

Al-Ghazali

Al-Ghazali (UK: /ælˈɡɑːzɑːli/,^[24] US: /ælɡəˈzɑːli, -zæl-/,^{[25][26]} full name أَبُو حَامِدٍ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ الْغَزَالِيُّ or الْغَزَالِيُّ, *Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad aṭ-Ṭūsiyy al-Ġaz(z)ālīy*; Latinized **Algazelus** or **Algazel**; c. 1058 – 19 December 1111), known in Persian-speaking countries as **Imam Muhammad-i Ghazali** (Persian: امام محمد غزالی), was a Persian^{[27][28][29]} polymath, who was one of the most prominent and influential philosophers, theologians, jurists, logicians and mystics^{[30][31]} of Islam.^[32]

Al-Ghazālī	
الغزالي	
 Abu Hamed Al-Ghazālī in Aabic calligraphy	
Title	Hujjat al-Islām (honorific) ^[1]
Personal	
Born	Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad aṭ-Ṭūsī al-Ġaz(z)ālī c. 1058 Tus, Iran, Seljuq Empire
Died	19 December 1111 (aged 52–53) Tus, Iran, Seljuq Empire
Religion	Islam
Era	Islamic Golden Age
Region	Seljuq Empire (Nishapur)^{[2]:292} Abbasid Caliphate(Baghdad) / (Jerusalem) / (Damascus) ^{[2]:292}
Denomination	Sunni ^{[3][4]}
School	Shafi'i
Creed	Ash'ari ^{[5][6]}
Main interest(s)	Sufism , theology (<i>kalam</i>) , philosophy , logic , Islamic jurisprudence
Notable work(s)	<i>The Revival of Religious Sciences</i>, <i>The Aims of the Philosophers</i>, <i>The Incoherence of the Philosophers</i>, <i>The Alchemy of Happiness</i>, <i>The</i>

(Islamic jurisprudence) from Ahmad al-Radhakani, a local teacher and [Abu ali Farmadi](#), a sufi from Tus.^{[39]:26–27} He later studied under [al-Juwayni](#), the distinguished jurist and theologian and "the most outstanding Muslim scholar of his time,"^[39] in [Nishapur](#), perhaps after a period of study in [Gurgan](#). After al-Juwayni's death in 1085, al-Ghazali departed from [Nishapur](#) and joined the court of [Nizam al-Mulk](#), the powerful vizier of the [Seljuq](#) sultans, which was likely centered in [Isfahan](#). After bestowing upon him the titles of "Brilliance of the Religion" and "Eminence among the Religious Leaders," Nizam al-Mulk advanced al-Ghazali in July 1091 to the "most prestigious and most challenging" professorial at the time: in the [Nizamiyya](#) madrasa in [Baghdad](#).^[39]

He underwent a spiritual crisis in 1095, likely suffering from clinical hysteria,^{[44][45][46]} abandoned his career and left Baghdad on the pretext of going on pilgrimage to [Mecca](#). Making arrangements for his family, he disposed of his wealth and adopted an ascetic lifestyle. According to biographer Duncan B. Macdonald, the purpose of abstaining from scholastic work was to confront the spiritual experience and more ordinary understanding of "the Word and the Traditions."^[47] After some time in [Damascus](#) and [Jerusalem](#), with a visit to [Medina](#) and Mecca in 1096, he returned to Tus to spend the next several years in 'uzla (seclusion). The seclusion consisted in abstaining from teaching at state-sponsored institutions, but he continued to publish, receive visitors and teach in the [zawiya](#) (private madrasa) and [khanqah](#) (Sufi lodge) that he had built.

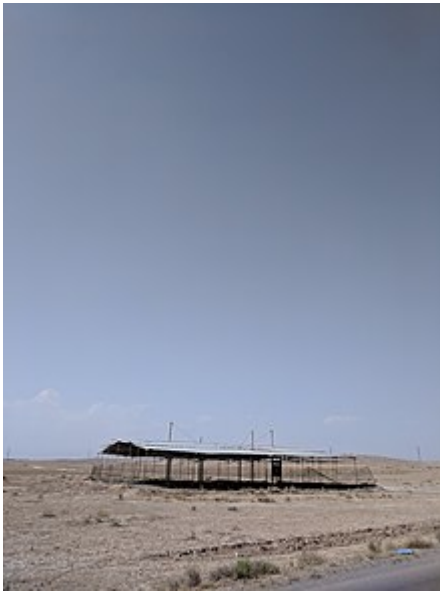
[Fakhr al-Mulk](#), grand vizier to [Ahmad Sanjar](#), pressed al-Ghazali to return to the Nizamiyya in Nishapur. Al-Ghazali reluctantly capitulated in 1106, fearing rightly that he and his teachings would meet with resistance and controversy.^[39] He later returned to Tus and declined an invitation in 1110 from the grand vizier of the Seljuq Sultan [Muhammad I](#) to return to Baghdad. He died on 19 December 1111. According to 'Abd al-Ghafir al-Farisi, he had several daughters but no sons.^[39]

