's given text expresses axial meaning and truth. Muhammad Arkoun sees al-Ghazālī's form of religion as an agent of closure, which blocks the road of inquiry, though he acknowledges al-Ghazālī's impact on the renewal of Islam's history. As religion in Islam provides systems of authority and order that call for submission, al-Ghazālī's appeal to the divine and esoteric seems to obscure healthy questioning and change for Arkoun. Indeed, modern sociological and anthropological deconstructions underpin Arkoun's reading of the Qur'ān. Similarly, the contemporary Arab poet 'Alī Aḥmad Sa'id, commonly known as Adunis, and his attack

on al-Ghazālī, blaming him for the lamentable conditions of the contemporary Muslim world and the defeat of reason in the Muslim intellectual traditions, is another example of rejecting al-Ghazālī's answers.

This rejection of al-Ghazālī reflects the variety of modern comparison techniques used as tools of judgment in the way the medieval Muslim society was perceived. Some classical works identify al-Ghazālī's world as distinct from modern concerns regarding truth-claims imposed upon the human consciousness in the name of revelation, and see the medieval Islamic society as 'moulded by political power'. This assumption is based on the fact that relating to principles of religion and morality as the source of social and political decisions stands over and against the whole order of social life, whatever its particular form is. Max Weber provided a classical modern application of this approach. However, it is our view that when it comes to al-Ghazālī's society, the picture remains more complex, and a sound critique of the flaws of al-Ghazālī's medieval society can rest on premises he himself understood and articulated better than his religious and philosophical sources, such as al-Fārābī and Avicenna (and their philosophical masters, Plato and Aristotle), and much better than Machiavelli, Hobbes and the other makers or heirs of the Enlightenment. His work is not ideological in the sense that he treats all its presuppositions and premises as open to rational consideration and argument. His epistemology of taste reflects that his primary vocation as a scholar was to be a theologian. Still, he believed that this required sound uncompromisingly critical analysis, whilst rejecting the speculative nature of the premises of philosophy as presented by Avicenna and al-Fārābī. Philosophy can be perfected when it resorts to historically given Revelation not available to philosophy or to the other sciences of nature as such. In this way, al-Ghazālī might want to say to a good deal of modern Western and Muslim thinkers that their imagination

has become weak because it too often allows the religious agenda to be set by conflicts over human power. He would not have much time for any form of modern elitist ideologies – religious or other otherwise!

**The Revd. Dr. Yazid Said**, Affiliate member of the Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University



## Al-Ghazālī and Science

Al-Ghazālī was not a practicing scientist nor did he pretend to be. Nevertheless, he had a major impact on the history of science in Islam and beyond. Beginning in the nineteenth century, many, if not most, western accounts of his influence have been generally negative. Indeed, an eminent scientist has recently proclaimed that “After al-Ghazzali [d. 1111], there was no more science worth mentioning in Islamic countries.” But more sober and scholarly views have revealed a much more nuanced and interesting al-Ghazālī. For instance, in his intellectual biography, he warns against the man, “loyal to Islam but ignorant,” who tries to defend the faith by “the denial of the mathematical sciences.” This could lead someone who understands the certainty of the mathematical proofs to conclude “that Islam is based on ignorance and the denial of apodeictic proof” and that such a person “grows in love for philosophy and hatred for Islam.” This was one of the reasons that al-Ghazālī advocated the teaching of logic and the mathematical sciences, especially insofar as they were useful for the Islamic community. And it is interesting to note, contrary to the stereotypes, that the teaching of mathematics, astronomy and logic flourished in numerous *madrāsas* (religious schools) *after* al-Ghazālī. But following al-Ghazālī’s admonitions against

being careless in attributing causes, we should resist the temptation to ascribe this acceptance or naturalization of ancient science to a single individual. Nevertheless al-Ghazālī’s influence in opening up space for science within the heart of Islamic teaching is undeniable.

There is another aspect of al-Ghazālī’s influence on science that we need to acknowledge. In his *Tahāfut al-falāsifah* (Incoherence of the Philosophers), he again and again takes a critical but non-dogmatic position toward Aristotelian natural philosophy, acknowledging that some of its propositions may be correct but that there are other, equally plausible alternatives. For example, in Discussion 14, al-Ghazālī sets out to prove that the philosopher’s view that the heavens are an animal with a soul that moves in obeisance to God remains unproven. Remarkably, one of his three alternative possibilities is that the heavens have their own principle of motion and thus move much as a falling stone moves here on Earth. He does not choose among the possibilities but simply argues that each is plausible. This may well be his most important contribution to science, encouraging debates on matters of great import. And contrary to what is usually held, we now know that these debates took place among Islamic theologians, philosophers and scientists over many subsequent centuries, indeed well into the modern period. As we can now see retrospectively, it was this questioning of Aristotelian natural philosophy that was critical for the emergence of a heliocentric cosmology and a new science. That this occurred outside the Islamic world should not diminish al-Ghazālī’s influence, an influence that may well have travelled outside the boundaries of Islam.

**F. Jamil Ragep**, Canada Research Chair in the History of Science in Islamic Societies, McGill University

## Al-Ghazālī and Philosophy

In the field of Islamic Studies, al-Ghazālī has long been presented as the preeminent medieval Muslim intellectual, although scholars have disagreed about whether al-Ghazālī's impact on Islamic thought was positive or negative. To some al-Ghazālī should be praised: he is described in the *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* as "the most original thinker that Islam has produced". Other scholars see al-Ghazālī as a reactionary defender of Sunnī Islamic Orthodoxy, one whose attack on Avicenna's philosophy dealt such a severe blow to rationalist speculation on religious matters that Islamic civilization never recovered and entered a long period of intellectual decline. This latter view is largely based largely on the *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, where al-Ghazālī made the case that by virtue of their belief in the world's co-eternity with God, their denial of God's knowledge of particular things and their denial of bodily resurrection, philosophers such as Avicenna deserved to be labelled as infidels.

Recent scholarship presents a more nuanced picture. One central concern of medieval Islamic thought, as with other monotheistic religions, was providing a coherent response to the questions, does God cause the world directly or indirectly, and does He do so voluntarily or necessarily? It turns out that al-Ghazālī's apparently inconsistent but actually quite subtle position on this issue reveals how he used Avicenna's ideas to construct a synthesis between the *falsafah* (i.e., Aristotelian and Neoplatonic philosophy) position that God creates indirectly and necessarily, and

the *kalām* (i.e., Islamic rational and systematic theology) position that God creates directly and voluntarily. The emerging scholarly consensus holds that far from being just a philosophy-basher, al-Ghazālī played a central role in the perpetuation and expansion of Islamic philosophical activity in Islam, in the form of an Avicennized *kalām*. In other words, what is important about al-Ghazālī is not so much his attack on the philosophers as his assiduous but largely covert incorporation of basic elements of Avicennian philosophy into mainstream Sunnī theology, and of the non-modal parts of Aristotelian syllogistic into mainstream Sunnī jurisprudence.

In the generation preceding al-Ghazālī and during the three or four generations following him, *kalām* changed dramatically as a result of this process of intellectual appropriation and naturalization. The post-classical period in Islamic intellectual history was an era increasingly dominated by academic institutions, and especially the *madrasah*: the college of law, theology and logic, of grammar and rhetoric, of *hadīth* and Qur'ān-interpretation, and (we now realize) of astronomy and mathematics. The Muslim thinkers who taught and studied and wrote in these institutions were highly trained scholars with a mastery over the various rationalist and traditionalist sciences of Islam. In the end, al-Ghazālī's role in helping to shape the era of the *madrasah* was his greatest contribution to Islamic civilization.

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## Al-Ghazālī on zombies and what to do when you drop your cellphone in the toilet

12

What makes a remarkable intellectual a great writer? What makes a text pass the test of time? It is, of course, the writing style of the author. Having interesting ideas are one thing - communicating them in a way that captivates the reader is wholly different. In a world where social media are killing spelling and punctuation, and where mass media are force-feeding us regurgitated, stale imagery and overused stereotypes, one may justifiably be frustrated that the art of writing is indeed an art; it can make or break a good idea. It seems that al-Ghazālī, though unfamiliar with Twitter and Fox News, knew very well that style is of the utmost importance, thus exploiting his talent of explaining difficult philosophical intricacies with vivid imagery, accessible to anyone and derived from daily life. This made his books far-reaching and added to their persuasiveness. It is also astounding how well al-Ghazālī's examples seem to relate even to our lives, 900 years later. This may of course be one of the driving forces behind al-Ghazālī's undiminished popularity. It is therefore safe to say that it is the combination of his brilliant mind and his excellent skills in writing and rhetoric that made him one of the most influential figures of humanity.

