

II

AL-GHAZÂLÎ'S THEORY OF DIVINE LOVE IN *KITÂB AL-MAḤABBA*¹

1. Introduction

Al-Ghazâlî discussed divine love in several writings,² but the full exposition of his ideas concerning divine love occurs in *Kitâb al-maḥabba* in the *Iḥyâ'*. Therefore the following inquiry will describe and analyze this book. In the opening section of this book, after the laudatory paragraph, al-Ghazâlî expresses the view, known from earlier sources,³ that the love for God (*al-maḥabba*) is the ultimate goal of all stations (*al-ghâya al-quṣwâ min al-maqâmât*), the rest of the stations, being either preliminaries to love for God [repentance (*tawba*), forbearance (*ṣabr*) and asceticism (*zuhd*)], or its results [longing (*shawq*), intimacy (*uns*), and contentment (*riḍâ*)].⁴ Contrary to other stations, whose occasional rarity does not cause one to disbelieve in the possibility of their existence, belief in love for God is rare to such an extent that some theologians deny the possibility of its existence claiming that divine love has meaning only as devotion to the obedience of God.⁵ According to them, the real meaning of love for God is conceivable only when used metaphorically. Consequently, says al-Ghazâlî, they also cancel the stations which result from love for God. Therefore he feels himself obliged to uncover the true meaning of this love.⁶

As a rule, al-Ghazâlî begins his discussions on the stations with citations of religious pieces of evidence.

Against the deniers of sacred love, he states that the Muslim community agrees unanimously (*mujmi'a*) that the love for God and His messenger is an obligation (*fard*).⁷ Hence, how can God oblige people to carry out what does not exist? Moreover, how can one interpret love to mean obedience, while obedience follows love?⁸ The Qur'ân (5.54) attests to the existence of love: '... God will assuredly bring a people He loves, and who love Him ...' Another verse (2.165) teaches not only the existence of love, but also its different ranks: '... But those that believe love God more ardently ...'⁹ Al-Ghazâlî is satisfied with citing only two verses, and he does not develop a discussion beyond his statement that these two verses prove both the existence of love for God and its various degrees. In addition he cites traditions according to which this love is a prerequisite for belief in God,¹⁰ an obligation imposed by the Prophet, a cause of meeting God in the afterlife, and a cause of happiness. A few statements of Jesus and some Şûfis stressing the value of love for God follow.¹¹ It seems that al-Ghazâlî does not ascribe much significance to these traditions and statements – for him these are only a kind of formal introduction – for they are a plain thing (*amr zâhir*). Moreover, these do not even serve as points of departure for further discussion. Because the real meaning of love is hidden, the core of his presentation is to find it (*taḥqîq*).¹² However, in the course of his discussion he sometimes cites traditions as corroboration for his arguments.

2. Definition, principles and causes of love

The second chapter entitled 'The explanation of the real meaning (*ḥaqîqa*) of love, its causes and finding the real meaning of man's love for God' reveals al-Ghazâlî's basic plan, that is, to explain first the real meaning of love, its conditions and causes, and then to investigate the real

meaning of love when applies to God. Al-Ghazâlî brings forward three basic principles for understanding love:

a. Love is preceded by knowledge (*ma'rifa*)¹³ and perception (*idrâk*).¹⁴ Consequently, and contrary to Ibn Sînâ, love is characteristic of only animate beings which can perceive.¹⁵ The objects one perceives are either consistent with one's nature and give one pleasure, or incompatible with one's nature and cause one pain. There are also objects which neither give pleasure nor cause pain. When man perceives objects which give him pleasure, he loves them, and when he perceives objects which cause him pain, he hates them. Objects which neither give pleasure, nor cause pain are neither beloved nor hated. Al-Ghazâlî defines love as the inclination of one's nature toward the object which gives pleasure (*mayl al-ṭab' ilâ al-shay' al-mulidhdh*). When this inclination becomes strong it is called *'ishq* (passionate love).¹⁶

b. Since love follows knowledge and perception and perception is divided according to the object perceived (*mudrak*) – each sense perceives a kind of object and each kind of object gives a different kind of pleasure (the eyes' pleasure is to see beautiful things, and the ears' pleasure is to listen to good and rhythmically balanced sounds and so on) – there are various kinds of love according to the five senses. Hence, the source of love is internal, such as the senses, but it arises as a result of an external stimulus. Al-Ghazâlî emphasizes the role of pleasure; one loves something, because it gives him pleasure; one loves to see beautiful forms, to hear music¹⁷ and so on. However, men and animals share the pleasures given by the five senses, and what particularizes the human being is the sixth sense called intellect (*'aql*), or light (*nûr*), or heart (*qalb*) or insight (*baṣîra bâṭina*).¹⁸ The perception of this faculty is stronger than the perception of the five senses. For example, the intellect's perception is stronger than the

perception of the sense of seeing. And the things perceived by the intellect are more beautiful than those perceived by the senses. This is a statement al-Ghazâlî does not yet prove, except by a tradition in which the Prophet says that he was evoked to love three things in this world: perfume, women and prayer. But prayer caused him spiritual pleasure (*qurrat al-'ayn*), which al-Ghazâlî deems the greatest pleasure. This statement serves him only to assert that the intellect perceives divine things which cannot be perceived by the senses, and that only whoever restricts himself to the perception of the five senses may deny divine love, for God cannot be perceived by the senses.¹⁹

c. Al-Ghazâlî puts forward another inner element which helps us to understand the phenomenon of love. It is well known that a man loves himself and loves another person for the sake of himself. Now, al-Ghazâlî asks a rhetorical question: Is it conceivable that a man should love another person because of the latter's essence, and not for the sake of himself? Those who are feeble-minded think that a man loves another person, so long as he receives some benefit for himself from the other. Al-Ghazâlî does not agree with the denial of disinterested love; this kind of love is conceivable and existent. Here al-Ghazâlî begins to explain the causes of love and its deviation.

The essence (*dhât, nafs*) of every living being is its first object of love, which means that there is a natural inclination in man to the continuance of his existence (*dawâm al-wujûd*) and an aversion to his non-existence (*'adam*).²⁰ This is explained by the fact that naturally the object beloved is that which fits the lover, and there is nothing more fitting man than himself and the continuance of his existence. One loves the continuance of his existence and hates death and killing not only because of one's fear of what happens after death or one's wariness of the death agony, but because of one's hatred for non-existence. Non-existence, thus, is hated by virtue of itself, so that if a man

died without pains, he would not be content with his death. If a man suffered pains, he would prefer to die, not because of his love for death, but because in such a case death involves the disappearance of his pains. Also perfection is examined by al-Ghazâlî in terms of existence and non-existence. Just as the continuance of existence is beloved, so the perfection of existence is beloved (*kamâl al-wujûd*), because imperfection (*naqş*) means non-existence in relation (*bi'l-idâfa ilâ*)²¹ to the thing which is absent. In other words, if part of a thing is non-existent, a thing is imperfect, and hence is not beloved. Moreover, love of perfection is, according to al-Ghazâlî, a natural disposition (*gharîza fi'l-ṭibâ'*) established by God as a law (*sunna*).²²

Consequently, all the things which serve man's continuance of existence and perfection are also beloved. Thus one loves one's organs, property, children, family and friends, for the continuance of one's existence and perfection depend on them. A man loves his children, for after his death they continue his existence, which is a kind of continuance for his own existence (*naw' baqâ' lahu*). However, if he was given the choice of either he or his son being killed – in the case his nature is temperate – he would prefer his existence to his son's existence, for his son's existence is like his existence from one point of view, but it is not his real existence. Apart from being immoral,²³ this statement need not always reflect real human experience. A man may also find the perfection of his existence through his relatives and family, because they give him strength, and hence make his existence perfect.²⁴

The second cause of love is doing good (*iḥsân*). Because of his natural disposition (*fiṭra*), a man loves whoever benefits him, even a stranger. Al-Ghazâlî cites a tradition which says: 'O God, do not make a libertine (*fâjir*) do me a favor so that I will love him,' as proof that the love for one who benefits a man is mandatory and cannot be rejected. In

his view, the second cause is a part of the first cause, for benefits by others cause one's existence to continue and be perfect. Seemingly trying to explain why he does not include the second cause under the first, al-Ghazâlî makes a distinction between what is beloved by virtue of itself, such as man's organs in which lies a man's perfection of existence, and the benefactor who serves only as a means to attain perfection, like a physician who maintains a man's health and a teacher who deepens a man's knowledge. Consequently, the benefactor is not beloved by virtue of himself, but because of his benefits, the absence of which will terminate the love for him. We should point out that from the point of view of man's continuance of existence and perfection as beloved by virtue of themselves, all other things are only a means to attain the goal. Hence, there is no justification for al-Ghazâlî to create a class of doing good as a second cause of love.²⁵ However, al-Ghazâlî has a right to single out *ihsân* as a separate cause of love, for although doing good is a means for man's continuance of existence and perfection, it is a special kind of means; it is the action of a human being – contrary to inanimate objects such as property – who intends to do good for another, and his intention and activity make the receiver of the benefits love the benefactor.

The most discussed and analyzed cause of love is the third cause: This is the love for a thing by virtue of itself (*li-dhâtihi*), and not on account of being a means to attain an end. Al-Ghazâlî regards this kind of love as a true and profound form of love which is eternal. The love of beauty is adduced as an example. Beauty is beloved for its own sake, for in the perception of beauty lies the very essence of one's pleasure. And pleasure is beloved by virtue of itself, and not by virtue of another thing. Al-Ghazâlî rejects the view that looking at beautiful forms serves only the satisfaction of a desire; he distinguishes between two kinds of pleasures: a. the pleasure of looking at beautiful forms;

and b. the pleasure of satisfaction of a desire. For example, a man may look at running water and be delighted, and he may also use running water to quench his thirst. That one is delighted with beautiful lights, flowers, and birds is a natural phenomenon²⁶. Al-Ghazâlî seems to consider the 'looking at' and the 'pleasure' as one phenomenon, otherwise it would be possible to argue that looking at beautiful things is the cause of pleasure which means that beautiful things are not beloved by virtue of themselves. Accordingly, though the statement that man's worries are driven away by looking at beautiful plants and that there is no goal beyond the 'looking at' may seem self-contradictory because it states that by 'looking at' worries are driven away, it does conform with al-Ghazâlî's view that the perception of beauty is identical with the very essence of pleasure. Contrary to the Epicureans who believe that pleasure is the principal good on which all morals are founded, the Stoics hold that moral values are sought for by virtue of themselves. Following the Stoics, al-Ghazâlî holds the view that it is possible to love beautiful things, whether sensual or spiritual, for their own sake, and not as a cause for another value.²⁷

Al-Ghazâlî continues his discussion by explaining the meaning of beauty (*jamâl* or *ḥusn*).²⁸ For him beauty is not limited to the perception of sight, meaning that beauty is not only a symmetry of forms and a mingling of colors. Such characteristics apply to the external beauty of the human being. Whoever thinks that whatever is not perceived by the eyes and by the imagination and is not composed of forms and colors cannot be conceived as beautiful, thinks that what cannot be conceived as external beautiful does not bring about pleasure and hence cannot be beloved. According to al-Ghazâlî, whatever is perceived can be subsumed under the titles of either beautiful or ugly (*qabîḥ*). Consequently, he defines beauty in a way which applies to all objects of perception. Beauty means the

presence of perfections which are possible and befitting for a certain object. The existence of all possible perfections in a certain object means its being in the utmost degree of beauty (*ghâyat al-jamâl*). The preceding definition of beauty is general, whereas every class of objects has its specific definition of beauty which establishes the possible perfections of the class. For instance, a beautiful horse combines the perfections of form, color, and gait, and beautiful handwriting has the qualities of symmetry of letters and their appropriate arrangement.

Al-Ghazâlî's definition of beauty seems to be a combination of Stoic and Platonic notions. According to the Stoics, the beautiful or the good has by nature characteristics which befit it. And in Plato's view, one of the conditions of beauty is perfection.²⁹ Contrary to the Greek masses who held that the beautiful cannot be but good, Plato asserted that the good cannot be but beautiful. Al-Ghazâlî seems to follow Plato's line of thought when considering non-sensual objects, such as knowledge, good character, and virtues, as beautiful. All these objects are perceived by the light of the insight (*nûr al-bašîra al-bâṭina*), a term equivalent in al-Ghazâlî to the intellect, and not by the senses. Spiritual qualities are beloved and the person qualified by them is by nature beloved by whoever knows his qualities. The proof for this is the fact that people by nature love prophets, the Companions of Muḥammad, the heads of the schools of law, such as al-Shâfi'î, although they did not see them. This love may sometimes reach the degree of excessive love (*'ishq*) which causes the lover to spend money, take pains, and even to sacrifice his life for the cause of the beloved imam or jurist. The origin of all virtues is knowledge (*'ilm*) through which man knows things as they really are, and power (*qudra*) through which man overcomes his desires.³⁰ To show again that these two faculties are not perceived by the senses, al-Ghazâlî brings forward the atomistic theory according

to which *'ilm* and *qudra* are accidents whose substrate (*maḥall*) is an atom (*juz' alladhî lâ yatajazza'*) in one's body, and an atom cannot be seen because it has no shape or color.