School affiliations

Al-Ghazali contributed significantly to the development of a systematic view of [Sufism](#) and its integration and acceptance in mainstream Islam. As a scholar of Sunni Islam, he belonged to the [Shafi'i](#) school of Islamic [jurisprudence](#) and to the [Asharite](#) school of [theology](#).^[48] Al-Ghazali received many titles such as *Sharaf-ul-A'imma* (شرف الأئمة), *Zayn-ud-dīn* (زين الدين) and *Hujjat-ul-Islām* (حجة الإسلام).

He is viewed as the key member of the influential [Asharite](#) school of [early Muslim philosophy](#) and the most important refuter of the [Mutazilites](#). However, he chose a slightly-different position in comparison with the Asharites. His beliefs and thoughts differ in some aspects from the orthodox Asharite school.^[48]

Works



Mausoleum of Al-Ghazali in [Tus](#), located near the tomb of the Persian poet [Ferdowsi](#).^[49] The mausoleum was discovered in the 1990s after being lost for many centuries and remains neglected.

A total of about 70 works can be attributed to Al-Ghazali.^[50] He is also known to have written a fatwa against the [Taifa](#) kings of Al Andalus, declaring them to be unprincipled, not fit to rule and that they should be removed from power. This fatwa was used by Yusuf ibn Tashfin to justify his conquest of al-Andalus ^[51]

Incoherence of the Philosophers

His 11th century book titled [The Incoherence of the Philosophers](#) marks a major turn in Islamic [epistemology](#). The encounter with [skepticism](#) led al-Ghazali to investigate a form of theological [occasionalism](#), or the belief that all causal events and interactions are not the product of material conjunctions but rather the immediate and present will of God.

In the next century, [Averroes](#) drafted a lengthy rebuttal of al-Ghazali's *Incoherence* entitled [The Incoherence of the Incoherence](#); however, the epistemological course of Islamic thought had already been set.^[52] Al-Ghazali gave as an example of the illusion of independent laws of cause the fact that cotton burns when coming into contact with fire. While it might seem as though a natural law was at work, it happened each and every time only because God willed it to happen—the event was "a direct product of divine intervention as any more attention

grabbing miracle". [Averroes](#), by contrast insisted while God created the natural law, humans "could more usefully say that fire caused cotton to burn—because creation had a pattern that they could discern."^{[53][54][55]}

The *Incoherence* also marked a turning point in Islamic philosophy in its vehement rejections of [Aristotle](#) and [Plato](#). The book took aim at the *falasifa*, a loosely defined group of Islamic philosophers from the 8th through the 11th centuries (most notable among them [Avicenna](#) and [Al-Farabi](#)) who drew intellectually upon the [Ancient Greeks](#).

This long-held argument has been criticized. [George Saliba](#) in 2007 argued that the decline of science in the 11th century has been overstated, pointing to continuing advances, particularly in astronomy, as late as the 14th century.^[56] On the other hand, author and journalist [Hassan Hassan](#) in 2012 argued that while indeed scientific thought in Islam was stifled in the 11th century, the person mostly to blame is not Al-Ghazali but [Nizam al-Mulk](#).^[57]

Autobiography



Last page of Al-Ghazali's autobiography in MS Istanbul, Shehid Ali Pasha 1712, dated [AH 509](#) ([AD 1115-1116](#)).