One of al-Ghazālī's favourite imagery's was the surgeon and his cup. In al-Ghazālī's time, a popular remedy for feeling under the weather was to consult a surgeon who would relieve one of 'impure blood'. After some moments of dizziness, people would tend to feel better (because the body produces new blood, boosting one's feeling of well-being), thereby 'proving' the surgeon had indeed managed to remove the foul blood and keep in the good blood. The former was caught in a cup by the surgeon, and it seems that this cup in particular

caught the attention of al-Ghazālī. In one of his most popular books, *The Deliverance from Error* (his autobiography), he contrasts this repulsive cup with sweet and tasty honey:

The lowest degree of education is to distinguish oneself from the ignorant ordinary man. The educated man does not loathe the honey even if he finds it in the surgeon's cup. Instead, he realizes that the cup does not essentially alter the honey. The natural aversion from it in such a case rests on popular ignorance, arising from the fact that the cup is made only for impure blood. Men imagine that the blood is impure because it is in the cup, and are not aware that the impurity is due to the blood itself. Since this property is absent from the honey, the fact that the honey is in such a container does not produce this property in it. It therefore does not follow that impurity should be attributed to the honey. To do so is fanciful and false.

The example, eating honey from a surgeon's cup, is wildly disgusting, and at the very least al-Ghazālī does show great confidence in the surgeon's cleaning capabilities of his cup. Because of the high gore level, however, he knew that his reader would not forget it. His example has, just from a stylistic perspective, so much force that even now we are disgusted by it and we will always think of al-Ghazālī and his example of the cup when we stare in despair at our phone lying at the bottom of the toilet. We know we flushed the toilet and that all the waste material has been replaced by clean water. Do we dare stick our hand and forearm into that water to grab our phone? According to al-Ghazālī we should have no hesitation to do this. That al-



Ghazālī used this example as a stylistic element is obvious from the fact that it can not only be found in *The Deliverance*, but also in many other writings —theological, juridical, mystical— and he in fact does not always use it to illustrate the same point. The commonality among all cases is however that the extreme shock value of the gory example takes the attention of the reader away from the actual argument at stake. By agreeing with the example, one consequently has to agree with the argument which is, in most cases, one that not everyone would find agreeable. In the example just given we may notice its quite potent concluding remark. “To do so is fanciful and false” seems to be in place to invoke the feeling of agreement on the side of the reader and squeeze out any room for dissent. No one wants to be fanciful or false! So, as it is better to err on the safe side, the reader automatically assumes the example to be correct. Doing otherwise would imply that al-Ghazālī thinks we are being fanciful and of a patently false opinion. But by agreeing to the example we now also have to concede the actual argument at stake, which is that people who we may resent for one reason or another, may have something of value for us in their culture and sciences. “Seek knowledge, even in China” says a famous *ḥadīth* (a statement made by the Prophet Muḥammad that has been recorded and preserved through the ages), but al-Ghazālī adds force to that one-liner: “Seek knowledge, even if it means you have to deal with those bloody Chinese!”, so al-Ghazālī wants to argue using the example of the surgeon’s cup.

Al-Ghazālī was not always out to win his audience through an amusing example, however. Sometimes he tried it the other way around, using a rational argument to engender an emotional response in his readership. In his *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, for example, his main goal is to put philosophy in its proper place. On many issues, he feels the philosophers used too simplistic arguments to construct theses that look attractive from a first glance,

but which may not be necessarily true. The autonomy of the human being is a good example of this. Philosophers in his age and time argued that human beings have free will, freedom to choose as they please. Because we see the harmony of will and action in human beings, it is easy to assume that whatever we do involves our free will, that we are making our choices ourselves as we wish. For example, we can think of a house and then actually build it. Al-Ghazālī’s philosophical counter-argument is that this thesis is based on itself: because we *think* we can do what we want to do, choose exactly as we wish, we conclude that we in fact *can* do what we want to do. But he does not write this in a straightforward fashion. It is as though he feels his audience (primarily philosophers who think they have unrestricted autonomy over themselves) will be too haughty to accept such a neutral argument. He therefore decides to hold a mirror up to his audience, asking them to think about the following:

God can create a will [that is, a sequence of choices of actions] without knowledge of the object willed [...] He can move a dead man’s hand, seating him and with the hand writing volumes and engaging in crafts, the man being all the while open-eyed, staring ahead of him, but not seeing and having no life and no power over [what is being done] —all these ordered acts being created by God together with the moving of [the man’s] hand, the moving coming from the direction of God. By allowing the possibility of this, there ends the distinction between the voluntary movement and the tremor.

The typical philosopher reading this, would reluctantly have to agree, line by line, step by step, with the possibility of all of this. But

throughout, a feeling of deep worry would grow: as the reader stares at the words he wonders why al-Ghazālī chose to make the zombie “write volumes”. If he would only say “bake cakes” it would be something a philosopher could not care less about, but writing volumes sounds eerily like something the philosopher could and would do. While the words unfold, we can picture the reader staring ahead, open-eyed, with a growing sense of doubt whether he is actually alive. All the proud journal articles and peer-reviewed books published; is it really something he did himself or could it just have been a tremor, a set of neurophysiological events over which he had no say whatsoever? The example elegantly shows the destructive force of philosophy. In just a few lines one can move the argument from the idea that humans have a godlike free will to that of humans being mere zombies, thereby stripping the proud philosopher of one of his most cherished possessions: his independent thinking. That is worrisome to say the least and it is undoubtedly the case that the arousal of this worry is the main objective of al-Ghazālī. His goal of putting philosophy in its proper place is thus achieved by having philosophers think twice before once again proudly proposing arguments for a thesis they would really like to be true. That this is his objective is clear when he returns to his words a few pages later, where he explains that it was just for argument’s sake that he argued that human beings are mere zombies. As long as you remember that God’s will always and forever trumps your own will, and that you should in fact be thankful to God that He made the world in such a way that we at least have the illusion that we can freely do what we like, you should be good.

L.W.C. (Eric) van Lit, M.A. 2011, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University



## The Concept of Divine Love According to al-Ghazālī

Many consider love to be the most sublime and highest human state. Love plays an important role in society, which is preceded only by the instinct to live. Most Sufi writers describe divine love in particular as one of the important stations or as the most important station on the mystical path. Despite the important role that love plays in the practice and understanding of Sufism, however, research into this topic remains unsatisfactory, and indeed much more study needs to be carried out to do justice to this important subject. The present study aims at examining the concept of divine love through the thought of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d.505/1111). Looking at the *Kitāb al-Maḥabbah* of his *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn* Kitāb, “The Revival of Religious Sciences,” and his *Kīmīyā-i Sa’ādat*, “The Alchemy of Happiness,” *Aṣl-i nuhum* (chapter 9), *Rukn-i Chāhārūm* (the fourth principle), I argue that his notion of love is very religious in nature; the ultimate goal in his perception of divine love is centered on worshiping God. According to al-Ghazālī, fear of God and His worship are the two qualifications that are required for man to demonstrate his/her true love towards Him and to attain divine love.

In the introduction to the *Kitāb al-Maḥabbah* of his *Iḥyā’*, al-Ghazālī explains:

Love for God is the ultimate aim among the stations and the highest summit among the degrees, for there is no station beyond the perception (*idrāk*) of love except

that it is a fruit among its fruits and consequence of its effects.<sup>1</sup>

Al-Ghazālī's foundation of love is drawn from Qur'ānic verses and certain ḥadīth. Citing the Qur'ān, for example "God loves those who fought for His sake" (4:61), and "God loves those who repent and those who cleanse themselves" (2:222), he defines the cause of God's love for man as a reward for the latter's faith.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, al-Ghazālī views man's love for God as the highest state he can achieve. It is the ultimate achievement of man in life.