Al-Ghazâlî links the love for inner beauty perceived by the intellect with doing good. Since a man loves whoever has virtues, he will love anyone who does good, even if the latter's action is not for his sake. This kind of love is the fourth cause, although in principle it can be subsumed under the heading of love for beauty.³¹

The fifth cause of love is the hidden affinity (*munâsaba khafiyya*) between the lover and the beloved. Sometimes love exists between two persons which stems not from beauty or benefit, but from an affinity of their souls. As a corroboration he cites the following tradition: 'Spirits are regimented battalions: those which know one another (*ta'ârafa*) associate familiarity together, while those which do not know one another (*tanâkara*) remain at variance.'³² Elsewhere al-Ghazâlî discusses affinity – according to him a mysterious matter – stressing the impossibility of finding its foundation. He quotes one of the scholars (*ba'd al-'ulamâ'*) as saying that God created the spirits and split some of them and made them circulate around the Throne (*al-'arsh*). If two halves of a split spirit meet and know one another in the upper world, they will be friends in this world.³³ This is probably related to the myth appearing in Plato's *Symposium* according to which love is explained as the longing of one half of the human being to the other.³⁴ It is also possible to trace it back to Plato's *Lysis* (214) in which he cites a poet's statement: 'God is ever drawing like towards like, and making them acquainted.'³⁵ However, stating that it is not with man's ability to know the causes of affinity,³⁶ al-Ghazâlî seems to have accepted neither the above explanation, nor the astrological explanation by which similarity in the stars' states causes affinity.³⁷

The second chapter ends with recapitulating the causes of love: 1. Man's love for his existence and its continuance and perfection; 2. Man's love for whoever benefits him for the sake of the continuance of his existence and his perfection; 3. Man's love for whoever benefits people in general, even if the individual himself does not benefit from the benefactor; 4. Man's love for whatever is beautiful by virtue of itself, whether it has external or internal beauty; and 5. Affinity.³⁸ Al-Ghazâlî's recapitulation does not comply with the order of his presentation, for the third cause occurring above is man's love for something by virtue of itself. Anyhow, one can reduce the number to three general causes: 1. One's love for oneself which derives from the will for self preservation; 2. Love for something by virtue of itself; and 3. Affinity. Al-Ghazâlî clearly states that the foundation of the five causes is natural disposition. The present point has much relevance to the question of what causes man to love God: Is it God or man's own efforts. In the following section we shall discuss this issue. If the five causes of love are joined in one person, love is multiplied. A man will love very much a son who is handsome, has virtues, does good to others and to his father. The power of love depends on the power of the qualities existing in the object beloved; if these are in the highest degree of perfection, love will be in the highest degree.

3. The causes of the love for God

The discussion of the causes of love serves al-Ghazâlî as an introduction to his third chapter in which he proves that God alone deserves love (*al-mustaḥaqq li'l-maḥabba huwa allâh waḥdahu*). All the five causes of love are joined in God in a real sense and in other objects in a metaphorical sense. Al-Ghazâlî begins to explain the first cause of love, that is, man's love for his existence. Man's existence originates in

God and it is God's favor to man. From the point of view of man's essence, he has no existence; he neither exists nor continues to exist by virtue of himself, but by virtue of God.³⁹ Furthermore, God also makes man's qualities perfect. Now, 'if the knower loves his essence and the existence of his essence stems from another, he necessarily will love whoever gives him existence and makes his existence continue,' in case he knows the latter as a creator, maker of subsistence, and existent by virtue of itself.⁴⁰ Al-Ghazâlî again emphasizes the importance of having knowledge in order to love; whoever does not know himself and his Lord, cannot love Him. The condition for such knowledge is rejecting the desires and the sensual objects.⁴¹ When this is done, man's love for himself and hence for God becomes necessary. What al-Ghazâlî is actually saying is that if a man devotes himself to his desires, he will not be able to realize his real interest, namely his own existence. The rejection of desires necessarily makes him know his real aim and hence the real source of his existence.

Also the second cause of love necessitates the love for God alone, for true knowledge reveals that God benefits man in various innumerable ways. Here God appears as the mover of the world and the cause of all phenomena. Consequently, God gives the human benefactor motives to help someone; and this benefactor serves only as a device of God to benefit man. In al-Ghazâlî's thought as elaborated in *Kitâb al-tawakkul*, man's acts of choice are necessarily carried out due to motives (*dawâ'i*) which exist outside himself.⁴² Besides, when a man benefits another, he is motivated to do this, because he has an aim of attaining reward either in the hereafter, or benefits in this world, such as prestige. Actually, the benefactor is doing good to himself and not to the person benefited, for he is seeking a compensation which exceeds his benefits. Therefore generosity (*jûd*) and doing good with reference to human

beings is either a lie or a metaphor. God alone deserves the quality of generosity.⁴³ The notion of God's generosity appears in Plato (*Timaeus*, 29–30) and Plotinus (*Enneads*, VI, 9.6). Aristotle says (*Nicomachean Ethics*, VIII, 6, 1158b, 1–5) that friendship built on utility is nothing but a mere exchange of pleasure for utility.⁴⁴ It seems to me that the second explanation of the apparent generosity of the human being contradicts the first explanation, for if God imposes motives on man, even though they may be considered selfish motives, these are not his own motives. The resolution of this contradiction seems to lie in al-Ghazâlî's speaking on two levels; on the first, the divine level, everything is decreed by God, so from this point of view we cannot ascribe any act to man. But at the second, the human level, man can know what his motives are, and from this point of view all man's acts are selfish. In like manner al-Ghazâlî explains man's determination of his acts; man does not freely choose his acts nor is he compelled to carry out acts, but he is compelled to choose his acts (*majbûr 'alâ al-ikhtiyâr*) which seems to mean that from the point of view of the cosmic system he is compelled to choose a definite way of action owing to external and internal causes. However, from the point of view of his awareness, he feels that he is free to choose his acts.⁴⁵

The third cause of love, the love for a benefactor whose benefits do not reach the lover, also applies to God. The benefits God gives to all people and the graces He bestows on all creations necessitate love for Him. Moreover, this cause of love necessitates the love for other benefactors only because God causes them to be benefactors. God's graces on man are divided into four parts: 1. Bringing man into existence (*îjâd*);⁴⁶ 2. Making man perfect through creation of necessary organs, such as the head, the heart, and the liver, and through the provision of necessary means of subsistence, such as water and food; 3. Creation of

useful things in man's body, such as the eye, the hand, and the foot, and outside his body, such as medicines, meat, and fruit; 4. Creation in man's body of beautiful things which are neither necessary nor useful, such as the curve of the eyebrows, the redness of the lips, and the various colors of eyes, and outside man's body, such as the greenness of trees, and the beautiful forms of flowers. The three criteria of God's benefits mentioned above, namely, necessity, usefulness and beauty, are found in all kinds of creation, be they animal, or plants, or inanimate things, from their lowest being to the highest one. God is the real benefactor, for He creates benefits, benefactors, benefaction and the means of benefaction. Here also we can discern Stoic notions. Cicero speaks of the purposefulness of man's organs and generally of the design observed in all kinds of things,⁴⁷ and of parts of man's body which appear to be intended only for ornament.⁴⁸

Now al-Ghazâlî turns to the fourth cause of love, the love for a beautiful thing by virtue of itself, and discusses at length its relevance to God as an object of love. As we have seen, beauty is divided into two parts: a. the beauty of the external form which is perceived by the faculty of sight; and b. the beauty of the internal form which is perceived by the intellect. The intellect appears in al-Ghazâlî as the eye of the heart (*'ayn al-qalb*) or the light of the insight (*nûr al-baṣîra*). Every kind of beauty, whether external or internal, is beloved by its perceiver. Therefore, man loves prophets, scholars and virtuous people, for they have internal beauty expressed in their good acts which stem from their excellent qualities. A good book testifies to the excellent qualities of its writer, and a good building testifies to the excellent qualities of its builder.⁴⁹ All man's virtues derive from knowledge (*'ilm*) and power (*qudra*), and the degrees of both one's knowledge of and power over a thing depend on the knowledge and power existing in the thing. In other words, whenever the object of knowledge is

more beautiful, for example, it contains many virtues, its knowledge is more beautiful, and whenever the object of power is more important, the power over it is more important. Does a man have power over God? Al-Ghazâlî seems to say that so long as a thing is powerful, one has to devote excessive efforts to know it. Since God, on account of His attributes, is the most exalted object of knowledge, the knowledge of God is the best knowledge. Likewise whatever is near to God and related to Him, its high rank is measured according to the relation to Him. In the light of the principles mentioned above, man's love for virtuous persons originates in three causes: a. their knowledge of God, His angels, books, messengers, and the laws of His prophets; thus they deal with the most excellent object of knowledge; b. their power to remedy their souls and the souls of other people through guidance; and c. their being free from vices and desires. Al-Ghazâlî's next step is to apply these three causes of love for virtuous persons, or these three qualities which constitute the inner beauty of righteous persons to God. God is omniscient and His knowledge is infinite. Man's knowledge in comparison to God's is exemplified by the following example: If all creatures in the heaven and earth joined together to know His wisdom regarding the details of His creation of an ant or a fly, they would not know one hundredth of His knowledge. Even man's scanty knowledge is caused by God. Moreover, the difference between God's knowledge and man's knowledge is far greater than the difference between the knowledge of the most knowing person and the knowledge of the most ignorant person. The reason is that the most knowing person exceeds the most ignorant in finite and enumerated objects of knowledge, which can be attained by the most ignorant through efforts, while God's objects of knowledge are infinite. Consequently, God as the Omniscient is most deserving of man's love.⁵⁰

In like manner al-Ghazâlî treats the quality of power.

Power is perfection and inability (*'ajz*) is imperfection. Whoever is qualified by qualities which stem from power, such as courage or prevalence over others, is beloved by people. Now, man's power in relation to God's amounts to nothing, for even his limited power is created and given to him by God. As a result, God as omnipotent is most deserving of man's love.⁵¹

As al-Ghazâlî says, being free from defects and vices is one of the qualities which necessitates love. This quality, which explains man's love for prophets and righteous people, finds its perfection only in God. The fact that man is created and compelled to act indicates his very imperfection. Contrary to God, whose perfection is absolute (*muṭlaq*), the perfection of each created being is relative. Thus, man is perfect in relation to animals. Actually, when referring to created beings, al-Ghazâlî prefers to speak of imperfection, rather than perfection; created beings differ from each other only in relation to the levels of imperfection (*darajât al-nuqṣân*). Owing to God's oneness, eternity, omnipotence, omniscience, and perfection al-Ghazâlî calls Him 'the absolute beautiful' (*al-jamîl al-muṭlaq*). Thus al-Ghazâlî distinguishes between three kinds of beauty: a. physical beauty; b. abstract beauty (moral or spiritual); and c. divine beauty, or absolute beauty.⁵² God's beauty as the cause of man's love for Him is stronger than the cause of God's benefaction, for benefaction increases and decreases, whereas God's beauty is a stable cause which does not change.⁵³

Affinity, the fifth cause of love, is also divided into external and internal or hidden affinity. External affinity, which al-Ghazâlî does not mention above, depends on external form or quality. Experience shows that like seeks like; a carpenter will be acquainted with his fellow carpenter and not with a peasant. On the other hand, affinity may be hidden; sometimes two persons love each other without any visible cause. The two parts of affinity

apply to the relation between God and man. One loves God through imitation of His attributes of knowledge,⁵⁴ piety, compassion, and so on. This imitation draws the human being close to God; however, al-Ghazâlî immediately notes, it is not a closeness of place, but only of attributes, that is, man comes close to God through carrying out the same acts God carries out.⁵⁵ Al-Ghazâlî emphatically denies any form of man's substantial union with God which was advocated by extreme Şûfis. For al-Ghazâlî God remains transcendent.

Contrary to the obvious affinity between God and man,⁵⁶ the hidden affinity is only alluded to in the Qur'ân and Tradition. The Qur'ân speaks of the spirit God gave to man. 'They will ask you about the spirit. Say: The spirit is from my Lord' (*min amr rabbî*) (Qur'ân 17.85). It seems to me that by the last phrase al-Ghazâlî intends 'from the essence of my Lord' (*min amr rabbî*), for he wants to prove that there is something common to God and man which inheres in both essentially but in different degrees. What corroborates this explanation is the second verse cited: 'When I have shaped him, and breathed My spirit in him' (Qur'ân 15.29 trans. Arberry) and the tradition: 'God created Adam in His image' (*şûra*).⁵⁷ Al-Ghazâlî understands *şûra* as inner form, but does not explain what this element, common to God and man, is. He only states that this kind of affinity is expressed in man's persistence in carrying out supererogatory works after mastering the precepts (*ihkâm al-farâ'id*): 'When my servant constantly draws near to me by works of supererogation, then do I love him, and once I have started to love him, I become his eye by which he sees, his ear by which he hears, and his tongue by which he speaks.'⁵⁸ Thus, *nomos* is now connected with *eros*; the love for God means carrying out acts which attest to man's submission to God. Al-Ghazâlî warns of two dangers involved in this affinity: a. regarding the common form as something perceived by the senses,

hence believing in anthropomorphism (*tashbîh*); and b. understanding this affinity as unity between God and man in the form of God's incarnation in man. Al-Hallâj's statement 'I am the Lord' (*anâ al-ḥaqq*) and Christian views that Jesus is God, or that humanity (*nâsût*) is mixed with (*tadharra'a*) with divinity (*lâhût*), or that Jesus was united with God serve as examples of this phenomenon. Al-Ghazâlî notes that those to whom the impossibility of anthropomorphism as well as the impossibility of incarnation and unity are revealed are very few. They know the real secret of this affinity, which is the strongest cause of love.⁵⁹ Does al-Ghazâlî think that knowledge is the common element between God and man?⁶⁰ It seems to me that in the following chapter he alludes to this possibility.

In *Kitâb al-implâ' fî ishkâlât al-iḥyâ'* (p. 38f), a book written by al-Ghazâlî as a rejoinder to criticisms leveled against some theses of the *Iḥyâ'*, he regards this tradition as expressing the notion that man is a microcosm. Just as the world is divided into sensual and spiritual parts, so man has two parts: the sensual and the intellectual or spiritual. In *Mishkât al-anwâr* (p. 158f) he adds that man's being a microcosm derives from God's mercy, or exactly 'the presence of His mercy' (*ḥaḍrat al-raḥma*), and connects the present tradition with the tradition which states that 'whoever knows himself (or his soul) knows God' (*man 'arafa nafsahu arafa rabbahu*).⁶¹ Since man is a microcosm, if he knows himself, meaning his physical aspects and his soul which governs these aspects, he will know the physical aspects of the world and God who governs the world. In an earlier passage of this treatise, the author states that man's intellect is a pattern (*unmûzag*) of God's light, which is God's intellect, and that the pattern resembles its original, but does not equal it.⁶² There is no evidence that al-Ghazâlî thought even for a moment of an identity between God's intellect and man's, or of the merging of man's intellect

with God's.⁶³ Such an opinion cannot be accepted in the light of al-Ghazâlî's insistence on God's transcendence which occurs in the *Ihyâ'* as well as in other of his writings.