The [autobiography](#) al-Ghazali wrote towards the end of his life, *Deliverance From Error* (المنقذ من الضلال *al-munqidh min al-ḍalāl*), is considered a work of major importance.^[43] In it, al-Ghazali recounts how, once a crisis of [epistemological skepticism](#) had been resolved by "a

light which God Most High cast into my breast ... the key to most knowledge,"^{[58]:66} he studied and mastered the arguments of [kalam](#), [Islamic philosophy](#), and [Ismailism](#). Though appreciating what was valid in the first two of these, at least, he determined that all three approaches were inadequate and found ultimate value only in the mystical experience and insight (the state of prophecy or *nubuwwa*) he attained as a result of following [Sufi](#) practices. [William James](#), in *Varieties of Religious Experience*, considered the autobiography an important document for "the purely literary student who would like to become acquainted with the inwardness of religions other than the Christian" because of the scarcity of recorded personal religious confessions and autobiographical literature from this period outside the Christian tradition.^{[59]:307}

The Revival of Religious Sciences (Ihya' Ulum al-Din)

Another of al-Ghazali's major works is [Ihya' Ulum al-Din](#) or *Ihya'u Ulumiddin* (*The Revival of Religious Sciences*). It covers almost all fields of Islamic sciences: [fiqh](#) (Islamic jurisprudence), [kalam](#) (theology) and [sufism](#).

It contains four major sections: *Acts of worship (Rub' al-'ibadat)*, *Norms of Daily Life (Rub' al-'adat)*, *The ways to Perdition (Rub' al-muhlikat)* and *The Ways to Salvation (Rub' al-munjiyat)*. The *Ihya* became the most frequently recited Islamic text after the Qur'an and the hadith. Its great achievement was to bring orthodox Sunni theology and Sufi mysticism together in a useful, comprehensive guide to every aspect of Muslim life and death.^[60] The book was well received by Islamic scholars such as [Nawawi](#) who stated that: "Were the books of Islam all to be lost, excepting only the *Ihya'*, it would suffice to replace them all."^[61]

The Alchemy of Happiness

The Alchemy of Happiness is a rewritten version of *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*. After the existential crisis that caused him to completely re-examine his way of living and his approach to religion, Al-Ghazali put together *The Alchemy of Happiness*^[62] to reassert his fundamental belief that a connection to God was an integral part of the joy of living. The book is divided into four different sections. The first of these is Knowledge of Self, where Al-Ghazali asserts that while food, sex, and other indulgences might slake humans appetites temporarily, they in turn make a human into an animal, and therefore will never give true happiness and fulfillment. In order to find oneself, people must devote themselves to God by showing restraint and discipline rather than gluttony of the senses. The second installment is called Knowledge of God, where Al-Ghazali states that the events that occur during one's life are meant to point an individual towards God, and that God will always be strong, no matter how far humans deviate from His will. The third section of *The Alchemy of Happiness* is Knowledge of the World. Here he states that the world is merely a place where humans learn

to love God, and prepare for the future, or the afterlife, the nature of which will be determined by our actions in this phase of our journey to happiness. The final section is Knowledge of the Future World, which details how there are two types of spirits within a man: the angelic spirit and the animal spirit. Al-Ghazali details the types of spiritual tortures unbelievers experience, as well as the path that must be taken in order to attain spiritual enlightenment. This book serves as a culmination of the transformation Ghazali goes through during his spiritual awakening.

Disciplining the Soul

One of the key sections of Ghazali's *Revival of the Religious Sciences* is *Disciplining the Soul*, which focuses on the internal struggles that every Muslim will face over the course of his lifetime.^[63] The first chapter primarily focuses on how one can develop himself into a person with positive attributes and good personal characteristics. The second chapter has a more specific focus: sexual satisfaction and *gluttony*.^[63] Here, Ghazali states that indeed every man has these desires and needs, and that it is natural to want these things.^[63] However, the Prophet explicitly states that there must be a middle ground for man, in order to practice the tenets of Islam faithfully. The ultimate goal that Ghazali is presenting not only in these two chapters, but in the entirety of *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, is that there must be moderation in every aspect of the soul of a man, an equilibrium. These two chapters were the 22nd and 23rd chapters, respectively, in Ghazali's *Revival of the Religious Sciences*^[63]. It's also important to note here that Ghazali draws from Greek as well as Islamic philosophy in crafting this literary staple, even though much of *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, his most well known work, takes a critical aim at their perspective.

The Eternity of the World

Al-Ghazali crafted his rebuttal of the Aristotelian viewpoint on the creation of the world in *The Eternity of the World*. Al-Ghazali essentially formulates two main arguments for what he views as a sacrilegious thought process. Central to the *Aristotelian* approach is the concept that motion will always precede motion, or in other words, a force will always create another force, and therefore for a force to be created, another force must act upon that force.^[32] This means that in essence time stretches infinitely both into the future and into the past, which therefore proves that *God* did not create the universe at one specific point in time. Ghazali counters this by first stating that if the world was created with exact boundaries, then in its current form there would be no need for a time before the creation of the world by God.^[32] The second argument Ghazali makes is that because humans can only imagine the time before the creation of the world, and your imagination is a fictional thing, that all the time before the world was created is fictional as well, and therefore does not matter as it was not intended by God to be understood by humans.