At the same time he divides man's love for God into five types. He begins his discussion with citations of the Qur'ān and ḥadīth as pieces of evidence. Al-Ghazālī states that the Muslim community agrees unanimously that love for God and His messenger is an obligation (*fard*).<sup>3</sup> Otherwise, how can God oblige people to carry out what does not exist? Moreover, how can one interpret love to mean obedience, when obedience follows love? The Qur'ān attests to the existence of love: "... God will assuredly bring a people He loves, and who love Him ..."<sup>4</sup> Another verse teaches not only the existence of love, but also its different ranks: "... But those that believe love God more ardently ..."<sup>5</sup> Abū Hāmid does not develop a discussion beyond his statement that these two verses prove both the existence of love for God and its various degrees. He also cites traditions according to which this love is a prerequisite for belief in God, an obligation imposed by the

Prophet, a cause of meeting God in the afterlife, and a cause of happiness.<sup>6</sup> It seems that al-Ghazālī's main references are religious text, and that he followed the prophet's tradition and the Qur'ān in defining his idea of love. As he saw it, Muslims need to follow the tradition and fulfill their religious obligations in order to be qualified to love God.

Nevertheless, al-Ghazālī does not appear to attach much significance to these traditions and statements; for him, they are only a kind of formal introduction, a "plain thing" as he expresses it. Moreover, they do not even serve as points of departure for further discussion. This is because for him the real meaning of love is hidden, and the core of his presentation is to find it.

Al-Ghazālī argues that there is no meaning to love except the inclination towards that in which we perceive there is delight. He then lists five kinds of love which he believes comprise all modes of human love: "(1) the love of man for himself, his perfection (*kamāl*) and his subsistence; (2) his love for whoever does good to him because it helps him subsist and be complete; (3) his love for whoever does good out of appreciation for the good he does; (4) his love for all that is beautiful in its essence; and (5) his love for one with whom he has a hidden inner relationship."<sup>7</sup> But for al-Ghazālī, the only one who is truly worthy of any form of love is God: "Whoever loves what is other than God, and not because of its relationship to Him, this is due to his ignorance and his lack of knowledge of God."<sup>8</sup> He thus argues that "according to the people of insight, there is in reality no beloved except God or more worthy of love but Him."<sup>9</sup> So each of the five types of love is in fact love for God and is only complete in so far as it is

<sup>1</sup> al-Ghazālī, Abū Hāmid. *Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn*. ed. Ḥussein Khadiv Jam, Tehran: Bunyād-i Farhang-i Iran Press, 1358/1980. Vol. 4, p. 257

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 286.

<sup>3</sup> al-Ghazālī, A. *Kīmīā-i Saʿādat*. ed. Aḥmad Ārām, Tehran: Kitābkhāneh va Chāpkhāneh-i Markazī, 1319/1954. p. 829.

<sup>4</sup> Arberry, Arthur J. *Qur'ān Interpreted*. London : Oxford University Press, 1964. 5:54

<sup>5</sup> al-Ghazālī, A. *Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn*, Vol. 2, p. 165.

<sup>6</sup> al-Ghazālī A. *Kīmīā-i Saʿādat*, p.831.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. pp.832-833.

<sup>8</sup> al-Ghazālī A. *Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn*, Vol. 4, p. 263.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

realized as such. Drawing on religious texts, al-Ghazālī argues that man has to love God, that he is obliged according to the Islamic law to obey Him, and that his worship is therefore defined as Divine love. For al-Ghazālī it is very important that one realizes love of God in all five of these modes because true salvation lies in love for God.

In discussing the five phases of love, al-Ghazālī mostly uses the words *ḥubb* and *maḥabbah*, which can be reached by two means:

The first is by cutting oneself off from the attachments of the world and expelling the love of what is other than God from the heart. For the heart is like a container, it cannot hold vinegar for example as long as the water is not expelled from it: "God did not make for man two hearts in his breast." (33:4) The perfection of love is in loving God with all one's heart.<sup>10</sup>

Al-Ghazālī declares that among the signs of God's friendship and love is one's friendship with His words (the Qur'ān), his beloved messenger (the Prophet Muḥammad) or friendship with what belongs to Him. He then tells us that the way to love God is through fear. "Whoever loves God through timidity and fear, he becomes the closest to Him and receives God's attention and friendship."<sup>11</sup> Here he argues that fear and love are not separate qualities. He points two causes which strengthen the love for God: a) the removal from the heart of what connects man to this world and to the things other than God which man loves. Each object of love other than God decreases man's love for God. "The stations which we have mentioned, namely, repentance (*tawbah*), forbearance (*ṣabr*), abstinence (*zuhd*),

fear (*khawf*), and hope (*raja'*) are preamble to the acquisition of one of the basic elements of love which is the evacuation from the heart of anything except God.<sup>12</sup>

Al-Ghazālī distinguishes the love of the servant for the Creator from that of the love of the Creator for the servant. The love of the servant is for that from which it derives greater perfection, "And this is impossible for God, for every perfection, beauty, wonder, and magnificence is possible in the truth of the Divinity."<sup>13</sup> The love of God for man thus represents God's inclination towards Himself. In one of the most important passages of *Ihyā'*, he indicates that all love is ultimately God's love for himself:

No one has a view of Him in so far as he is other than Him; rather, one's view is of His essence and His acts only, and there is nothing in existence but His essence and His acts. Therefore as the verse said: "He loves them and they love Him" (5:54) means He truly loves them, for there is nothing in love but Himself, meaning that He is the eternity and there is nothing but his existence.<sup>14</sup>

Al-Ghazālī asserts that all love is essentially for God and from Him. Even the five stages of man's love for God are five ways in which God loves Himself through the love of His servant for Him. Since the existence of everything except God derives from the existence of God, which means that there is nothing but His essence and acts, then God does not contemplate anything except His essence and acts. Consequently, He loves only Himself -- in which all creation is naturally included.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 274.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 314.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 315.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 286.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

God's love for man is, al-Ghazālī states, the cause of man's love for Him. If God did not give man His gracious assistance, man would not love Him. Hence, the signs of man's love for God also derive from signs of God's love for man, and that is very likely because God's love for man brings about man's love for God.<sup>15</sup>

In conclusion, it seems that al-Ghazālī's theory of love is divinely-based, for it is directed toward God; it is also Islamic, for the ideas he presents are derived from the Qur'ān, mystical sayings and Prophetic traditions. He defines love as worshiping God. To support his arguments, he cites Islamic sources and at the same time implies that only Muslims are capable of loving God, and that the followers of other religions are not qualified to love or to be loved. This

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 329.

stands in clear contrast with the general Sufi notion, which leaves the door of love open to all human beings regardless of race, gender, color or religion.

Fear of God is, moreover, central to al-Ghazālī's theory of divine love. Unlike most Sufi teachings, which describe the lover as reckless, free and courageous, as one who gambles with his life, neither discouraged by any obstacles nor intimidated by any danger on the path, al-Ghazālī's theory of love is woven around fear. According to him, the perfect lover lives in a state of fear of God; for him, love for God is an obligation, and he cites Qur'ānic verses and traditions according to which this love is a prerequisite for a Muslim's belief in God.

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# The Exhibition

## Display Case One — McLennan Library

### The Institute of Islamic Studies' Ph.D. and M.A. Theses: al-Ghazālī

The Institute of Islamic Studies and the Islamic Studies Library were founded in 1952. Dr. Smith's vision was to create a place of study in which Muslim and Christian students from both East and West could sit side by side to encourage interfaith dialogue and understanding. One of the first seminars offered by the Institute in the inaugural year was entitled "al-Ghazālī," a clear indication of the importance of one of the foremost scholars of Islamic thought.