Finally, says al-Ghazâlî, all the causes of love apply really and not metaphorically to God, and when these apply to God they occupy the highest rank of intensity. Whereas intelligent people consider only the love for God reasonable and acceptable, the unintelligent people consider the love for anything except God reasonable and possible. The latter are wrong, for no entity can share with God the full content of the causes of love; no entity is perfect like Him or benefits others like He benefits. Hence He is more deserving love than any other being.⁶⁴

4. The way to love God

Whereas in the preceding chapter al-Ghazâlî proves that God is the most deserving object of love, in chapter four⁶⁵ he turns to discuss the way through which man loves this object. The explanation begins with the description of man's nature. Man has various natural dispositions (*gharîza* pl. *gharâ'iz*) which were created in him purposefully. For example, the purpose of the disposition of the desire to eat is to spur man to attain the food on which he lives. Pleasure (*ladhdha*) means to consume food, in other words to consume what is required to satisfy this disposition. In like manner, man's heart contains a disposition called 'the divine light' (*al-nûr al-ilâhî*),⁶⁶ or intellect ('*aql*), or insight (*başîra*), or the light of belief and certainty (*nûr al-îmân wa'l-yaqîn*).⁶⁷ At last, our author prefers to call this disposition intellect. However, he does not positively define this term, but only points out what the intellect perceives, namely, objects which are neither sensual nor imaginable, such as the creation of the world,

or its need for an eternal and wise creator who is qualified by divine attributes. Besides, the intellect is not a device by which one perceives the ways of dispute (*mujâdala*, *munâzzara*), although it became well known as such. Its goal is to know the real meanings of things (*ḥaqâ'iq al-umûr*). Consequently, when one attains this goal, one has pleasure. This is also proved through experience; a man is happy and proud when knowledge is ascribed to him, even if this is knowledge of despicable things, while when ignorance is ascribed to him, he is sad. He is aware that he attains perfection of his essence through knowledge, that is because knowledge is the most specific attribute of Godship (*akḥaṣṣ ṣifât al-rubûbiyya*) and the highest degree of perfection.

Al-Ghazâlî expresses here an Aristotelian notion: 'Aristotle regards the highest activity as being of a contemplative nature since this activity is akin to God's activity, and is therefore God-like.'⁶⁸ It seems to me that the fact that this notion directly follows the fifth cause of love (affinity) alludes to the possibility that al-Ghazâlî regards knowledge as the link which connects man to God. That knowledge plays an important role in al-Ghazâlî's conception of love will also be proved later.

Man's degree of pleasure follows the degree of knowledge, and the degree of knowledge depends on the degree of the object known. Inasmuch as the rank of the object known is greater, the pleasure is greater. Thus, the pleasure of knowing the states of a leader is far greater than the pleasure of knowing the states of a peasant. As a result, one's love for the object known, which stems from pleasure, increases in compliance with al-Ghazâlî's statement that love originates in pleasure.⁶⁹ Now, since the highest and the most sublime object known is God, who creates, perfects, and directs all things, the knowledge of the divine secrets and of the divine matters which encompass all existents is the highest and the most pleasant

knowledge. One should thus know that the pleasure of knowledge is stronger than any other kind of pleasure, be it a pleasure of desire, of senses and so on.⁷⁰

The criterion for knowing which pleasure is preferable to man, whether external pleasure, such as the pleasure attained through the five senses, or internal pleasure, such as the pleasure of leadership or knowledge, is subjective; if a man is given the choice to look at a beautiful form or to smell perfume and he chooses to look at the beautiful form, this proves that this man prefers the pleasure of looking to the pleasure of smelling. Experience testifies that people of virtue and those whose intellect is perfect prefer internal pleasures to external ones. Also man's attitude toward different kinds of pleasure changes according to his age. Children take pleasure in games, young people detest games but take pleasure in dressing and riding on animals, then they have desire for women. Adults take pleasure in leadership and being proud, this pleasure being the highest pleasure of the present world. Only after that people take pleasure in the knowledge of God and His acts.⁷¹ Al-Ghazâlî emphasizes that the highest pleasure is attained through knowledge of God, His attributes and acts, but a portion of this pleasure (al-Ghazâlî uses the words 'smell of this pleasure') is tasted by those who engage in knowledge of the sciences.⁷² Here is a slight allusion that the scientist or the philosopher is the nearest person to the highest knowledge, the knowledge of God.

As we have seen al-Ghazâlî is not consistent in using technical terms. When speaking of the highest knowledge he employs intermittently the terms *'ilm* and *ma'rifa* which may denote *gnosis*, and the terms *kashf* (unveiling) and *dhawq* (spiritual 'taste' or intuition) which may denote mystical experience. Since al-Ghazâlî fails to pay strict attention to technical terms and states (see above) that the importance lies in the meaning of an idea and not in its technical expression, his use of these terms does not help us

in establishing his stand concerning the nature of this knowledge, whether such knowledge is attained through mystical experience or through rational arguments. It seems to me that al-Ghazâlî alludes to his conception of the highest pleasure which stems from the highest knowledge when stating that seekers of knowledge are very near to those who know God, and when citing, at the end of chapter four, Şûfîc statements to the effect that man's ultimate goal is looking at (*naẓar*) and meeting (*liqâ'*) God.⁷³ Chapter five, entitled 'Explanation of why the pleasure of looking at God in the world to come is greater than (the pleasure of) the knowledge in this world,' connects man's knowledge in this world to his knowledge in the world to come. Of this connection we have already learned in the previous chapter in which al-Ghazâlî states that death does not destroy the substrate of the knowledge of God (*maḥall marifat allâh*) which is the spirit (*rûḥ*), a heavenly divine matter. Incidentally we learn that al-Ghazâlî holds the immateriality and immortality of man's soul. Expressing a Platonic notion, al-Ghazâlî states that only death releases the spirit from its material impediments, that is from its prison.⁷⁴ Thus, man's knowledge continues to live in the world to come. We shall now turn to discuss chapter five which shows that al-Ghazâlî seems to have inclined to hold rational mysticism.

Seeing God (*ru'yat allâh*) is the Muslim's best reward in the hereafter.⁷⁵ The real meaning of this dogma has been much debated in theological circles.⁷⁶ The likeners (*mushabbihûn*) interpreted Qur'ân verses (for instance 75.22-23, 10.26, 85.15, 7.43)⁷⁷ literally maintaining that people will see God openly as they look at each other. On the other hand, the Mu'tazilites, the Zaydites, the Khârijites, and most of the Murji'ites connected this question with anthropomorphism (*tashbîḥ*) arguing that since God is neither a body (*jism*) nor an accident (*'araḍ*),

He cannot be seen either in this world or in the afterworld. For most Mu'tazilites, with the exception of Hishâm al-Fuwaî and 'Abbâd ibn Sulaymân, to see God is to know Him. The orthodox theologians held an intermediate position known as the *bi-lâ kayfa* doctrine,⁷⁸ according to which seeing God is true (*al-ru'ya haqq*), but its modality (*kayfiyya*) is unknown.⁷⁹ Some later Ash'arite theologians believed that *ru'yat allâh* is a kind of knowledge.⁸⁰

The foundation of al-Ghazâlî's discussion on seeing God is the distinction he makes between two kinds of things perceived: a. things perceived (*mudrakât*) by imagination (*khayâl*), such as bodies of any sort; and b. things which are not perceived by imagination, namely, those which are not bodies, such as God and His attributes of knowledge, power, will, and so on. Bodies can be perceived either by seeing or by imagination. For example, a man sees another man, then afterwards he can shut his eyes and see the form of this man in his imagination. The difference between the two perceptions does not lie in a distinction of forms, for the form seen is the form imagined, but rather it lies in the state of clarity. The form seen appears clearer than the form imagined. From the point of view of disclosure (*kashf*) and clarity, the first phase of perception is imagination and what makes it perfect is seeing (*ru'ya*). *Ru'ya* is so called because it is the utmost degree of disclosure, not because it is fixed in the eyes.

In like manner, the knowledge of the things known (*ma'lûmât*) not by imagination is divided into two kinds: a. the first knowledge, the unclear and imperfect knowledge; and b. the clear and perfect knowledge. The relation between *a* and *b* exactly corresponds to the relation between imagination and seeing. Just as seeing, the utmost degree of disclosure, is impeded by shutting the eyes, so man's perfect knowledge of things which are not perceived by imagination is impeded by bodily desires and human material qualities. Since bodily obstacles are removed in the

hereafter, man's knowledge of God and His attributes becomes perfect.⁸¹ There is no difference in essence between man's knowledge of God in this world and his knowledge of Him in the world to come, but there is difference in degree; the knowledge in the world to come is perfect.⁸² 'The knowledge which is attained in this world, this knowledge itself, is to be complemented, reach the perfect disclosure and clarity and become perfect perception, or intellectual seeing (*mushâhada*).⁸³ There will be no difference between the perfect perception in the hereafter and the perception of things in this world but with regard to additional unveiling and clarity.'⁸⁴

Now, of what kind of knowledge al-Ghazâlî is speaking? According to al-Ghazâlî, God and His attributes are perceived neither by the senses nor by imagination. Are these perceived by *gnosis*, meaning mystical knowledge attained by a sudden revelation? In the third volume of *Ihyâ'*, our author differentiates between knowledge which attacks man's heart suddenly, and knowledge which man acquires by putting forth proofs and by learning. The first knowledge is called inspiration (*ilhâm*) and the second learning and reflection (*i'tibâr, istibshâr*). Inspiration is divided in turn into a. knowledge which man does not know how and whence it comes to him. Its recipients are saints and pure or chosen persons (*awliyâ', aṣfiyâ'*); and b. knowledge whose source is known, meaning the angel who transmits knowledge to man. This knowledge is denoted by the term revelation (*wahy*), and belongs to the prophets.⁸⁵ Again al-Ghazâlî is not precise in using technical terms; *ilhâm* is both the general term for knowledge which is not acquired and for the knowledge of saints. Anyhow, according to al-Ghazâlî, man's heart is ready for the revelation of the real meaning of all things. Using the famous metaphor of the mirror,⁸⁶ he states that man's heart is like a mirror which faces the mirror of the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-mahfûẓ*) on which God has

written all knowledge. The transmission of pieces of knowledge from the Preserved Tablet to man's heart is like the transmission of forms from one mirror to another facing the former. Now, there is a screen between the two mirrors which can be removed by either one's hand or by the wind. In reality, the screen represents five obstacles preventing man from attaining knowledge: 1. imperfection of the heart, meaning the intellect; 2. sins and desires which hurt man's intellect; 3. the intellect does not turn to the right direction, which means that it does not look for the true objects of knowledge; 4. accepting dogmas and notions without criticism (*taqlîd*);⁸⁷ 5. ignorance of premises needed to built syllogisms.⁸⁸ Let us return to the explanation of the metaphor. The removal of the screen by the hand represents acquisition of knowledge through one's efforts, while its removal by the wind represents God's grace which removes the screen so that a part of what is written on the Preserved Tablet is revealed to man.

The removal of the screen occurs sometimes in sleep,⁸⁹ sometimes in waking, but the total removal occurs in death. When occurring in waking hours knowledge sometimes strikes suddenly like a flash of lightning,⁹⁰ and sometimes it lasts for a while. Such a lasting revelation, though, is very rare. It is worth noting that, in al-Ghazâlî's view, there is no difference between receiving knowledge through inspiration or through acquisition with regard to the essence of knowledge, the substrate of knowledge, and the cause of knowledge.⁹¹ The only difference lies in the occurrence of inspiration with or without man's choice.⁹²

What is al-Ghazâlî's attitude toward these two types of knowledge? Does he prefer inspiration or acquisition? And what are the implications of the answers to these questions on the issue with which we are dealing, that is, the looking at God and its prefatory phase in this world. First he brings forth the way of the Şûfis; they incline to the sciences of

inspiration (*al-'ulûm al-ilhâmiyya*), and not to the sciences of instruction (*al-'ulûm al-ta'limiyya*), therefore they do not learn views and proofs which occur in scientific books. They believe in asceticism, in erasing the blameworthy qualities, and in sincere turning to God alone according to which one thinks only on God and mentions His name. After self-purification man is ready and expecting to receive inspiration from God. This process applies only to prophets and saints.⁹³ However, it does not remain without criticism put in the mouth of learned people (or scholars *nuzẓâr*, *dhawû al-i'tibâr*). The fact that al-Ghazâlî does not rejoin to this criticism may allude to his agreement with it, although he does not say this explicitly. It is possible that this criticism is directed toward ordinary people who think that they can receive inspiration through the way mentioned above. A similar mistake was made by those who believe in the incarnation of God in man's body (*ḥulûl*). They thought that ascetic practice would lead them to pass away (*fanâ'*) from their attributes and to the incarnation of God's attributes in them.⁹⁴

The scholars who criticize the Şûfîs do not deny the possible occurrence of the mystic way of attaining knowledge, but affirm its rarity regarding most people with the exclusion of prophets and saints. According to the critics, it is difficult to achieve this stage, for man's erasing his connections with this world is almost impossible, and even if one attains this condition, its continuance is more inconceivable, because one's heart is liable to changes caused by blameworthy motives which instigate man to carry out evil acts.⁹⁵ If, before practicing the ascetic life, one does not deal with true sciences, one will face the danger of false imaginations which one will consider true revelation. Knowledge should serve as a criterion for what is revealed to the Şûfî, therefore it must precede his ascetic practice. The way of learning is more confident and nearer to the mystical goal than the way of inspiration. Those

scholars argue that the state of one who does not engage in sciences and waits for inspiration to come in order to know resembles the state of one who omits learning jurisprudence claiming that the Prophet did not learn it and became jurisprudent by inspiration. Here, incidentally, al-Ghazâlî unusually inserts into the context a personal note: 'ascetic practice also sometimes brought me to inspiration.'⁹⁶ If my understanding of this sentence, in the light of its context, is correct, it indicates that al-Ghazâlî himself was disappointed in ascetic practice as a means to reveal the truth. Whoever thinks that ascetic practice is sufficient is like whoever does not act expecting to find a treasure; it is possible that he will find a treasure, but it is very unlikely. They say that one should first learn and understand the knowledge acquired by the scholars and 'then there is no objection to expect what was not revealed to all the scholars; maybe it will be revealed (after learning) through ascetic practice.'⁹⁷ Although al-Ghazâlî introduces the combination of learning and ascetic practice as the view of the learned people, he seems to have accepted it – at least with regard to erudite persons, because he agrees without reservation to the reception of inspiration by prophets and saints – for he expresses no objection whatsoever to this view. Furthermore, he does not rejoin to the criticism leveled against the Şûfis. Thus, according to our author, an ordinary intelligent person should learn sciences and practice the ascetic way of life in order to be ready for inspiration. It should be noted that in a chapter which deals with religious pieces of evidence for the notion that the Şûfîc way of acquiring knowledge not from learning is right,⁹⁸ al-Ghazâlî brings forward stories of great Şûfis who knew past and future events. However, no Şûfî is said to have known sciences, or the real meanings of things. Finally, one should notice that according to al-Ghazâlî, happiness (*sa'âda*) is attained only through knowledge, be it knowledge acquired by learning or knowledge received

by inspiration. It is worth noting that, like the illuminationist philosopher al-Suhrawardî (d. 587/1191), al-Ghazâlî held that inspiration or mystical experience is not sufficient for real knowledge without a previous rational structure which can explain the content of inspiration.⁹⁹ However, while al-Suhrawardî 'begins with the structure of reality as we experience it rather than with the structure of our conceptual knowledge of reality,'¹⁰⁰ or in other words al-Suhrawardî held that mystical intuition precedes rational thought, al-Ghazâlî seems to prefer the precedence of rational structure over the mystical experience.¹⁰¹

Let us now return to the discussion of chapter five in *Kitâb al-maḥabba*. To recapitulate the main idea of this chapter: The knowledge attained in this world is complemented in the hereafter and made perfect. Al-Ghazâlî reiterates the notion that knowledge may be received through inspiration after practicing asceticism, but it may be confused by thoughts and evil motives, so that only in death man attains complete disconnection from material things. Moreover, in most cases, inspiration lasts a short time like a flash of lightning.¹⁰² It is no wonder, then, that al-Ghazâlî emphasizes knowledge attained through learning and reflection. A long life is a guarantee for the multiplication of knowledge through continuance of reflection (*fikr*) and insistence on ascetic practice.¹⁰³ Chapter six ('Explanation of the causes which strengthen the love for God') provides us with further information concerning the question with which we are dealing.

Al-Ghazâlî points out 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 (*tawba*), forbearance

(*ṣabr*), abstinence (*zuhd*), fear (*khawf*), and hope (*rajâ'*), are preambles to the acquisition of one of the basic elements of love which is the evacuation from the heart of anything except God.¹⁰⁴ b. As we have seen, one's love stems from one's pleasure which in turn stems from one's knowledge or perception. It is possible to attain knowledge only after man disconnects himself from worldly affairs which distract man from reflection on God, His attributes, and creation. Those who attain knowledge are divided into two groups. The first group is composed of persons called the strong (*al-aqwiyyâ'*) who know all things through their preliminary knowledge of God. Al-Ghazâlî may mean by this knowledge the knowledge which is achieved through inspiration or revelation, that is, the knowledge of prophets and saints. What corroborates this understanding is al-Ghazâlî's reference to it as an obscure matter which most people cannot comprehend. The second group is composed of persons called the weak (*al-du'afâ'*) who first observe phenomena in the world, then deduce from these the existence of the Creator. This way of knowing God is easy for most people, and the Qur'ân calls on people to carry it out through observing and reflecting on the world's phenomena.¹⁰⁵ Actually the argument from design is set forth here in two phases: discussion of phenomena observed in the heavens (the spheres, the stars) and of phenomena on earth (man's body and its composition, the forms of animals). Al-Ghazâlî emphasizes the functionality of nature and the wisdom observed even in the smallest creatures.¹⁰⁶ Inasmuch as the knowledge of God's wonders increases, so the love for God increases. Although this way of knowledge which deduces God's existence and attributes from phenomena observed in the world is not the strongest way to know God, al-Ghazâlî treats it in detail, very probably because this way pertains to most people, with the exception of prophets and saints. Moreover, when referring to the vast majority this is the highest way, the

reason being that there are three different groups with regard to the knowledge of God: a. those who only know the literal meanings of God's attributes and names and sometimes ascribe to them wrong meanings; b. those who believe in and accept God's attributes and names, but do not enter into discussion of them; and c. those who know the real meanings of God's attributes and names.¹⁰⁷ As an example, al-Ghazâlî brings forward the followers of al-Shâfi'î (d. 205/820), the eponym of the Shâfi'ite school of jurisprudence. Being divided into experts in jurisprudence (*fuqahâ'*) and commoners (*'awwâm*), they all share the love for al-Shâfi'î, for they know his excellence and piety. However, the commoner knows al-Shâfi'î's characteristics in a general way, whereas the expert knows them in detail. As a result, the expert's knowledge of his master, and hence his love for him, is more complete than the commoner's. The same rule applies to other arts, such as poetry and prose, and undoubtedly to God's creations. Since the knowledge of God's wonders is infinite, like a sea without a shore, people differ in their knowledge of God and consequently in their love for Him.¹⁰⁸ Again we see that al-Ghazâlî concentrates on man's efforts to accumulate knowledge of God which will bring him happiness in the world to come. It is to be noted that the intensity of love changes according to its cause. Thus love which is depended on God's benefaction may increase or decrease according to the measure of benefits the lover thinks that he receives. Another point to be stressed is that the degree of love in this world establishes the degree of happiness in the world to come.

The process of learning is obstructed not only due to man's being absorbed in desires and material things, but also due to the object of knowledge, namely God. Here lies one of the paradoxes of the knowledge of God.¹⁰⁹ We would expect God to be first perceived, for He is the most manifest existent. His being the most evident existent stems

from the infinite phenomena which testify to His existence and His basic attributes, such as life, power, will, and knowledge. If we see a craftsman, like a tailor or a writer in his work, his life, knowledge, power, and will to work, are manifest, because they are deduced from his work. Now, all the phenomena in the world, be they in inanimate things, or in plants, or in animals, or in man, including the changes which occur in him, attest to the existence of the Creator of the world, its Director, and its Mover. Furthermore, they demonstrate God's knowledge, power, generosity, and wisdom. Again al-Ghazâlî sets forth the argument from design.¹¹⁰ Whereas in the example of the craftsman we deduce our conclusion from one testimony, that is, the motion of the craftsman's hand, we are perplexed by the huge number of phenomena which we observe around us. Such a conclusion which we deduce from phenomena, states al-Ghazâlî, is not known either because the phenomena are hidden and obscure, or are so clear that one cannot notice them. A bat sees at night but cannot see by day, not because daylight is absent, but because daylight is too strong and the bat, having a weak sight, is dazzled. In like manner, man's intellect is weak and the divine presence in all phenomena is so strong that its very manifest appearance is its cause of hiddenness. Al-Ghazâlî further elucidates this paradox of concealment which follows evident appearance. Things are known through their opposites; we know the existence of light by its non-existence. If light did not disappear at night, we could almost not recognize its existence, for things would not change their shapes. The change shows us the cause of the clear appearance of things, which is light. Just as light, which is manifest and makes other things become manifest, so God is manifest (exactly: the most manifest being) and makes other things become manifest. However, unlike light, God has no contrary, that is He is never absent. If God were absent, the heavens and the earth would

collapse, and man would know the difference between the two states, namely His existence and nonexistence. And if some things were existent by virtue of God and others by virtue of another being, one would know the existence of God by knowing the difference between the two conditions. However, signs attesting to God exist perpetually in all things without exception, and the opposite state is inconceivable. Hence, the intensity of God's presence causes His being hidden.¹¹¹

At the end of this chapter (8), al-Ghazâlî adds another reason for the inability of man to learn from nature about God. Man sees the phenomena around him from childhood when his intellect is absent. Then as intellect gradually appears, man pays little attention to the phenomena around him (which are decisive pieces of evidence for God) either because he is absorbed in his desires or because he has become accustomed to the phenomena.¹¹²

Although the knowledge of God's existence is difficult both owing to His total presence in things and man's weak perception, there is the possibility that whoever has strong intellect will perceive that the only true existent is God and that He is the source of all existing things. Such a man pays attention not to the acts, namely, heaven, earth, animals, and plants, but to the Agent; he observes the phenomena from the point of view of their producer rather than their activity. He sees only God, and even looks on himself not in terms of his essence but as his being a slave of God.¹¹³ Such a person is said to have been annihilated in God's unity (*faniya fi'l-tawhîd*) and to have been unaware of himself (*faniya 'an nafsîhi*). Here al-Ghazâlî expresses the notion of *waḥdat al-shuhûd* which means that one is aware of God's true existence as opposed to the metaphorical existence of all other beings,¹¹⁴ but it is not an ontological unity between man and God, a unity of being (*waḥdat al-wujûd*) which extreme Şûfîs like Ibn al-'Arabî (d. 638/1240) held.¹¹⁵ Following al-Junayd, al-Ghazâlî

believes that when a man is aware of his untrue existence and of God's true existence, he is annihilated and God alone remains. Zaehner notes on this statement that 'whether Junayd and Ghazâlî really believed this – for it is equivalent to denying one's own existence, which is absurd, – we cannot say.'¹¹⁶ Al-Ghazâlî makes a distinction between real and metaphorical existence. A real existent is that which exists by virtue of itself, while a metaphorical existent is that which exists by virtue of another. Since created beings derive their existence from God, considered as themselves, they are non-existent. The knowledge that the only real existent is God is attained either through inquiry of the intellect, or through mystical experience.¹¹⁷ Consequently, denying one's own existence is not absurd, on the condition of our understanding of existence. In the light of this explanation one cannot blame al-Ghazâlî of infidelity,¹¹⁸ neither in the *Iḥyâ'* and *Kîmiyâ' al-sa'âda* nor in the *Mishkât*. Nowhere does he speak of ontological union or identity with God. Only those who are in the state of drunkenness may feel union or identity with God, however, their feeling does not reflect objective reality which should be known according to the judgment of the intellect, namely God's balance on earth (*mîzân allâh fî arḍihi*).¹¹⁹

Already Sahl al-Tustarî (d. 283/896) expressed the notion that since God is the sole real agent in existence, and the only cause of existence, He is the only real existent.¹²⁰ That this is the reasoning of al-Ghazâlî is also proved by the passages in *Kitâb al-tawḥîd wa'l-tawakkul* which deals with the acceptance of God's unity (*tawḥîd*). Al-Ghazâlî divides those who accept God's unity into four groups: a. those who utter the statement 'there is no god except God' without paying attention to its content or while in fact denying it; b. those, like all Muslims, who accept God's unity as true. Their belief is sometimes based on speculative arguments. This is the *tawḥîd* of the commoners

(*al-‘awwâm*); c. those who see many things, but nevertheless consider them as originating from one agent; and d. those who see in the world only God, and do not see even themselves. In this stage, one passes away from one’s consciousness, on account of being immersed in God’s unity (*al-fanâ’ fî’l-tawhîd*).¹²¹ Also in al-Junayd we find four-part division of holders of *tawhîd* which approximately corresponds to al-Ghazâlî’s. The first group is the common people, who, although regarding God as the only god, still rely on forces other than God. The second group consists of people who are well versed in the formal aspects of religion. They assert God’s unity and prove it publicly. The third and the fourth groups are the élite among the people of *gnosis* (*al-khawâṣṣ min ahl al-ma‘rifa*). The third group espouses God’s unity by considering all things other than God non-existent. They rely only on God. In the fourth stage of *tawhîd* people pass away from their awareness of themselves, lose their individuality and see only God. They return to their original state before their existence.¹²² Very probably al-Ghazâlî’s position in this issue was influenced by al-Junayd.

Using Stace’s differentiation between extrovertive and introvertive mysticism we can analyze al-Ghazâlî’s attitude toward the assertion of God’s unity. Both the extrovertive and the introvertive ways are perception of the One, in other words the ultimate unity in all things. But while the extrovertive way finds this unity through the work of the senses on the external phenomena, the introvertive way finds it through examination of the self. In the history of mysticism, the introvertive is superior to the extrovertive both in importance and in number of occurrences.¹²³ Al-Ghazâlî seems to adopt the extrovertive process which begins with the third stage of the assertion of unity in which one observes that all things originate in one entity. And in the fourth stage ‘one does not consider (*yarâ*) the whole as many but as one.’¹²⁴ The whole process seems to

be intellectual. The vocabulary used by al-Ghazâlî also helps to support this argument. He states that a thing may be 'many' from one perspective (*i'tibâr*) and 'one' from another. For instance, man is 'many' because he consists of many parts, and 'one' in relation to another man.¹²⁵ Here he neither speaks of a sudden perception of God's unity nor of an inner perception of this unity.