Al-Ghazālī's subject matter covers a wide-range of concepts, ideas and opinions that are central to the field of Islamic Studies. The Institute of Islamic Studies recognized the importance of al-Ghazālī immediately thus offering a seminar course on his thinking and writings. Since the Institute's founding in 1952 fifteen students have completed their M.A. or Ph.D. thesis on some aspect of al-Ghazālī. The selections illustrate the breadth of knowledge and study on al-Ghazālī by IIS students throughout the past 59 years. The earliest thesis dates from 1955 and the last printed volume was in 2004. The diversity of writings on and

about al-Ghazālī are noted. For example, Ümit Devji's M.A. Thesis (2003) entitled, *al-Ghazālī and Quantum Theory: A Comparative analysis of the Seventeenth discussion of Tahāfut al-falāsifah and Quantum theory*. Another such example is Nurman Said's M.A. Thesis (1992) entitled *al-Ghazālī's works and their influence on Islam in Indonesia*. There is also a monograph by Fathi Muthna (Ph.D. McGill, 2007) which was the end product of his Ph.D. thesis. Moreover, we also have on display the former Director of McGill Libraries, Dr. Eric Orsmy, introductory monograph on al-Ghazālī as well as a copy of his Ph.D. thesis (Princeton, 1981).

This case also contains a Qur'ān (Arabic Manuscript A20), a fine example of a 19th century Persian work. This Qur'ān is in Arabic accompanied by a Persian translation. We also have on display two specimens of calligraphy, one is a *ḥadīth*, a traditional saying of the Prophet Muḥammad (Arabic Calligraphy AC16) and the other specimen is a chapter from the Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Naḥl (Arabic Calligraphy AC82).







**Adams, Charles J., Wael B. Hallaq, and Donald P. Little.**

*Islamic Studies presented to Charles J. Adams.* Leiden: Brill, 1991.

BP53 I76 1991 Islamic Studies Library

**Arokiasamy, Lourduraj.**

*The Essential Elements of Taubah in the Writings of al-Ghazālī.* Montreal, QC: McGill University, 1982.

AS42 M3 1983 A769 Islamic Studies Library

**Asari, Hasan.**

*The Educational Thought of al-Ghazālī: Theory and Practice.* Montreal, QC: McGill University, 1993.

AS42 M3 1993 A753 Islamic Studies Library

**Devji, Ümit Yoksuloglu.**

*Al-Ghazālī and Quantum Physics: A Comparative Analysis of the Seventeenth Discussion of Tahāfut Al-Falāsifa and Quantum Theory.* Montreal, QC: McGill University, 2003.

AS42 M3 2004 D487 Islamic Studies Library

**Kamālī, Sabih Ahmad.**

*Ghazālī's Tahāfut al-falāsifah (Destruction of the philosophers) / al-Ghazālī.* Montreal, QC: McGill University, 1955.

AS42 M3 1955 K14 Islamic Studies Library

**Kamarudin, Russli.**

*Political Philosophy of al-Ghazzālī: An Analysis.* Montreal, QC: McGill University, c1997.

AS42 M3 1998 K363 Islamic Studies Library

**Mitha, Farouk.**

*Al-Ghazālī and the Ismailis : a debate on reason and authority in medieval Islam /*

*Farouk Mitha.* London: I.B. Tauris, in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2001.

B753 G34 M58 2001 Islamic Studies Library

**Mitha, Farouk.**

*Re-reading al-Ghazālī : orthodoxy, reason and authority in the Kitāb al-Mustazhirī.* Montreal, QC: McGill University, c1993.

AS42 M3 1993 M573 Islamic Studies Library

**Nurbaethy, Andi.**

*Development of al-Ghazālī's concept of the knowledge of God in his three later works : Ihyā', al-Munqidh, and Iljām al-Awāmm.* Montreal, QC: McGill University, c1998.

AS42 M3 1999 N8736 Islamic Studies Library

**Said, Nurman.**

*Al-Ghazālī's works and their influence on Islam in Indonesia.* Montreal, QC: McGill University, c1992.

AS42 M3 1993 S25 Islamic Studies Library

**Ormsby, Eric L.**

*Theodicy in Islamic Thought: The Dispute Over Al-Ghazālī's "Best of All Possible Worlds."* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984.

BP166.2 O76 1984 Islamic Studies Library

**Ormsby, Eric L.**

*Ghazali: The Revival of Islam.* Oxford, England: Oneworld, 2008.

BP80 G3 O76 2008 Islamic Studies Library

**Qomariyah, Siti.**

*Al-Ghazzālī's Theory of Munāsaba in the Context of the Adaptability of Islamic Law.* Montreal, QC: McGill University, c1994.

AS42 M3 1994 Q65 Islamic Studies Library





When the Institute first opened, Dr. W.C. Smith, colleagues and students regularly gathered for afternoon tea to discuss the program and related matters. Photo taken c.1955.

## Display Case Two—McLennan Library

الغزالي: إحياء علوم الدين

### *The Revival of the Religious Sciences: al-Ghazālī*

*The Revival of the Religious Sciences* is al-Ghazālī's most famous work. The text comprises 40 volumes and strives to cover every aspect of a Muslim's life. Moreover, in the Muslim world, it is thought to be the most widely-read and studied text after the Qur'ān. It is divided into four sections: the first is occupied with knowledge and the requirements of faith; the second section concerns itself with people and society such as marriage, manners, and friendship; the third and fourth sections are concerned with the soul and how to live a virtuous life. On display, we had many different selections of *The Revival of the Religious Sciences* in a number of different

languages. Moreover, three manuscripts were on display, two of which are chapters from *The Revival*. The third manuscript is a Persian work entitled *The Alchemy of Happiness* which is an abridged version of *The Revival*. The three codices on display were purchased c. 1930 in Hyderabad, India for the prominent McGill ophthalmologist, ornithologist, and bibliophile, Dr. Casey Wood by the Ismaili scholar Dr. Wladimir Ivanow.

The case also contained a *Qur'ān* (Arabic Manuscript A17), composed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and one specimen of calligraphy which in fact is a *Sūrah* from the *Qur'ān*, *Sūrat al-Qadr* (Arabic Calligraphy AC60).





## Ghazālī, 1058-1111.

*Abstinence in Islam : Kasr al Shahwatayn (Curbing the two appetites) from Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn (Revivification of the Sciences of Religion);* translation and notes by Caesar E. Farah. Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1992.

BP184.4 G47 1992 Islamic Studies Library

*Das Elixier der Glückseligkeit / von al-Ghasali ;* aus den persischen und arabischen Quellen in auswahl übertragen von Hellmut Ritter. Jena: E. Diederichs, 1923.

B753 G33 I32163 1923 Islamic Studies Library

*The Alchemy of Happiness.* Translated into the German by Hellmut Ritter. The text was published in Jena, Germany by E. Diederichs in 1923. This is the sixth volume of a series of religious texts published in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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*Iksīr-i hidāyat : tarjumah-yi Urdū yi-Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat / az taṣnīfāt-i Imām Ḥujjat al-Islām qutb-i ʿāsimān-i bīmīsālī Imām Muḥammad Ghazzālī;* mutarjim Fakhrudīn Aḥmad. [Lakhna<sup>o</sup>: Naval Kishor, 1890].

folio ISLAM C7 G41k Rare Books / Special Collections – Islamic Studies Collection

*The Alchemy of Happiness.* Translated into the Urdu by Fakhrudīn Aḥmad. The lithograph was published at Naval Kishor in Lucknow, India in 1890.

*Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn / taṣnīf al-Imām Abī Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī. Wa-bi-dhaylihi kitāb al-Mughnī ʿan ḥaml al-asfār fī al-asfār fī takhrīj mā fī al-Iḥyā' min al-akhbār. Miṣr:* al-Maktabah al-Tijārīyah al-Kubrā, [195-?].

B753G33 I3 1950z Islamic Studies Library

*The Revival of the Religious Sciences.*

The text was printed in Cairo in the 1950s. The publishing house, al-Maktabah al-Tijārīyah al-Kubrā published many works on philosophy, theology and Sufism. On display is volume three of the five volume set.

*Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn Urdū / taḥf, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī ;* tarjumah Nadīm al-Vājidi. Devband: Dārulkitāb, [199-?].

B753 G33 I3189 1990z Islamic Studies Library

*The Revival of the Religious Sciences.* Translated into the Urdu by Nadīm al-Vājidi. This edition was printed in Devband, Uttar Pradesh, India in the early 1990s. On display is volume three of the six volume set.

*Imam Ghazzali's Ihya ulum-id-din / translated by* Fazul-ul-Karim. Lahore: Sind Sagar Academy, [1971?].

B753 G33 I313 1971 Islamic Studies Library

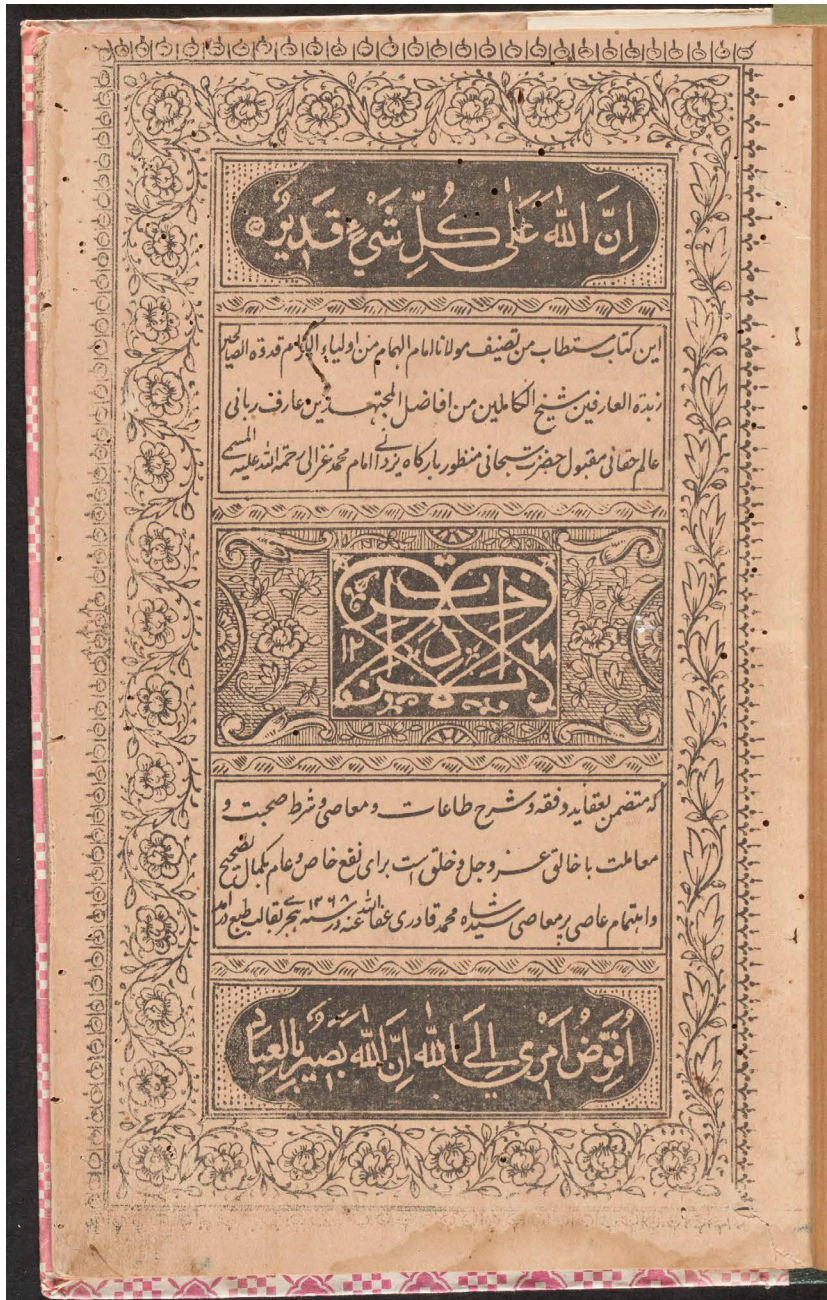
*Maladies de l'âme et maîtrise du coeur : Livre XXII de l'Iḥyā' Ulūm al-dīn intitulé : livre de la discipline de l'âme, de l'éducation des comportements moraux et du traitement des comportements moraux / Abū Ḥāmid al Ghazzālī ;* préface par Maurice Borrmans ; introduction, traduction et notes par Marie-Thérèse Hirsch. Paris: Cerf, 2007.

BJ1533 D49 G4814 2007 Islamic Studies Library

*Le livre du licite et de l'illicite / Al-Ġazālī ;* introduction, traduction et notes par Régis Morelon. Paris: J. Vrin, 1981.

BP188 G473614 1981 Islamic Studies Library





Ghazālī, 1058 – 1111.

Zād-i ākhirat / taṣḥīḥ va ihtimām-i Sayyid Shāh Muḥammad Qādirī.

C6.G41199z Rare Books / Special Collections – Islamic Lithographs

*The Provision of the Hereafter*, a rare Persian lithograph. The work was printed in India in 1851 or 1852.

**Ghazālī, 1058 – 1111.**

*Muḥammad al-Ġazzālīs Lehre von den Stufen zur Gottesliebe : die Bücher 31-36 seines Hauptwerkes / eingeleitet, übersetzt und kommentiert von Richard Gramlich.* Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1984.

B753 G33 I3215 1984 Islamic Studies Library

*The Revival of the Religious Sciences.* Selections translated into the German by Richard Gramlich. The selections come from books 31-36 of the forty books of *The Revival*. The text was printed in Wiesbaden, Germany by F. Steiner.

*The mysteries of fasting : being a translation with notes of the Kitāb asrār al-ṣawm of al-Ghazzālī's "Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn"* / translated by Nabih Amin Faris. Lahore, Pakistan: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1968.

B753 G33 I34613 1968 Islamic Studies Library

*Some moral and religious teachings of al-Ghazzālī.* / translated by Syed Nawab Ali. Lahore: Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1946.

B753 G33 I3213 1946 Islamic Studies Library

*Temps et prières : prières et invocations : extraits de l'Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-Dīn / Al-Ghazâlî ; traduits de l'arabe, présentés et annotés par Pierre Cuperly.* Paris: Sindbad, c1990.

B753 G33 I3214 1990 Islamic Studies Library

**al-Zabīdī, Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Murtaḍá, 1732 / 3 – 1791.**

*Kitāb Iḥāf al-sādah al-muttaqīn bi-sharḥ asrār Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn / taṣnīf Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī al-Zabīdī al-shahīr bi-Murtaḍá.* Miṣr: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Maymanīyah, 1311 [1893 or 1894].

folio B753 G33 I3357 1893 Rare Books / Special Collections – Islamic Studies Collection

*The Book of the gift of God-Fearing Siyyids as explanation of the secrets of the Revival of the Religious Sciences.* This is the most complete commentary on *The Revival*. It is ten volumes and was published in Cairo in 1893/1894.







حساب

بدر عدد

وَعَلَى ثَلَاثَةِ الدِّينِ حُلْمُوا حَتَّى إِذَا ضَاءَتْ  
 قَت عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ وَضَاءَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ  
 وَظَنُّوا أَنْ لَا نَجَاةَ لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَهُهُمُ ثُمَّ نَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَبُؤُهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ  
 اللَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَابُ الرَّحِيمُ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا  
 مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ مَا كَانَ لِأَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُمْ مِنَ  
 الْأَعْرَابِ أَنْ يَخْلِفُوكَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَرْغَبُوا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ مِنْ ذَلِكَ  
 بَأْتُمْ لَا تَصِيبُكُمْ ظُلْمٌ وَلَا نَصَبٌ وَلَا مَخْصَةٌ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَطْغُونَ  
 مَوْطِئًا يَغِيظُوكَ لَكُنَّازٌ وَلَا يَنَالُونَ نَيْلًا إِلَّا أَنْ يَكْتَسِبُوا  
 بِهِ هَمَلٌ صَالِحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْحَسَنِينَ وَلَا يَتَفَقُونَ  
 نَفَقَةً صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً وَلَا يَقْطَعُونَ وَادِيًا إِلَّا  
 كَتَبَ لَهُمْ بَيْعًا يُمْسِكُهُمْ اللَّهُ فَاصْتَسْخَرُوا مِنْكُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ  
 وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْمِنُوا بِلَيْفٍ فَكَانُوا  
 لَا تَفْرِينِ كُلَّ فَرِيَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ  
 لِيَتَقَضُوا عَلَى الدِّينِ وَيُسْتَدَّ بِهَا قَوْمٌ فَأَرْجَعُوا  
 إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قِيلُوا الَّذِينَ  
 يَلُونَكُمْ مِنَ الْكُفْرَانِ لَيْسُوا بِكُمْ وَلَا يَدْعُوا  
 اللَّهُ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ وَإِذَا مَا أُنزِلَتْ سُورَةٌ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ  
 أَيُّكُمْ زَادَتْهُ هَذِهِ إِيمَانًا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَرَأَوْهُمُ إِيمَانًا وَهُمْ  
 يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَتْهُمْ رِجْسًا  
 إِلَى رِجْسِهِمْ وَأَعَدَّوْا لَهُمْ كَأْسًا فَزَرَقُوا الْأُولَى بَرُونَ أَنْهُمْ  
 يَقْتَنُونَ فِي كُلِّ عَامٍ مَكَّةَ أَوْ مَدْيَنَ ثُمَّ لَابِسُوا بُرُودًا وَلَا يَحْمُ  
 يَدُ كُرُونٍ وَإِذَا مَا أُنزِلَتْ سُورَةٌ نَظَرَ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ  
 هَلْ يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ تُفَصِّلُ الْوَأَسْرَ فَإِنَّهُ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِأَيْمَانِهِمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ  
 أَفَلَمْ يَجَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزَبَ عَنَّا عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ  
 عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ دَؤُوبٌ فَكَيْفَ يُحْمَلُ فَانِ تَوَلَّوْا فَعَلَّ  
 حَسْبًا إِنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ قَوْلُكُمْ  
 وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ

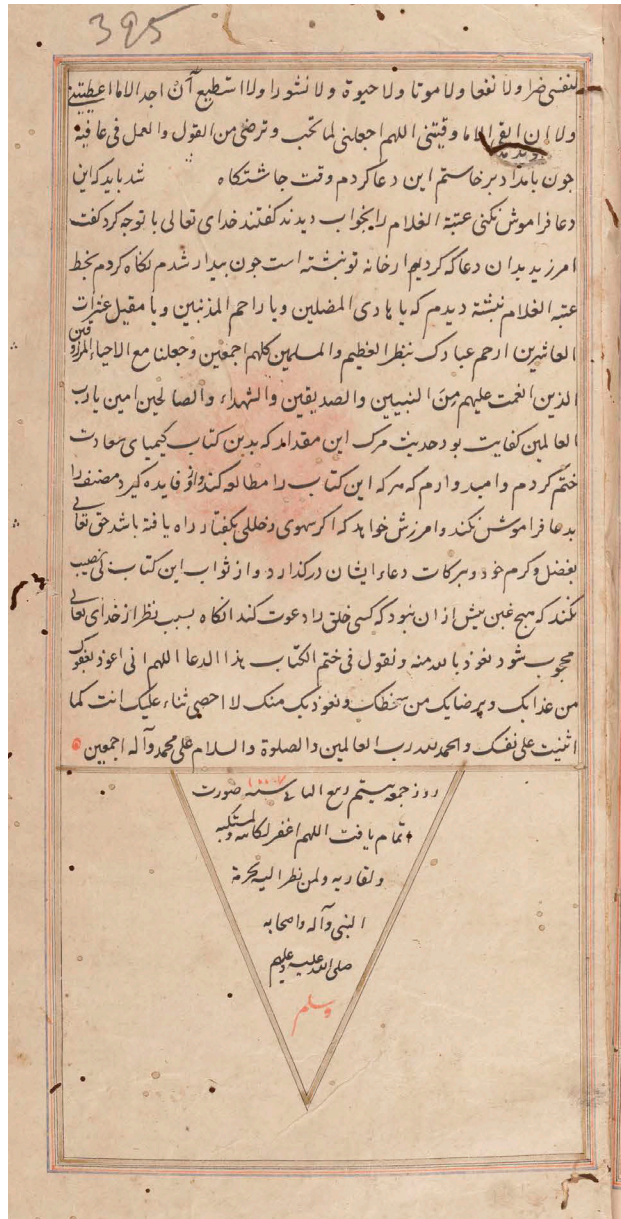
Qur'an.

Written by Muḥammad al-°Ilmī, a pupil of Muḥammad al-°Alā°ī Muḥammad °Abd Allāh, on European laid paper, in a very small, fully vocalized Naskh hand in black ink.

Copied in 1240 A.H. / 1824-5 A.D.

Arabic manuscripts A17 Rare Books / Special Collections





Ghazālī, 1058 – 1111.

*Kimīyā' al-sa'ādah*. / Written in Indian nasta'liq hand, with a simple decorated headpiece.

Dated Rabī' al-thānī 1007 A.H. / 1598 A.D.

Ivanow MS95 Rare Books / Special Collections – Blacker-Wood Collection

*The Alchemy of Happiness*. This manuscript was purchased by the Oriental scholar, Dr. Wladimir Ivanow for Dr. Casey Wood in 1928 in Lucknow, India. *Kimīyā' al-sa'ādah*. Written in Indian nastaliq hand, with a simple decorated headpiece.

## Display Case Three—McLennan Library

### The life and publications of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī 1058-1111 A.D.

Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, also known as Algazel, was born in 1058 in the city of Tūs in the province of Khurāsān, Iran.

Al-Ghazālī received a traditional Islamic education. In 1070, he went to Gurgān, Iran and enrolled in a *madrasah* (religious school) where he studied for seven years. In 1080, he travelled to Nishāpūr, Iran and became a student of the Sunnī theologian Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī (d.1085) with whom he stayed until 1085.

Around this time, he was invited by the vizier of the Seljuq Empire, Nizām al-Mulk al-Tūsī (d.1092) to join his court. In 1091, he was appointed chief professor in the Niẓāmiyah madrasah (religious university) in Baghdād recognized as one of the most well-known universities at that time. Al-Ghazālī lectured to more than 300 students, and his writings on Islamic law, theology, and philosophy made him popular in the Islamicate in general.

From 1095 to 1106, he passed through a spiritual crisis which drove him to give up his academic career, and to leave Baghdād. He spent some time in Damascus and Jerusalem, and visited Medina and Mecca. In 1106, al-Ghazālī went back to the Niẓāmiyah in Nishāpūr for a short period of time before returning to Tūs where he died in December 1111.

### Al-Ghazālī's visit to Syria

Al-Ghazālī was 38 years old when he decided to leave Baghdād, abandoning a promising academic career, and moving to Syria. He would later sojourn to Jerusalem and Hebron before going on pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia in 1096.

The following passage is his own description of his life in Damascus, extracted from his autobiography entitled *The Deliverance from error*. The following extract comes from W. Montgomery-Watt's *The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazālī*:

In due course, I entered Damascus, and there I remained for nearly two years with no other occupation than the cultivation of retirement and solitude, together with religious and ascetic exercises, as I busied myself purifying my soul, improving my character and cleansing my heart for the constant recollection of God most high, as I had learnt from my study of mysticism. I used to go into retreat for a period in the mosque of Damascus, going up the minaret of the Mosque for the whole day and shutting myself in so as to be alone.





**Map of Damascus.**

“Damascus, urbs nobilissima ad Libanum montem Totius Syriae Metropolis.” Georg Braun & Franz Hogenberg, Cologne, 1588.

Map Collection Rare Books / Special Collections

**Ghazālī, 1058 – 1111.**

*Maqāsid al-falāsifah fī al-mantiq wa-al-ḥikmah al-ilāhīyah wa-al-ḥikmah al-ṭabīʿīyah / li-hujjat al-Islām al-Ghazzālī ; ṭabaʿa ʿala nafaqat Muḥiyyi al-Dīn Šabrī al-Kurdī. Miṣr: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Maḥmūdīyah al-Tijārīyah, 1936.*

B753 G33 M36 1936 Islamic Studies Library

*Aims of the philosophers on divine logic and wisdom, and on natural wisdom.* This is a fine example of al-Ghazālī questioning philosophers and philosophy in general. This work was one of the first texts to be translated from Arabic to Latin occurring in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. This edition was printed in Egypt in 1936.