In chapter nine al-Ghazâlî deals with passionate longing for God (*shawq*). Once more our author emphasizes his conviction that knowledge is an indispensable element in man's love for God. Passionate longing for God is discussed from the point of view of knowledge. First al-Ghazâlî establishes the connection between love and *shawq*. To think of *shawq* being directed toward a beloved entity which is present is inconceivable, states al-Ghazâlî, for *shawq* means seeking something, and one does not look for something which is present. However, wishing to be more precise, al-Ghazâlî says that *shawq* means to long for a thing which is perceived in a certain respect and not in another. Thus, what cannot absolutely be perceived is not longed for. It is inconceivable to long for someone not seen and whose description is not known.¹²⁶ And on the contrary, what is perceived in its totality is not longed for (*mâ udrika bi-kamâlihi lâ yushtâqu ilayhi*). According to al-Ghazâlî, the perfect perception is seeing. Hence, whoever always sees his beloved, does not long for him.¹²⁷ To illustrate his principle that *shawq* for a thing means longing for its perception from a different point of view, al-Ghazâlî brings two examples: a. when a beloved person disappears from the lover's sight, he remains in the lover's imagination, and the lover longs for the completion of his imagination through seeing. If the lover saw the beloved person, it would be inconceivable that the former should long for the latter; and b. the lover may see only a part of the beloved person and may thus long for seeing other parts, or he may know that the beloved person has

beautiful organs therefore longs to see what he was unable to see at all. These two aspects of *shawq*, the first longing for clearer knowledge and the second for more knowledge, which are necessarily attached to every knower, apply to the knowledge of God. The knowledge of divine matters, even if it is very clear, remains behind a fine screen and therefore not absolutely clear. This screen is a metaphor for imaginations and material matters which impede the attaining of the clearest knowledge. As al-Ghazâlî says in chapter five, the knowledge of this world becomes perfectly revealed in the afterworld. The fact that man has only a partial knowledge necessitates *shawq* which is likely to supply him with the motivation to obtain clearer knowledge. Also the second kind of *shawq* applies to man's knowledge of God, for man knows only parts of the divine matters, and he wants to know more. Consequently, he longs for more pieces of divine knowledge which he does not know at all, either in clear or obscure fashion. The first kind of *shawq* comes to an end in the world to come through what is called (*mâ yusammâ*)¹²⁸ seeing (*ru'ya*, *mushâhada*) and meeting (*liqâ'*) interpreted by al-Ghazâlî to mean knowledge. He does not define exactly the essence of this knowledge, but says that this is the knowledge one attains in this world in an obscure form. The second kind of *shawq* ends neither in this world nor in the afterworld, for its end means the knowledge of what God knows, namely His majesty, attributes, wisdom, and acts, which is impossible for a human being to know. This guarantees that even in the afterworld man will continue to long for God and to love Him.¹²⁹ It is not inconceivable that divine assistance (*lutf*) would continue without interruption to make man reflect on God, and hence his pleasure would be increasing for ever. The pleasure of receiving divine assistance will divert man from feeling the longing for the knowledge he has not yet received.¹³⁰ By the last statement al-Ghazâlî seems to solve the contradiction between the

pleasure of Paradise which God promises and the sorrow involved in longing for more knowledge of God. To recapitulate, the condition for this process of continuing pleasure which derives from perpetually receiving pieces of knowledge in the world to come is the knowledge which man acquires in this world. Using the common metaphor of light which denotes knowledge, al-Ghazâlî corroborates his theory by Qur'ân verses, for example 66.8: '... their light running before them, and on their right hands; and they say, Our Lord, perfect for us our light ...' (trans. Arberry) The notion of *shawq* is undoubtedly the Muslim version of *eros*, the unending longing for the perception of the eternal entity. Al-Ghazâlî's achievement consists in the combination of the *eros* motif with the Muslim idea of eternal pleasure in Paradise. However, while not denying bodily pleasures, our author stresses that the highest pleasure in the world to come is purely intellectual. In his system he blends Islamic teachings with the philosophical view.

Through his theory of *shawq*, al-Ghazâlî explains Muslim notions about the connection between this world and the world to come and the modality of eternal pleasure in the afterworld. Whereas in the ordinary dogma, a man who carries out the precepts and leads a moral life will enter Paradise and enjoy the sensual pleasures therein, in al-Ghazâlî's view, the fulfillment of the precepts and the conduct of a moral life are only prerequisites to cleansing the heart in order to qualify it to receive knowledge from God directly or to acquire knowledge through one's efforts. Knowledge is the key concept of al-Ghazâlî's theory; it produces the connection between this world and the afterworld, and it is the source of man's eternal pleasure in the afterworld. However, al-Ghazâlî is careful not to omit the usual Muslim dogma of life in Paradise, although, in his view, the material pleasure man is given in Paradise is not the highest pleasure, for the highest pleasure is spiritual. In chapter eleven, which deals with the signs of man's love for

God (*'alâmât maḥabbat al-'abd li-allâh*), al-Ghazâlî states that man will be given in Paradise what he hopes for in this world.¹³¹ He makes a distinction between those who will be given material pleasure in Paradise and those who will have the spiritual pleasure of coming near to God. This notion is corroborated by a prophetic tradition to the effect that most people of Paradise are stupid (*akthar ahl al-janna al-bulhu*) and the upper place (*'illiyyûn*)¹³² is given to the intelligent. Once again al-Ghazâlî states that the highest pleasure is connected with knowledge.

5. The signs of love

One must examine himself to know whether his love for God is sincere or false, for the Devil or even man's soul may deceive him into believing that he loves God. Signs of sincere love, which is the subject matter of chapter eleven, are discerned on different levels. We can characterize signs of love according to thought or will, feeling, state, and activity. Al-Ghazâlî's first criterion for testing love is one's aspiration to see and meet his beloved. As in terrestrial love, it is inconceivable that a lover would not wish to meet and see his beloved. In the case of love for God, meeting and seeing means death, hence the lover should be ready and willing to leave this world in order to meet God.¹³³ Fighting for the sake of God and the will to sacrifice one's life in a Holy War (*jihâd*) testify to one's love for God. Al-Ghazâlî qualifies his absolute statement by saying that one's hatred for death does not indicate the denial of love for God but only absence of perfect love. It is possible that a man can partially love God, because he loves his family and property. Hence, there are various degrees of love. It is also possible that a man would be at the beginning of the station of love (*maqâm al-ḥubb*), therefore he does not abhor death, but only its quick coming before he is ready

to meet God. In such a case one's love is not weak and it does not deny perfect love, for the lover is engaged in preparing himself to meet God.¹³⁴

Another sign of love for God, included in the criterion of thought, is the lover's preference for what God loves to what he loves manifestly or secretly. Consequently, the lover abstains from following his desires and is industrious in obeying God and carrying out supererogatory acts (the activity criterion). Furthermore, he should not regard obedience as a burden, but as a pleasure. This kind of love expressed by obedience to God is called, as we have seen, *nomos*, and it characterizes the love for God in the Bible.¹³⁵ Moreover, when love increases it subdues desires and causes man to obey God. Disobedience, states al-Ghazâlî, does not contradict the basis of love, but only its perfection. Just as a sick man may eat something harmful, although he loves himself, so a man may disobey God, due to ignorance or desires, although he loves Him. Another sign included in the criteria of activity and feeling is the mention of God and that connected to God such as the Qur'ân, and the love for what has any reference to God, such as the Qur'ân, the Messenger, and all people for whom he must feel pity.¹³⁶ Sometimes the criteria of feeling, state, and activity are mingled, for example when a man rejoices at being in solitude (*unsuhu bi'l-khalwa*)¹³⁷ and conversing intimately with God at night. Furthermore, the lover should not be sad about what he missed, except for hours in which he did not mention and obey God. The adherence of the lover to his love is so great – it is compared to the child's attachment to a beloved toy – that he is afraid of its loss, through, for example, the beloved's keeping away from him, or the lover's turning to another object of love. There is an advantage in the lover's fear, because if the love for God increases and the knowledge of Him overcomes man's heart, he cannot endure such a situation. The function of fear thus is to lessen the impression of love on man which

can cause bewilderment. Al-Ghazâlî stresses that there are portions of knowledge which ordinary human beings cannot share with the gnostics. 'Whoever receives knowledge through revelation (*man inkashafa lahu*) is not allowed to transmit this knowledge to whomever did not receive knowledge through revelation. Moreover, if people shared this knowledge, the world would be destroyed. Reason dictates that for the sake of maintaining civilization people should be heedless. If all people ate permitted food for forty days, the world would be destroyed owing to their asceticism, and markets and means of subsistence would be annulled.'¹³⁸ Actually, al-Ghazâlî rejects the possibility of absolute realization of moral values in this world, and admits that the present condition of the world in which good and evil are mingled is the best possible state of affairs provided by God's knowledge and power. This is reminiscent of al-Ghazâlî's famous dictum 'it is impossible that there should be something more wonderful than the present world' (*laysa fi'l-imkân abda' mimmâ kâna*). In other words, this world is the most wonderful world which God could create.¹³⁹ Here al-Ghazâlî does not explain the reason of the existence of good and evil in this world, but only states that there are secrets behind their existence and that God's wisdom and power are infinite, which means that man cannot attain absolute knowledge.

Another feature of the lover is the hiding of his love in order to magnify the Beloved and out of fear of Him and jealousy of His secret. That is because the lover does not know exactly the state of his love, and hence he may claim something false regarding it. The lover is forgiven for expressing his love openly only if this occurs in a state of mystical intoxication (*sakra*) in which he is overcome by an irresistible external force. Apart from reasoning the hiding of love for fear of informing a false state of affairs, the manifestation of one's love is forbidden because of the danger of expressing arrogance.¹⁴⁰ The lover should intend

to inform his love only to his beloved. Informing love to someone else is regarded as making someone share this love (*shirk fî'l-ḥubb*). Love, in al-Ghazâlî's view, is a private matter between the lover and the beloved, and when the lover brings someone else into his love by telling him about it, he impedes this privacy. Moreover, the lover must be humble and not divulge his love, for in relation to the angels' great love for God, expressed through their perpetual obedience and complete devotion to God, his love is imperfect.¹⁴¹

Although man is forbidden to intentionally manifest his love, his love is disclosed by his acts and states and even by his bodily liquids. Al-Junayd (d. 298/910) related that when his master Sarî al-Saqâṭî (d. ca. 253/867) was ill and the cause of his illness was unknown, a physician was called. After examining his patient's urine, the doctor diagnosed al-Saqâṭî's disease as love, saying: 'I consider it the urine of a passionate lover' (*arâhu bawl 'âshiq*). Admitting the physician's talent, al-Saqâṭî agreed with his diagnosis, to al-Junayd's astonishment.¹⁴² Finally, al-Ghazâlî says, all good morals are the fruit of love. This statement widens the sphere of the signs of love. However, there are signs which seem to be more important than others and to which our author devotes whole chapters. These are *uns* and *riḍâ*.

As we have seen (above n. 137), al-Ghazâlî defines *uns* as the heart's rejoicing caused by perceiving the presence of God. When this state increases, a man wants to live in solitude, and even if a man lives among people, he feels that he is alone.¹⁴³ Another sign or result of love is contentment (*riḍâ*) which means that one is content with God's acts. This state is divided into two parts: a. the state of whoever is so absorbed in his love for God that he does not feel pains which he would feel if he did not love. Sahl al-Tustarî (d. 283/896) expresses this kind of contentment by the maxim 'the beating of a lover does not hurt' (*ḍarb al-ḥabîb*

lâ yûji'u).¹⁴⁴ b. the state of whoever feels pains but is content with them. Moreover, such a person requires pain in terms of his intellect even if his nature detests it. That is because he either expects a reward from God, or because he wants to fulfill the beloved's will. Since this state is found in terrestrial love, the more so in love for God.¹⁴⁵ Al-Ghazâlî ends the chapter on contentment (ch. 13) with relevant Sûfî stories, and with a discussion of the apparent contradiction between contentment with God's actions and contentment with transgressions of God's precepts. This issue deserves careful consideration, for it shows again al-Ghazâlî's rational mysticism.

'Qur'ân verses and traditions inform on contentment with God's decree (*qaḍâ' allâh*). If sins do not derive from God's decree, this is an absurdity, for (such a notion) infringes God's unity.¹⁴⁶ (On the other hand), if sins derive from God's decree, one must detest them, and hence detest God's decree . . . How can one join between contentment and detestation regarding one thing?'¹⁴⁷ In other words, if we state that sins are not decreed by God, we impair the notion of God's unity, and if we state that they are decreed by God, we must detest God's decree, for we detest sins. Al-Ghazâlî answers saying that contentment and detestation contradict each other when they refer to one thing from one point of view. One can be content with a thing because of a certain point of view and detest it because of another point of view. The death of one's enemy makes one's content, but if this enemy is also the enemy of one's enemies, one would not be content with his death. Likewise, says al-Ghazâlî, we can examine sins in the light of two points of view: a. Sins are God's acts and choice, and hence one is content with them; and b. they are man's acquisition (*kasb*),¹⁴⁸ meaning his acts, and they are signs that God hates the sinner. Therefore, the sinner is detested by man. A contradiction would arise, if we said that man's sins are detested and contented with as God's acts. Why the

sinner should be detested although God makes him sin through providing him with motives of disobedience is not explained by al-Ghazâlî. He only states that God's decree is a secret which no one is allowed to reveal.

6. God's love for man

Al-Ghazâlî also deals with God's love for man (ch. 10). As other Şûfîs, he has relatively little to say of this kind of love. His foundation for this love is some Qur'ân verses, for example 'a people He loves, and who loves Him' (Qur'ân 5.54), 'God loves those who fight for His sake' (Qur'ân 4.61), and 'God loves those who repent and those who cleanse themselves' (Qur'ân 2.222), and also some traditions, for example, as mentioned above: 'When my servant constantly draws near to me by works of supererogation, then do I love him, and once I have started to love him, I become his eye by which he sees, his ear by which he hears, and his tongue by which he speaks'. However, when we come to the heart and essence of our topic, we cannot apply the definition of love, namely, the inclination of one's soul to what befits it, nor the principal causes of love, namely, doing good (*iḥsân*) and beauty (*jamâl*), to God. That is because an imperfect essence benefits from what befits it by achieving perfection and pleasure, a process inconceivable with regard to God for whom every beauty and perfection is possible, and actually all perfections are present in Him eternally. Since the existence of every thing except God derives from the existence of God, which means that there is nothing but His essence and acts, God does not look at anything except at His essence and acts. Consequently, He loves only Himself in which all creation is included.¹⁴⁹ The word love, as other words and terms which apply both to God and man, is a homonym (*ism mushtarak*), hence it bears one meaning

when applied to God and another when applied to man. If God's love refers to His eternal will, it means giving man power (*tamkîn*)¹⁵⁰ to come near to God, and if His love refers to His act, it means unveiling the partition from man's heart so that he can see God in his heart. Contrary to God's will, this act is produced in time in the wake of a cause which is man's performing supererogatory works. However, this cause too expresses both God's act and His graceful assistance (*lutf*), and this is the meaning of His love. What al-Ghazâlî is actually saying is that God's love for man is the cause of man's love for Him, a notion reminiscent of the *agape* motif. If God did not give man His graceful assistance, man would not love Him.¹⁵¹ Hence, says al-Ghazâlî, the signs of man's love for God also derive from the signs of God's love for man,¹⁵² that is very probably because God's love for man brings about man's love for God.