*Minhāj al-ʿābidīn / li-Abī Ḥamid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī al-Ṭūsī ; wa-bi-hāmishihi al-kitāb al-musammā Bidāyat al-hidāyah lil-muʿallif ayḍan. Miṣr: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabīyah, ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-Shurakāʾuh, [19--].*

BP189.6 G49 1900z Islamic Studies Library

*Methodology of the worshipers.* This text contemplates various aspects of Sufism. While the work is attributed to al-Ghazālī, there is some question to its authenticity. This work was printed in Egypt in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Mīzān al-ʿamal / lil-Imām al-Ghazzālī ; Ḥaqqāqahu wa-qaddama lahu Sulaymān Duniyā. Miṣr: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1964.*

BJ1291 G43 1964 Islamic Studies Library

*Criterion of Action.* This work is on Sufism and the metaphysics of belief. While this text is attributed to al-Ghazālī there is some question to its authenticity. The text was published in Egypt in 1964.

*Al-Munqidh min al-dalāl wa-mawṣil ilá dhī al-ʿizzah wa-al-jalāl / taʿlif Abī Ḥamid al-Ghazzālī; haqqāqahu wa-qaddama lahu Jamīl ʿalībā, Kāmil ʿAyyād. [Dimashq]: Matbaʿat al-Jamiʿah Dimashqi, 1960.*

B753 G33 M8 1960 Islamic Studies Library

*The Deliverance from Error, and the way to the One with Honour and Magnificence.* This text is considered to be al-Ghazālī's autobiography. This edition was printed in Damascus in 1960.

*The niche of lights = Mishkāt al-anwār ; a parallel English-Arabic text / translated, introduced, and annotated by David Buchman. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1998.*

BP189.26 G3913 1998 Islamic Studies Library

*The ninety-nine beautiful names of God = al-Maqṣad al-asnā fī sharḥ asmāʿ Allāh al-ḥusnā / al-Ghazzālī ; translated with notes by David B. Burrell and Nazih Daher. Cambridge [England] : Islamic Texts Society, 1992.*

BP166.2 M49613 1992 Islamic Studies Library

*Shifāʿ al-ghalīl fī bayān al-shabah wa-al-mukhīl wa-masālik al-taʿlīl / li-Abī Ḥamid al-Ghazzālī Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī ; taḥqīq Ḥamad al-Kubaysī. Baghdād: Maṭbaʿat al-Irshād, 1971.*

KBP440.62 G4 A37 1971 Islamic Studies Library

*Appeasement of the resentment in the description of similarity, and imaginings and methods explanation.* The text contemplates various aspects of Islamic law and was printed in Baghdād in 1971.

*Tahāfut al-falāsifah / lil-Imām al-Ghazālī ; ṣaḥḥaḥahu wa-ʿallaqa ʿalayhi wa-qaddama lahu Sulaymān Duniyā. Al-Qāhirah: ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Halabī, [1947].*

B753 G33 T13 1947 Islamic Studies Library

*Incoherence of the philosophers.* The philosopher ibn Rushd (Averroës) would later write a response entitled *Incoherence of the incoherence.* This text was printed in Cairo in 1947.

**Hazard, Harry W. 1918 –**

*Atlas of Islamic history / compiled by Harry W. Hazard ; maps executed by H. Lester Cooke, Jr., and J. McA. Smiley.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1952.

folio G1785 H3 1952 Islamic Studies Library

**Nawawī, 1233 – 1277.**

*al-Tanqīh fī sharḥ al-Wasīṭ lil-Imām Abī Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī / taṣnīf Yahyá ibn Sharaf ibn Marī ibn Ḥasan ibn Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-Nawāwī ; taḥqīq wa-ta'liq Nāyif ibn Nāfi° al-°Umarī.* [Cairo]: Dār al-Manār, 1997-

KCL G4453 N39 1997 Islamic Studies Library

*Modification to the commentary of the intermediary by the Imām Abī Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī.* This is a commentary on al-Ghazālī's works on Islamic law. The text was printed in Cairo in 1997.



قَالَ الْإِمَامُ أَبُو الْعَبَّاسِ الْمُتَّقِي رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ  
 فَصَدَّتْ دِيَارُ مِصْرٍ أُرِيدَ طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ مِنَ الْإِمَامِ أَبِي جَامِدٍ بْنِ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ حَبِوَةَ  
 الْمِصْرِيِّ رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَوَلَمَّتْ حَدِيثَ خَالِدِ بْنِ وَليدِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ  
 عَنْهُ فَأَمَرَنِي بِصَوْمِ سَنَةٍ كَمَا مَلَئْتُمْ عَاوِدَتَهُ فِي ذَلِكَ فَأَخْبَرَنِي  
 بِإِسْتَادِهِ عَزَمْنَا بَعْضَهُ عَنِ خَالِدِ بْنِ وَليدِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ  
 جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ سَلْ عَمَّا يُعِينِي  
 فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَالْآخِرَةَ قَالَ لَهُ سَلْ عَسَا بَدَا لَكَ فَقَالَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهُ أَجِبْ  
 أَنْ أَكُونَ أَعْنَى النَّاسِ فَقَالَ كُنْ قَافِيًا ذَكَرَ غِنَى النَّاسِ  
 فَقَالَ لِحُبِّ أَنْ أَكُونَ خَيْرَ النَّاسِ فَقَالَ خَيْرُ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَنْفَعُ  
 النَّاسَ فَكُنْ نَافِعًا لَهُمْ فَقَالَ أَجِبْ أَنْ أَكُونَ أَعْدَلَ النَّاسِ  
 فَقَالَ حُبِّ النَّاسِ لِنَفْسِكَ حَرِّهِ الْفَقِيرَ الْحَقِيرَ الْمَذْتَبِ  
 عَبْدُ الْقَادِرِ الْجَلِيلِ بِإِمَامٍ زَادَهُ بِحَافِظِ الْقُرْآنِ

34

**Ḥadīth.**

°Abd al-Qadar al-Ḥamdī.

Naskh. Undated.

Arabic Calligraphy AC15 Rare Books / Special Collections

Ḥadīth refers to deeds and actions as well as sayings attributed to the Prophet Muhammad. Each ḥadīth consists of a list of persons who witnessed or verified the transmission of a ḥadīth, this is known as isnād. In this selection there are a number of signatures confirming the ḥadīth. This ḥadīth is concerned with living a virtuous life and helping others.





**Qur'ān.**

Written on European glazed wove paper of biscuit tincture in a fully vocalized Naskh hand by Ḥāfiẓ Aḥmad ʿIlmī, a pupil of Muḥammad al-Ḥamdī known as Nafs al-Bakbāzārī Bawāsh Zāda. It is the fifth copy of the Qur'an executed by his hand.

The codex opens with a richly illuminated double frontispiece characterized by a floral design which is also used for marginal medallions.

It is dated 1284 A.H. / 1867 – 1868 A.D.

Arabic Manuscripts A18 Rare Books / Special Collections

## Display Case Four—McLennan Library

### Influences of al-Ghazālī

Al-Ghazālī remains one of the most influential scholars in the world. His works covered a wide variety of subjects and topics. Moreover, his writing style made these works accessible thus contributing to his popularity.

Perhaps the greatest influence for al-Ghazālī was his teacher Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī, (d.1085) who wrote a number of texts including *Kitāb al-irshād ilā qawāṭiʿ al-adilla fī uṣūl al-iʿtiqād* (A guide to conclusive proofs for the principles of belief). Another major influence was Abū Ṭālib Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī Makkī (d. 996), particularly his work *Qūt al-qulūb* (Nourishments of the heart).

Many scholars have written extensively on al-Ghazālī, one of whom was the famous philosopher, Ibn Rushd (d. 1198) or more commonly known as Averroës in the West. Averroës focused on al-Ghazālī's *The Incoherence of the Philosophers* by refuting al-Ghazālī's disputations with philosophy.

Finally, al-Ghazālī has been compared to many European philosophers, for example René

Descartes (d. 1650) and Blaise Pascal (d. 1662). Al-Ghazālī remains one of the most important and influential figures to this day, 900 years after his passing.

Al-Ghazālī was able in his time to work with some of the prominent Greek philosophers such as Aristotle while at the same time synthesizing these thoughts with the works of his contemporaries. This in turn has had a lasting impact on European, Jewish, Middle Eastern thinkers, whether they are philosophers, theologians, mystics or jurists, up to the present. This influence of al-Ghazālī's writings on the ways in which we look at and understand our world makes al-Ghazālī one of the world's most discussed and respected authors.

This case displayed some of the breadth and depth of influences on him and to whom he influenced. The works on display come from the Islamic Studies Library as well as from the collection of the late Prof. Raymond Klibansky, a prominent McGill philosopher, whose library is held in Rare Books and Special Collections.





**Qurʾān.**

Written on thick European laid paper, in a bold, fully vocalized Maghribī hand. The text begins with an illuminated headpiece containing an invocation against Satan.

The name of the calligrapher is not given. According to the colophon this is Volume 5 of a set of 12 executed in 1144 A.H. / 1731 A.D.

Arabic Manuscripts A21 Rare Books / Special Collections



**Averroës, 1126 – 1198.**

*Tahafot at-Tahafot*. Texte arabe établi par Maurice Bouyges. Beyrouth: Impr. catholique, 1930.

B749 T3 1930 Islamic Studies Library

*Incoherence of the incoherence*. This is the philosopher Averroës' response to al-Ghazālī's *The Incoherence of the philosophers*. The text was published in Beirut in 1930.

**Aristotle.**

*Aristotelis Organon graece / novis codicum auxiliis adiutus recognovit, scholiis ineditis et commentario instruxit Theodorus Waitz*. Lipsiae: Sumtibus Hahnii, 1844-1846.

PA3893 O7 1844 Rare Books/Special Collections – Raymond Klibansky Collection

**Carra de Vaux, Bernard.**

*Gazali* / Paris: Félix Alcan Éditeur, 1902.

C6 312g Rare Books / Special Collections – Islamic Studies Collection

**Descartes, René, 1596 – 1650.**

*Renati Des Cartes Specimina philosophiae, seu, Dissertatio de method recte regendae rationis, & veritatis in scientiis investigandae; Dioptrice,*

*et Meteora / ex Gallico translata, & ab auctore perlecta, variisque in locis emendata*. Amsterdami: Apud Johannem Janssonium juniorem, 1656.

B1843 L3 C6 1656 Rare Books / Special Collections

**Ghazālī, 1058 – 1111.**

*Zedeleer naar Ghazzâli / Soendanesche tekst met Inleiding en aantekeningen van G. J. Grashuis*. Leiden: A. W. Sitjthoff, 1874.

BP188 G472517 1874 Rare Books / Special Collections – Islamic Studies Collection

*Etiquette according to Ghazali*. A. W. Sitjthoff briefly spells out the situation of Muslim learned men on West-Java. They seem to restrict themselves to just a few texts, of which this text, *Kitab Tasaoep* (Book of Mysticism, i.e. on practical ethics), in the local language of Sundanese, is one.

*The incoherence of the philosophers = Tahāfut al-falāsifah: a parallel English-Arabic text / translated, introduced, and annotated by Michael E. Marmura*. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1997.

B753 G33 T3313 1997 Islamic Studies Library



**Hadith.**

Sayyid °Uthman al-Rushdī.

Naskh.Undated.

Arabic Calligraphy AC10 Rare Books / Special Collections

*Hadīth refers to deeds and actions as well as sayings attributed to the Prophet Muhammad. This hadīth provides advice through sayings of the Prophet Muhammad on remaining calm, living a pious life, and prayer.*



**Khalifah, Sha°bān °Abd al-°Azīz.**

*Miftāḥ al-sa°ādah wa-miṣbāḥ al-siyādah fī mawḍū°āt al-°ulūm li-Ṭāshkūbrīzādah : dirāsah bayūjrāfiyah bibliyūrāfiyah bibliyūmatrīyah wa-kishāfāt / Sha°bān Khalīfah, Walīd Muḥammad al-°Awzah. al-Qāhirah: al-°Arabī lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī°, 1993.*

AE3 T33 K43 1993 Islamic Studies Library

This biographical work offers a lengthy overview of al-Ghazālī. This edition was printed in Cairo in 1993.

**Makkī, Abū Ṭālib Muḥammad ibn °Alī, d. 996.**

*Qūt al-qulūb.* [Cairo]: Maṭba°ah al-Miṣrīyah, 1932.

BP188.9 M325 1932 Islamic Studies Library

*Nourishments of the heart.* This text on Sufism and governing the inner life had a tremendous impact on al-Ghazālī. This edition was printed in Cairo in 1932.

**Miskawayh, Abū °Alī Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, d. 1030.**

*Kitāb Tahdhīb al-akhlāq wa-taḥhīr al-a°rāq / li-Abī °Alī Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-ma°rūf bi-Ibn Miskawayh. [Cairo]: al-Maṭba°ah al-Ḥusaynīyah, 1329 [1911].*

BJ1291 I27x 1911 Islamic Studies Library

*The Cultivation of morals and the purification of the roots.* This text on ethics had an influential impact on al-

Ghazālī. This edition was printed in Cairo in 1911.

**Morewedge, Parviz.**

*The Metaphysica of Avicenna (ibn Sīnā): a critical translation-commentary and analysis of the fundamental arguments in Avicenna's Metaphysica in the Dānish nāma-i °Alā°i (The book of scientific knowledge).* New York: Columbia University Press, 1973.

B751 Z7 M67 1973 Rare Books / Special Collections – Raymond Klibansky Collection

**Pascal, Blaise, 1623 – 1662.**

*Pensées de M. Pascal sur la religion, et sur quelques autres sujets.* Amsterdam: Chez Henry Wetstein, [ca. 1700].

B1901 P4 1700 Rare Books / Special Collections

**Subki, Taj al-Din Abd al-Wahhab ibn Ali, ca. 1327-1370.**

*Ṭabaqāt al-Shafīyah al-kubrā / li-Taj al-Din Abi Nasr Abd al-Wahhab ibn Ali ibn Abd al-Kafi al-Subki ; taḥqīq Mahmud Muhammad al-Tanahi [wa] Abd al-Fattah Muhammad al-Hilw. [al-Qahirah]: Isa al-Babi al-Halabi, [1964-. Vol. 4].*

KBP325 S94 1964 Islamic Studies Library

*The book of the major classes.* This text known in Arabic as Ṭabaqāt, or biographical literature provides a detailed overview of al-Ghazālī. The text was printed in Cairo in 1964 and consists of six volumes.



**Diploma.**

Muhammad Rāghib Afandī.

Thuluth and Naskh. Dated 1201 A.H. / 1786-7 A.D.

Arabic Calligraphy AC97 Rare Books / Special Collections

*Diplomas, known in Arabic as ijāzāt may also be translated as licences. An ijāzah was granted for a number of different fields. This particular ijāzah was issued for Afandī's distinguished penmanship.*

**Proverb.**

Muḥammad Qāsim.

Jalī Ta'ālīq Undated.

Arabic Calligraphy AC62 Rare Books / Special Collections

*Proverb, known in Arabic as mithal is a customary saying usually offering wisdom for a given situation. This particular mithal translates as "Speak the truth even if it is bitter". This proverb came to embody the spirit of the exhibition as al-Ghazālī was continuously searching for the truth.*

## Chronology of al-Ghazālī's life

450 A. H. / 1058 A.D.	al-Ghazālī is born in Tūs.
477 A. H. / 1078 A.D.	al-Ghazālī travels to Nīshāpūr.
478 A. H. / 1085 A.D.	al-Juwaynī (Imām al-Haramayn) dies in Nīshāpūr and al-Ghazālī goes to the “camp” of Nīzām al-Mulk
484 A. H. / 1091 A.D.	al-Ghazālī is appointed to teach at Baghdād's Nīzāmiyah madrassah.
485 A. H. / 1092 A.D.	Nīzām al-Mulk is assassinated in Khurāsān.
488 A. H. / 1095 A.D.	al-Ghazālī quits Baghdād's Nīzāmiyah.
489 A. H. / 1096 A.D.	al-Ghazālī completes the Ḥajj.
498A. H. / 1105 A.D.	al-Ghazālī returns to Tūs.
499A. H. / 1106 A.D.	al-Ghazālī returns to teaching at Nīshāpūr's Nīzāmiyah.
505A. H. / 1111 A.D.	al-Ghazālī dies in Tūs.









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