7. Summary

Although from the metaphysical point of view God causes man to love Him, from the point of view of man, the attitude is not one of passivity. Man should not wait for God's assistance, but work and be active for the purpose of knowing the world and its phenomena which is the requisite for knowing God and hence loving Him. Intellectual efforts play an important role in al-Ghazâlî's theory of love. In that, he expresses a naturalistic stand which resembles the philosophers'. Advocating the possibility of happiness in this world, he emphasizes, however, that the highest happiness man can achieve is in the world to come. The last happiness takes the form of a continuous love for God which is never ending because man's knowledge of God increases forever. In combining love for God in this world and the world to come, al-Ghazâlî seems

to reconcile the Aristotelian position of mundane happiness and the Neoplatonist position of the happiness of the soul.¹⁵³ Al-Ghazâlî expresses the *eros* motif in Islamic dress. Man always has to aspire for perfection which is stated in terms of knowledge and spiritual pleasure. Like Plato, he compares true love with seeing of the beloved,¹⁵⁴ in his case, seeing of God. His conception of love is egocentric; man's needs, pleasure, and happiness are placed in the center of the discussion. Man needs God for his existence and subsistence, his supreme pleasure is to know God, and his knowledge of God will bring him to the highest happiness, namely his perpetual love for God.¹⁵⁵

Does al-Ghazâlî believe in a possibility of universal love for God? Can all people love God? Al-Ghazâlî does not pose this question, and we can only suggest his answer. While seemingly not denying love for God from any person, he appears to advocate different degrees of love. That is because if love depends on knowledge, and naturally people vary with regard to their possession of knowledge, there are necessarily different degrees of love. Consequently, the best lover is the best knower of God and the world, and the worst lover is the ignorant. Moral traits are desired not by virtue of themselves, but as requisites for acquiring knowledge, for they disconnect man from materiality which constitutes the veil between man and knowledge.

Al-Ghazâlî's theory of love is religious, for it is directed toward God; it is intellectual, for it is formulated in terms of knowledge; and it is mystical, for it regards the nearness to God as a value. Notwithstanding citations from the Qur'ân, the traditions, and mystics' sayings, which appear mainly as corroboration and not as a point of departure, his theory seems to be more philosophical than orthodox in nature. However, it is Islamic, for the philosophical ideas are interwoven with Islamic ideas on this world and the

world to come. In the final analysis al-Ghazâlî presents an Islamic version of the *eros* motif combined with Islamic ideas on the world to come.

As for his sources, it is evident that they can mainly be traced back to Greek philosophy not directly but through the medium of Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Sînâ and Ikhwân al-Şafâ'. Muslim mystics who exercised some influence on him are al-Junayd, al-Muḥâsibî, and Abû Tâlib al-Makkî.

- 194 *Ibid.*, fols. 176a-177a.
- 195 *Ibid.*, fol. 177.
- 196 Smith, *Studies*, chs. I-V. *Idem*, *Al-Muḥâsibî*, pp. 82-84.
- 197 Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 47.
- 198 Zaehner, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, pp. 106-109. According to Zaehner, al-Bisṭāmî's monism seems to have been directly derived from the Vedânta. *Mysticism*, pp. 161ff. H. Corbin opposes the derivation of monistic trends in Ṣūfism from Indian monism. *Le paradoxe du monothéisme*, Paris 1981. This work was first published in *Eranos-Yahrbuch* 45 (1976), Leiden 1980, pp. 69-133.

II AL-GHAZÂLÎ'S THEORY OF DIVINE LOVE

- 1 The full name of the book is: 'The Book of Love, Longing, Intimacy and Contentment' (*Kitâb al-maḥabba wa'l-shawq wa'l-uns wa'l-riḍâ*). It constitutes the sixth book of the fourth volume of *Iḥyâ*'.
- 2 In the *Iḥyâ*' itself this subject appears in the second volume in a book entitled 'Book of the Manners of Friendship and Love' (*Kitâb âdâb al-ulfa wa'l-ṣuḥba*). Both *Kitâb al-arba'in fî uṣûl al-dîn*, an Arabic summary of the *iḥyâ*', and *Kîmiyâ al-sa'âda*, a Persian summary of the *Iḥyâ*', contain discussions on divine love which as a rule do not deviate from what he says in *Kitâb al-maḥabba*. (Cf. *The Alchemy of Happiness*, trans. from the Hindustani by C. Field, London 1983, pp. 105-122.) Other Ghazâlîan treatises which deal with this subject matter in a fragmentary way or with related matters will be mentioned in the course of our presentation.
- 3 See, for example, Smith, *Râbi'a*, p. 113.
- 4 As we have shown, al-Ghazâlî's arrangement of the stations is different from that of Abû Ṭâlib al-Makkî who places *riḍâ* before love and not as a fruit of love. See above p. 148, n. 163.
- 5 This view was mainly associated with the Ḥanbalites. See above Introduction, p. 16.
- 6 *Iḥyâ*', vol. IV, p. 294.
- 7 Cf. the Jewish stand. Introduction p. 5f.
- 8 In the light of his very short polemic against the deniers of love, it seems that he ascribes little importance to their views.

- 9 Translations of Qur'ân are usually taken from A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, Oxford 1983.
- 10 'What belief is? Belief means that God and His messenger are more lovable to you than anything else.'
- 11 *Ihyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 295f.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 296, ll. 10–11.
- 13 From the context it is very clear that by *ma'rifa* he does not mean *gnosis*, that is mystical knowledge. Schimmel defines *gnosis* as 'knowledge that is not reached by discursive reason but is a higher understanding of the divine mystery.' *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 130.
- 14 The notion that the love for God is based on knowledge often occurs in Greek philosophy. Consequently, only those few who are trained in philosophy may reach the rank of Love. Walzer, 'Aspects,' p. 614. As many other Greek notions, it passes to Jewish and Muslim thinkers. See, for example, A. Eran, *From Simple Faith to Sublime Faith – Ibn Daud's Pre-Maimonidean Thought* (in Hebrew), Tel Aviv 1998, p. 281. Also Maimonides says: 'Love is according to the measure of perception' (*inna al-maḥabba 'alâ qadr al-idrâk*). *The Guide*, part 3, ch. 51, p. 457, l. 4. Pines' trans., vol. II, p. 621, l. 6: 'Love is proportionate to apprehension.' Al-Râzî, *Mafâtîḥ al-ghayb*, part 4, p. 206, ll. 24ff. Possibly, al-Ghazâlî's *Kitâb al-maḥabba* served as al-Râzî's source. The famous mystic and poet Umar ibn al-Fârîd (d. 632/1234) makes a distinction between knowledge which precedes love and knowledge which follows love. The former is more perfect than the latter, for it deals with the absolute entity. Muḥammad Muṣṭafâ Ḥilmî, *Ibn al-Fârîd wa'l-ḥubb al-ilâhî*, Cairo 1945, p. 177.
- 15 Introduction p. 21f.
- 16 *Ihyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 296, l. 20. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 280. Cf. Maimonides, *The Guide*, ed. Joel, p. 462, ll. 16–17. For the term '*ishq*' see Introduction p. 17ff.
- 17 Al-Ghazâlî's attitude toward music is fully elaborated in the eighth book of the second volume of the *Ihyâ'* entitled 'The Book of the Manners of Listening to Music and the States which Follow It' (*Kitâb âdâb al-samâ' wa'l-wajd*). *Wajd* in al-Ghazâlî means the states one finds (*wajada*) in himself after listening to music. This book was translated into English by D. B. Macdonald in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1901), pp. 195–252, 705–48, (1902), pp. 1–22 ('Emotional religion in Islam as affected by music

and singing, being a translation of a book of the *Ihyâ' 'ulûm ad-dîn* of al-Ghazâlî with analysis, annotation and appendices').

Al-Ghazâlî discusses the question of whether it is permissible to listen to music or not. Taking into account textual and rational considerations he draws the conclusion that listening to music and singing is permissible. As for the rational argument, it is built on an analogy to the pleasure taken by the other senses; just as it is allowable to take pleasure from seeing beautiful things, so it is regarding hearing beautiful sounds. Besides, God's creation supplies us with pleasant sounds, such as the birds' singing, which are not forbidden to hear. Musical instruments, like flutes, are imitations of the sounds created by God, hence listening to them is permissible. The Qur'ân teaches that 'The most disgusting voice is the ass's' (31.19), meaning that it praises the beautiful voices. Listening to music, says al-Ghazâlî, is forbidden only if it leads to violation of God's laws and to corruption, for example, drinking wine. Music exercises influence on man, it makes him feel happiness, sorrow and so on. Whoever is not moved by music is ill-tempered (*fâsid al-mizâj*), furthermore, he is remote from spirituality (*ba'îd 'an al-rûhâniyya*). Music moves only whoever has an inborn faculty which reacts to music. The connection of listening to music to divine love is expressed through the statement that each existent except God is His wonderful creation. Consequently, the more the music, God's creation, is beautiful, the more it moves man and makes him love God. *Ihyâ'*, vol. II, pp. 270-280.

- 18 For al-Ghazâlî the importance of a notion lies in its meaning, not in the terms denoting it. Therefore many times his terminology is imprecise. *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 307, l. 29-p. 308, l. 2. *Idem*, *Mishkât*, pp. 122, 152. Hillenbrand, 'Some Aspects,' p. 262.
- 19 *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 296f. 'The heart is the knower of God' *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 2. *Idem*, *The Incoherence*, p. 214, l. 11-p. 215, l. 2. Cf. al-Râzî, *al-Mabâhith al-mashriqiyya*, vol. II, pp. 441-443.
- 20 The notion that the first inclination of the animal is to preserve itself is Stoic. Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum*, III, 16. Van Den Bergh, *The Incoherence*, vol. II, p. 89, l. 3 from the bottom.

- 21 Al-Ghazâlî is very fond of using this formula in various contexts. For example, man is composed of many parts, but in relation to humanity he is one. *Ihyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 246.
- 22 For the meaning of *sunna* as a rule see Abrahamov, 'Causality', p. 93f. The notion that every entity desires its perfection is expressed by Ibn Sînâ. See above p. 22. Morewedge, 'Emanationism,' part 2, p. 11. For Ibn Sînâ's influence on al-Ghazâlî see my 'Ibn Sînâ's Influence on al-Ghazâlî's Non-philosophical works,' *Abr-Nahrain* 29 (1991), pp. 1-17.
- 23 Van Den Bergh, 'The 'Love of God,' p. 311.
- 24 *Ihyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 297. Van Den Bergh (*ibid.*, pp. 308-311) traces back the notions appearing in this section of al-Ghazâlî's work to Stoic and Platonic sources. Diotima, Socrates' interlocutor in the *Symposium*, says: 'Marvel not then at the love which all men have of their offspring; for that universal love and interest is for the sake of immortality.' *Symposium*, 208. Jowett's trans., vol. I, p. 578, l. 4 from the bottom.
- 25 Cf. Van Den Bergh, *ibid.*, p. 311. It worth noting that, in al-Ghazâlî's view, love caused by *ihsân* characterizes the commoners (*al-âmma*), while love caused by the beloved's essence (beauty and other qualities) characterizes the élite. *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 338, ll. 21-26. The reason for this is very probably the fact that the knowledge of the beloved's essence and qualities requires intellectual capacity which the masses lack. According to Miskawaih, pleasure, gain, and good are causes of love. *Tahdhîb al-akhlâq*, Cairo 1959, p. 139. Walzer, 'Aspects,' p. 613.
- 26 *Ihyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 298, ll. 15-25. Fakhr al-Dîn al-Râzî proves how pleasure cannot be explained through causes (*ghayr mu'allal*). If a man were asked for what purpose he earns money, he would answer: to eat and drink. He would further say that eating and drinking serve the goal of gaining pleasure and rejecting pain. But there is no reason to explain why a man seeks for pleasure and hates pain. If each thing were sought for the purpose of another, there would be either an endless chain of causes and effects or a vicious circle, both of which are absurd. Therefore pleasure is sought for by virtue of itself. *Mafâtîḥ al-ghayb* to Qur'ân 2.165, vol. II, part 4, p. 206.
- 27 Van Den Bergh, 'The Love of God,' p. 312.

28 Like Miskawaih, al-Ghazâlî uses *jamâl* as well as *ḥusn* to designate beauty. Hillenbrand, 'Some Aspects,' p. 262, n. 43. Although, as Hillenbrand writes, Al-Ghazâlî has no 'fully-fledged aesthetic theory,' it is important for the present study to set forth his basic statements concerning beauty. The following is based on her article (pp. 251-3) which derives its materials mainly from al-Ghazâlî's *Kîmiyâ' al-sa'âda*. For al-Ghazâlî, the human being's beauty serves as a key for the knowledge of God's greatness. Man is a microcosm, a model of the whole creation which was built according to a wonderful design. Notwithstanding, beauty can deviate man from the right way, for example, if one marries a beautiful but unchast woman. In *Iḥyâ'* (vol. II, p. 37), al-Ghazâlî counts three basic qualities of a good woman. Physical beauty stands in the third place after chastity and good character. Just as one can learn of God's wisdom through observing man's body, so with regard to the wonderful design of the macrocosm which tells us about God's wisdom and greatness. In the discussion which follows, al-Ghazâlî deals with abstract beauty and its function in the divine love.

The Qur'ân does not refer to God as beautiful. This appellation occurs in a tradition which states that 'God is beautiful who loves beauty' (*inna allâh jamîl yuḥibbu al-jamâl*). Gimaret, *Les noms divins en Islam - exégèse lexicographique et théologique*, Paris 1988, p. 215. Al-Ghazâlî connects God's beauty to His greatness stating that 'when the attributes of greatness are referred to the faculty which perceives them (*al-baṣîra al-mudrika*), they are called beauty, and whoever is described by them is called beautiful.' Originally, the name beautiful refers to the external form (*ṣûra zâhira*) which is perceived by sight, for external form fits sight. Then 'beautiful' applies to internal form (*ṣûra bâṭina*) which is perceived by insight (*baṣîra*). When the internal form is perfect, it is beautiful in relation to the insight which perceives it. One has greater pleasure in perceiving internal forms than in perceiving external ones. Since God is the source of all beauty and perfection in the world, He is the true and absolute beautiful (*al-jamîl al-ḥaqq al-muṭlaq*). Hence whoever perceives God, takes the greatest pleasure. Al-Ghazâlî, *al-Maqṣad al-asnâ fî sharḥ ma'ânî asmâ' allâh al-ḥusnâ*, ed. F. A. Shehadî, Beirut 1971, p. 126f.

- 29 Van Den Bergh, 'The Love for God,' p. 312f.
- 30 For al-Dabbâgh's opinion on the basic virtues see below p. 10.
- 31 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, pp. 298–300.
- 32 Bell, *Love Theory*, p. 109. The translation is taken from A. J. Arberry's English version of Ibn Ḥazm's *Ṭawq al-ḥamâma*, London 1953, p. 27. Cf. Giffen, p. 55. Al-Daylamî, *Kitâb 'atf*, p. 105.
- 33 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. II (*Kitâb âdâb al-ṣuḥba*), p. 161.
- 34 Plato, *Symposium*, 189–193. See above p. 1.
- 35 Jowett's trans., vol. I, p. 62.
- 36 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. II, p. 162. It is worth noting that some theologians deny the possibility of affinity between God and man. In the light of their position, one can explain the fact that some Ṣūfis, like al-Qushayrî and Abû Ṭâlib al-Makkî, do not mention affinity as a cause of man's love for God, and Hujwîrî regards it as a cause of physical love. Bell, *Love Theory*, p. 110.
- 37 *Rasâil ikhwân al-ṣafâ'*, vol. III, p. 275. See above p. 18 and below p. 114.
- 38 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 300.
- 39 This reminds one of Ibn Sînâ's notion that whatever is necessarily existent by virtue of another (*wâjib al-wujûd bi-ghayrihi*), is possibly existent by virtue of itself (*mumkin al-wujûd bi-dhâtihi*). *Kitâb al-najât*, p. 262.
- 40 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 301, ll. 15–16.
- 41 *Ibid.*, ll. 17–19.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 254.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 302, ll. 2–20.
- 44 Van Den Bergh, 'The Love of God,' p. 315. Ibn Sînâ defines generosity as giving not for the sake of reward. *Al-Shifâ'*, *Ilâhiyyât*, VI, 5, p. 296.
- 45 Abrahamov, 'Causality,' p. 89.
- 46 It is worth noting that according to Aristotle there is no connection between God and evil, for God is an eternal being. *Metaphysics*, VII–IX. Eran, pp. 236–238. Cf. al-Ghazâlî, *Tahâfut*, p. 94.
- 47 *de natura deorum*, II, 121, and 120–138.
- 48 *de finibus bonorum et malorum*, III, 18.
- 49 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 303, l. 20–p. 304, l. 1.
- 50 *Ibid.*, p. 304, ll. 9–19.
- 51 *Ibid.*, p. 304, l. 20–p. 305, l. 9.
- 52 Cf. Hillenbrand, 'Some Aspects,' p. 262.

- 53 *Ihyâ'*, p. 305, l. 20–p. 306, l. 12.
- 54 As we shall see below, it is not accidental that knowledge occupies the first place in the list of God's attributes which man has to imitate.
- 55 Cf. Maimonides, *The Guide*, p. 471. Pines' trans., vol. II, p. 638.
- 56 Al-Ghazâlî refers to a statement attributed to the Prophet: 'Imitate God's virtues.'
- 57 For a discussion of this tradition in the context of anthropomorphism see W. M. Watt, 'Created in His Image,' *Glasgow University Oriental Society* 18 (1959–60), pp. 38–49.
- 58 Zaehner's translation in *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, p. 148. In his *Mîzân al-'amal* (p. 400) the tradition of the supererogatory works serves al-Ghazâlî to show that the wayfarer should not be satisfied with only carrying out the precepts, but he should carry out supererogatory acts in order to deviate from the seduction of this world. Like al-Ghazâlî, al-Shaydhala expresses the idea that love means the replacement of the lover's attributes by the Beloved's and connects it with this tradition. However, unlike al-Ghazâlî, he explains the citation of this tradition in the present context. It is not real replacement, for eternal attributes cannot inhere in created beings, therefore it means that man carries out his works in compliance with God's will and satisfaction. In other words, God's attributes serve man as criteria for action. Shaydhala1, fol. 100b.
- 59 *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 306, l. 23–p. 307, l. 9.
- 60 In a commentary on the *Timaeus*, Chalcidius (the fourth century) states that 'knowledge is common to us with Divinity, and we are said to be children of God.' Quoted by Altmann in 'The Delphic Maxim,' p. 6.
- 61 For the various interpretations of this dictum in Islamic and Jewish philosophy see Altmann, 'The Delphic Maxim,' pp. 1–40.
- 62 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 8–11. Contrary to Altmann, I have hesitated to include in my discussion books which are ascribed to al-Ghazâlî, such as *al-maḍnûn al-saghîr* and *al-maḍnûn al-kabîr*, but suspected by modern scholars of being inauthentic. Cf. M. Bouyges, *Essai de Chronologie des Oeuvres de al-Ghazâlî*, ed. M. Allard, Beirut 1959, pp. 51–5. However, concerning the *Mishkât*, I tend to agree with the view of Abû al-'Alâ Afîfî who accepts its genuineness in the

introduction to his edition of the book (Cairo 1964) against the view of W. M. Watt who rejects the authenticity of the last section of the *Mishkât* (the Veils section). 'A Forgery in al-Ghazâlî's *Mishkât*?' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1949), pp. 5-22.

63 Altmann ('The Delphic Maxim,' p. 11f) suggests such possibilities.

64 *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 307, ll. 12-20.

65 'An explanation that the highest and the most important pleasure is the knowledge of God and the looking at His splendid face and that it is inconceivable that one should (not) prefer another pleasure to it unless one is deprived of this pleasure.' *Ibid.*, p. 307, ll. 21-22. The word 'not' must be redundant.

66 Al-Ghazâlî's reason for this appellation is Qur'ân 39.22 which reads: 'Is he whose breast God has expanded unto Islam, so he walks in a light from his Lord?' (trans. Arberry) In *Mishkât* (pp. 122ff), al-Ghazâlî explains why it is more appropriate to call the intellect light than to call the eye, meaning the faculty of sight, light.

67 See n. 18 above.

68 Morewedge, 'Emanationism,' part II, p. 7.

69 See above p. 44.

70 *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 308.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 311.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 310, l. 8.

73 *Ibid.*, p. 310f. Among these statements appears the famous poem of Râbi'a:

I have loved Thee with two loves, a selfish love
and a love that is worthy (of Thee),
As for the love which is selfish, I occupy myself
therein with remembrance of Thee to the
exclusion of all others,
As for that which is worthy of Thee, therein Thou
raisest the veil that I may see Thee.
Yet is there no praise to me in this or that,
But the praise is to Thee, whether in that or this.

Trans. by M. Smith in her *Râbi'a*, p. 126. Cf. al-Makkî, *Qût al-qulûb*, vol. III, p. 84. Ernst, 'The Stages of Love,' p. 439.

74 *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 309. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 250. Cf. Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists*, p. 16.

- 75 See, for example, *Tafsîr Ibn Kathîr* (Beirut 1970) to Qur'ân 10.26 (vol. III, p. 497f) and 75.22–23 (vol. VII, p. 171).
- 76 A. K. Tuft, *The Origins and Development of the Controversy Over 'Ru'ya' in Medieval Islam and its Relation to Contemporary Visual Theory*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of California 1979, University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor 1982.
- 77 The most famous verses of these are Qur'ân 75.22–23: 'On that day faces will be luminous looking at their Lord.'
- 78 B. Abrahamov, 'The *Bi-lâ kayfa* Doctrine and its Foundations in Islamic Theology,' *Arabica* 42,3 (1995), pp. 365–379.
- 79 Ibn Abî al-Izz, *Sharḥ al-'aqîda al-ṭahâwiyya*, ed. Abdallâh ibn 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkî and Shu'ayb al-Arnaûṭ, Beirut 1991, vol. I, p. 207.
- 80 B. Abrahamov, *Anthropomorphism & Interpretation of the Qur'ân in the Theology of al-Qâsim ibn Ibrâhîm, Kitâb al-Mustarshid*, Leiden 1996, p. 15f.
- 81 Cf. Plato, *Phaedo*, 66f. Jowett's trans., vol. II, p. 205f: 'It has been proved to us by experience that if we would have pure knowledge of anything we must be quit of the body – the soul in herself must behold things in themselves: and then we shall attain the wisdom which we desire, and of which we say that we are lovers; not while we live, but after death . . . In this present life, I reckon that we make the nearest approach to knowledge when we have the least possible intercourse or communion with the body . . .' Thus according to Plato, in this world one can only come close to knowledge, but pure knowledge can be attained only after death.
- 82 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 312f.
- 83 Literally *mushâhada* means seeing, but in our context it can be rendered as intellectual seeing or contemplation. The connection between knowing God and seeing Him was already expressed by Isaac of Nineveh, a Christian mystic of the seventh century A.D. in the following statement: 'You see God as soon as you know Him.' Smith, *Studies*, p. 211.
- 84 *Ibid.*, p. 313, ll. 10–12. Abrahamov, 'al-Ghazâlî's Supreme Way,' p. 156. According to al-Ghazâlî, man's knowledge is not erased when he dies. *Ibid.*, n. 69. *Iḥyâ'*, vol. III, p. 22. *Mishkât*, 127f. It is worth noting that the connection

- between love for God and knowledge or gnosis appears in the teachings of early Ṣūfīs. Abū Ḥamid Aḥmad ibn Ḥaḍrawaih (240/854) says that 'the reality of love is to know God in the heart' (*ḥaqīqat al-maḥabba al-ma'rifa lahu bi'l-qalb*). Shaydhala, fol. 89a. In al-Sulamī (*Ṭabaqāt*, p. 105) an inverse formula of this statement is introduced: 'The reality of knowledge is to love God in the heart.'
- 85 The difference between a prophet and a saint is a difference of function. A prophet is an individual to whom the real meanings of things are revealed (*kūshifa bi-ḥaqā'iq al-umūr*) and who deals with the improvement of mankind, while a saint shares with the prophet the first characteristic but lacks the second. *Iḥyā'*, *ibid.*, p. 25, l.30–p. 26, l. 1.
- 86 For the notion that man's heart or soul is like a mirror see H. Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, tr. from the French by L. Sherrad, London 1993, p. 260. Idem, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, tr. from the French by W. R. Trask, Dallas 1980, pp. 152f, 239f. Ibn Sīnā regards the rational soul as a polished mirror in which the forms of things are imprinted. *Risāla fī'l-kalām 'alā al-naḥs al-nāṭiqā*, ed. Aḥmad Fu'ād al-Ahwānī, *Majallat al-kitāb*, 1952, p. 421. Cf. Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 581/1185), *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, ed. N. Nader, Beirut 1963, p. 30. The origin of this image is most probably ancient Hellenism. H. Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies in al-Ghazālī*, Jerusalem 1970, p. 313. For knowledge as light see F. Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, Leiden 1970, ch. VI, pp. 155–93. In Greek and Islamic philosophical texts the Active Intellect is sometimes compared to light and sometimes to the sun. *Al-Fārābī on the Perfect State. Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī's Mabādī' Ārā Ahl al-madīna al-Fāḍila*, ed., tr., and comm. R. Walzer, Oxford 1985, p. 403. (henceforth: *Al-Fārābī*, Walzer) Netton, *Allāh Transcendent*, p. 176f. This note was taken from my 'Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Philosophical Justification of Visiting Tombs,' *Al-Masāq – Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 11 (1999), p. 119, n. 31.
- 87 For this term in al-Ghazālī see, for example, R. M. Frank, 'Al-Ghazālī on *Taqlīd*. Scholars, Theologians, and Philosophers,' *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften*, ed. F. Sezgin 7 (1991/2), pp. 207–252.
- 88 *Iḥyā'*, vol. III, 13f.
- 89 I do not know why al-Ghazālī points out that in sleep man can know only future events (in p. 21, l. 26 *ibid.*, he also

- mentions past events) and why he does not mention the content of revelation in man's other states.
- 90 Cf. Maimonides, *The Guide*, Introduction, (p. 3, l. 27). Pines' trans., vol. I, p. 7. According to Pines, the simile of lightning flashes for truth originates in Ibn Sînâ's *Kitâb al-ishârât wa'l-tanbîhât* (ed. J. Forget, Leiden 1892, p. 202f). 'The Limitations of Human Knowledge According to Al-Farabi, ibn Bajja, and Maimonides,' *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, ed. I. Twersky, Cambridge Mass. and London 1979, p. 89.
- 91 By the cause of knowledge al-Ghazâlî probably means that knowledge is created on the Preserved Tablet and hence the cause of its existence is God.
- 92 *Ihyâ'*, vol. III, p. 18f.
- 93 *Ibid.*, p. 19f.
- 94 Abdel-Kader, *Al-Junayd*, p. 84. Al-Sarrâj, *Kitâb al-luma'*, p. 426.
- 95 These motives are called *wasâwîs* (sing. *waswâs* literally 'whisper'), and the Devil (*al-shayṭân*) is responsible for their introduction into man's heart. *Ihyâ'*, vol. III, p. 27, l. 4. The origin of the term is Qur'ân 114., 7.20, 20.120.
- 96 *wa-anâ ayḍan rubbamâ intahat bi al-riyâḍa wa'l-muwâḏaba ilayhi*. *Ihyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 20, l. 14. It seems to me that *ilayhi* refers to this false claim.
- 97 *Lâ b'sa ba'da dhâlika bi'l-intizâr li-mâ lam yankashif li-sâ'ir al-'ulamâ' fa-'asâhu yankashifu ba'da dhâlika bi'l-mujâhada*. *Ibid.*, l. 17.
- 98 *Ibid.*, pp. 23-26.
- 99 For al-Suhrawardî's view see Wahlbridge, *The Science of Mystic Lights*, pp. 35, 38.
- 100 *Ibid.*, p. 45.
- 101 Six hundred years after al-Ghazâlî, the Swedish scientist, philosopher, and mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) began his intellectual career as a scientist and then became a mystic. As Oliver Lodge writes in the introduction to Swedenborg's *The Divine Love and Wisdom* (p. xii) 'His scientific training in fact to some extent curbs, and controls his mysticism.' However, Swedenborg has not planned this process.
- 102 *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 314, l. 22-p. 315, l. 1.
- 103 *Ibid.*, p. 315, ll. 5-9.
- 104 *Ibid.*, p. 316, ll. 21-23.

- 105 See for example Qur'ân 10.101: 'Observe what is in the heavens and in the earth.'
- 106 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, pp. 317–319. For the argument from design see H. A. Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity, Creation and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy*, New York and Oxford 1987, ch. 7. B. Abrahamov, *Al-Qâsim B. Ibrâhîm on the Proof of God's Existence – Kitâb al-Dalîl al-Kabîr*, Leiden 1990, pp. 1–13.
- 107 In compliance with Qur'ân 56.88–92, they are called respectively those who go astray (*ḍâlûn*), blameless people from the Companions of the Right (*ahl al-salâma min aṣḥâb al-yamîn*), and those who come near to God (*al-muqarrabûn*).
- 108 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, (ch. 7 of *Kitâb al-maḥabba*) p. 319f.
- 109 'Paradoxicality is one of the common characteristics of all mysticism.' Stace, *The Teachings of the Mystics*, p. 16.
- 110 For an elaboration on this topic, see al-Ghazâlî's *Kitâb al-ḥikma fî makhlûqât allâh*, in *Majmû'at rasâ'il al-imâm al-Ghazâlî*, Beirut 1996, pp. 7–46.
- 111 *Iḥyâ'*, p. 320, l. 24–p. 321, l. 3.
- 112 *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 322, ll. 16–22.
- 113 *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 322, ll. 4–16. Cf. *Mishkât*, p. 138f.
- 114 In *Rawḍat al-ṭâlibîn* (p. 120), a treatise which is attributed to al-Ghazâlî, but suspected as spurious (M. Bouyges, *Essai de chronologie des oeuvres de al-Ghazali*, edited and updated by M. Allard, Beirut 1959, p. 91, n. 1.) the author states: 'Since everything except God exists and subsists by virtue of God, not by virtue of itself (*mawjûd bi-allâh wa-qâ'im bihi lâ bi-naḥsihi*), its existence is metaphorical (*majâz*), and the existence of whoever subsists by virtue of itself and makes others subsist is real and true.'
- 115 Sometimes both terms are interchangeable. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, pp. 267, 368.
- 116 *Mysticism*, p. 159.
- 117 *Mishkât*, pp. 137–9.
- 118 Zaehner, *Mysticism*, p. 160.
- 119 *Mishkât*, p. 140f.
- 120 Smith, *Studies*, p. 200.
- 121 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 245f. *Idem*, *al-Maqṣad al-asnâ*, p. 58. Abrahamov, 'Al-Ghazâlî's Supreme Way,' p. 158–160.
- 122 Abdel-Kader, *al-Junayd*, pp. 55–57 of the Arabic text. The text was translated in pp. 176–178.

- 123 Stace, *The Teachings of the Mystics*, p. 15.
- 124 *Iḥyâ*, vol. IV, p. 246, l. 8. Abrahamov, 'Al-Ghazâlî's Supreme Way,' p. 158.
- 125 *Iḥyâ*, *ibid.*, ll. 26–28. Abrahamov, *ibid.*, p. 159.
- 126 Cf. Abarbanel (Leone Ebreo), *Dialoghi D'Amore*, trans. into Hebrew M. Dorman, Jerusalem 1983, the beginning of the first conversation.
- 127 *Iḥyâ*, vol. IV, p. 322, l. 29–p. 323, l. 5.
- 128 The reader should pay attention to al-Ghazâlî's formulation. 'What is called seeing' means that it is a convention to call it seeing, but the real meaning is knowledge.
- 129 The notion that man's love for God never ends, for one cannot exhaust the riches of the infinite Being, was already expressed by Dhû al-Nûn al-Miṣrî (d. 245/859) who states that 'the end of love for whoever has no end is absurd' (Shaydhala1, fol. 81b) and by the famous proponent of monism Abû Yazîd al-Bisṭâmî (261/874). Zaehner, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, p. 106. Zaehner advocates Indian influence on al-Bisṭâmî's monism, while Schimmel (*Mystical Dimensions*, p. 47f.) prefers the Islamic experience of *fanâ* (annihilation) as his source.
- This notion was also expressed by al-Junayd who says that 'love for God is an excessive inclination without attainment' (*al-maḥabba ifrâṭ al-mayl bi-lâ nayl*). Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, p. 512.
- On man's unending love for God says al-Niffarî (d. 354/965): 'One thing is, and one thing will be, and one thing will not be. The first is my loving thee, the second is thy seeing Me, the third thy ever knowing Me with complete gnosis.' *The Mawâqif and Mukhâṭabât of Muḥammad ibn 'Abdi 'L-Jabbâr al-Niffarî*, ed. and trans. A. J. Arberry, London 1935, p. 139 of the translation. The notion that *shawq* is an endless process was also expressed by Ibn Taymiyya's eminent disciple Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350). Bell, *Love Theory*, p. 169.
- 130 *Iḥyâ*, p. 323, l. 6–p. 324, l. 9.
- 131 The person whose love for God is mixed with love for other things, enjoys pleasure in Paradise commensurate to the measure of his love for God. Here he uses the famous metaphor of love as drinking wine which also expresses the pleasure of Paradise. Whoever loves only God, drinks pure wine. *Ibid.*, p. 334, ll. 17–22.

- 132 See Qur'ân 83.18–19.
- 133 Cf. al-Qushayrî, *al-Risâla*, p. 148.
- 134 *Iḥyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 329, l. 28, p. 331, l. 9.
- 135 See above p. 5f.
- 136 Contrary to the Christian dogma of *agape* according to which God loves every human being, whether he is righteous or wicked, and hence every human being must behave like Him, in the Qur'ân God hates evil people and infidels, and whoever loves Him must carry out His precepts.
- 137 Al-Ghazâlî defines *uns* as the heart's rejoicing caused by perceiving the presence of God. *Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 339, ll. 19–29. Sometimes it is defined by Ṣûfîs as 'intimacy.' Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 132.
- 138 *Iḥyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 337, ll. 6–8.
- 139 For a discussion of this dictum which advocates theodicy and the reactions of later scholars to this doctrine, see E. L. Ormsby, *Theodicy in Islamic Thought – The Dispute over al-Ghazâlî's 'Best of All Possible Worlds'*, Princeton 1984.
- 140 Cf. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 45.
- 141 *Iḥyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 337, l. 11–p. 338, l. 12.
- 142 *Ibid.*, p. 338, ll. 13–18. Al-Saqâfî is known for his discussions of mystical love. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 53.
- 143 *Iḥyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 340, l. 13: 'His body is with people, but not his heart' (*mukhâliṭ bi'l-badan munfarid bi'l-qalb*). Cf. Maimonides, *The Guide*, p. 457. Pines' trans., vol. II, p. 621.
- 144 *Iḥyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 347, l. 23. Hujwîrî states (in his *Kashf al-maḥjûb*, p. 178): 'From the standpoint of ethics, satisfaction is the acquiescence of one who knows that giving and withholding are in God's knowledge, and firmly believes that God sees him in all circumstances. There are four classes of quietists: 1. those who are satisfied with God's gift (*'aṭ'â*) which is gnosis (*ma'rifa*); 2. those who are satisfied with happiness (*ni'ma*), which is this world; 3. those who are satisfied with affliction (*balâ'*), which consists of diverse probations; and 4. those who are satisfied with being chosen (*iṣṭifâ'*), which is love (*maḥabba*).
- 145 *Ibid.*, p. 347, l. 24–p. 348, l. 10, p. 350, ll. 25–30.
- 146 According to al-Ghazâlî's, God's unity means the origination of all things in Him. Abrahamov, 'Al-Ghazâlî's Supreme Way,' p. 158.
- 147 *Iḥyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 352, ll. 12–14.

- 148 For the theory of *kasb* in al-Asharî's writings see my 'A Re-examination of al-Asharî's Theory of *kasb* according to *Kitâb al-luma'*,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1989), pp. 210–221.
- 149 That God loves Himself is not a new idea; it goes back to Greek philosophy and appears in the Şûfîc literature before al-Ghazâlî. Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, pp. 554–557. See above p. 38
- 150 For this Kalâm term see my 'Abd al-Jabbâr's Theory of Divine Assistance (*lutf*),' *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 16 (1993), p. 48, n. 40.
- 151 The notion that God's love for man is an eternal favor, which causes man to love Him, is expressed by al-Shaydhala. Shaydhala1, fols. 19b, 21–22a. See above p. 40.
- 152 *Ihyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 329, ll. 24–25.
- 153 Cf. Walzer, 'Aspects,' pp. 609–611.
- 154 Singer, *The Nature of Love*, p. 73.
- 155 Bell, *Love Theory*, p. 150.

III AL-DABBÂGH'S THEORY OF DIVINE LOVE

- 1 His full name is Abû Zayd 'Abd al-Raḥmân ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alî ibn 'Abdallâh al-Anṣârî al-Mâlikî al-Qayrawânî known as al-Dabbâgh (d. 696/1296). He was a jurist, traditionist, and historian of al-Qayrawân and wrote a biographical book on its important personalities which is the source of *Ma'âlim al-îmân fî ma'rîfat ahl al-qayrawân* written by al-Qâsim ibn 'îsâ al-Nâjî (d. 837/1433). See Ritter's introduction to his edition of *Mashâriq*, p. 6 (*wâw*). According to Kaḥḥâla (*Mu'jam al-mu'allifîn*, Beirut 1993, vol. II, p. 117) he died in 689/1290 and his nickname is al-Dabbâgh. In M. Talbi's short article in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden 1981, Supplement, 3–4, p. 172) the date of death is 699/1300, and the nickname is al-Dabbâgh.
- 2 *Mashâriq*, p. 4, ll. 7–9.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 5, l. 12–p. 6, l. 12.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 20, l. 16. As a rule, in order to create a coherent presentation I have not followed the order of al-Dabbâgh's chapters in discussing his ideas,
- 5 'The proof that love includes all stations and states is that a man does not love a beloved except after he knows the perfection of the essence (*kamâl dhât*) of this beloved. Then

this knowledge ('ilm) continues to be verified in him until it becomes profound knowledge (or gnosis). From this knowledge is derived desire and then longing for the beauty of this essence. The forbearance (*ṣabr*) of the difficulty of seeking the beloved follows from love, and in this circumstance a fear (*khawf*) of being veiled from the beloved as well as hope (*rajâ'*) to be near him arise in him. Also love causes contentment (*riḍâ*) with the beloved's will, abstinence (*zuhd*) from other beings, belief in the beloved's being unique in his attributes of perfection, and complete trust in him.' *Mashâriq*, p. 20, ll. 2-9.

- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 19. Cf. Ernst, *Rûzbihân Baqlî: Mysticism*, p. 143f. For Muḥammad's light and its functions in the world see, for example, U. Rubin, 'Pre-existence and light – Aspects of the concept of Nûr Muḥammad,' *Israel Oriental Studies* 5 (1975), pp. 62-119. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, index.

7 For the impossibility of defining love see p. 147f, n. 159 above.

8 *Mashâriq*, p. 20, l. 22, p. 21, l. 8.

9 See p. 161, n. 109 above.

- 10 *Mashâriq*, p. 21, l. 12-p. 22, l. 2. For the structure of definition, see Maimonides, *Introduction to Logic* (Millot *Ha-Higayon*), trans. into Hebrew by Moses ibn Tibbon and ed. by Leon Roth, Jerusalem 1965, p. 71.

11 *Mashâriq*, p. 22, ll. 3-4.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 22, l. 3, p. 23, l. 10.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 7, ll. 1-7. Hence, death brings about true and perfect perception of God and as a result true love. Cf. Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, p. 533.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 7, ll. 7-9. See p. 64 above.

- 15 Al-Dabbâgh here refers to Galen's theory of the blending of the four humors (blood, phlegm, black bile, yellow bile) which determines a man's mental and emotional characteristics. For example, he whose temperament is dominated by yellow bile is characterized by anger. Galen, *That the Faculties of the Soul Are Consequent upon the Temperament of the Body*, ed. K. G. Kühn, Leipzig 1821-33, vol. IV, pp. 767-821. Galen, *Selected Works*, translated with an Introduction and Notes by P. N. Singer, Oxford 1997, pp. 150-176. D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition, Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*, Leiden 1988, p. 75f. However, our author begins his explanation with Galen's natural theory but changes it into

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RoutledgeCurzon

Taylor & Francis Group

LONDON AND NEW YORK

DIVINE LOVE IN
ISLAMIC
MYSTICISM

First published 2003
by RoutledgeCurzon
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE
Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by RoutledgeCurzon
29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001
*RoutledgeCurzon is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis
Group*

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Typeset in Sabon by Steven Gardiner Ltd, Cambridge
Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Antony Rowe Ltd, Chippenham, Wiltshire

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the
British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN 0-7007-1607-6