The Decisive Criterion for Distinguishing Islam from Clandestine Unbelief

Al-Ghazali lays out in *The Decisive Criterion for Distinguishing Islam from Clandestine Unbelief* his approach to Muslim orthodoxy. Ghazali veers from the often hardline stance of many of his contemporaries during this time period and states that as long as one believes in the [Prophet Muhammad](#) and God himself, there are many different ways to practice Islam and that any of the many traditions practiced in good faith by believers should not be viewed as heretical by other Muslims.^[39] While Ghazali does state that any Muslim practicing Islam in good faith is not guilty of [apostasy](#), he does outline in *The Criterion* that there is one standard of Islam that is more correct than the others, and that those practicing the faith incorrectly should be moved to change.^[39] In Ghazali's view, only the Prophet himself could deem a faithfully practicing Muslim an infidel, and his work was a reaction to the religious persecution and strife that occurred often during this time period between various Islamic sects.^[39]

Works in Persian

Al-Ghazali wrote most of his works in [Arabic](#) and few in [Persian](#). His most important Persian work is *Kimiya-yi sa'adat* (The Alchemy of Happiness). It is al-Ghazali's own Persian version of *Ihya' 'ulum al-din* (The Revival of Religious Sciences) in Arabic, but a shorter work. It is one of the outstanding works of 11th-century-Persian literature. The book was published several times in [Tehran](#) by the edition of Hussain Khadev-jam, a renowned Iranian scholar. It is translated to [English](#), [Arabic](#), [Turkish](#), [Urdu](#), [Azerbaijani](#) and other languages.^[62]

Another authentic work of al-Ghazali is the so-called “first part” of the *Nasihāt al-mulūk* (Counsel for kings), addressed to the Saljuqid ruler of Khurasan Ahmad b. Malik-shah Sanjar (r. 490-552/1097-1157).^[64] The text was written after an official reception at his court in 503/1109 and upon his request. Al-Ghazali was summoned to Sanjar because of the intrigues of his opponents and their criticism of his student's compilation in Arabic, *al-Mankhul min ta'liqat al-usul* (The sifted notes on the fundamentals), in addition to his refusal to continue teaching at the Nizamiya of Nishapur. After the reception, al-Ghazali had, apparently, a private audience with Sanjar, during which he quoted a verse from the Quran 14:24: “Have you not seen how Allah sets forth a parable of a beautiful phrase (being) like a beautiful tree, whose roots are firm and whose branches are in Heaven.” The genuine text of the *Nasihāt al-mulūk*, which is actually an official epistle with a short explanatory note on *al-Mankhul* added on its frontispiece^[65] and the title given to it later, discloses the verse image of the “beautiful tree” (*shajara tayyiba*) consisting of ten roots and ten branches.

Faza'il al-anam min rasa'il Hujjat al-Islam is the collection of letters in Persian that al-Ghazali wrote in response to the kings, ministers, jurists and some of his friends after he returned to

[Khorasan](#). The collection was gathered by one of his grandchildren after his death, under five sections/chapters. The longest letter is the response to objections raised against some of his statements in *Mishkat al-Anwar* (The Niche of Light) and *al-Munqidh min al-dalal* (Rescuer from Error). The first letter is the one which al-Ghazali wrote to [Sultan Sanjar](#) presenting his excuse for teaching in [Nizamiyya](#) of [Nishapur](#); followed by al-Ghazali's speech in the court of Sultan Sanjar. Al-Ghazali makes an impressive speech when he was taken to the king's court in Nishapur in 1106, giving very influential counsels, asking the sultan once again for excusing him from teaching in Nizamiyya. The sultan was so impressed that he ordered al-Ghazali to write down his speech so that it will be sent to all the [ulemas](#) of [Khorasan](#) and [Iraq](#).

Zad-e Ākhirat (Provision for the hereafter) is an important Persian book of al-Ghazali but gained less scholarly attention. The greater part of it consists of the Persian translation of one of his Arabic books, *Bidayat al-Hidaya* (Beginning of Guidance). It contains in addition the same contents as the *Kimiya-yi Sa'adat*. The book was most probably written during the last years of his life. Its manuscripts are in [Kabul](#) (Library of the Department of Press) and in [Leiden](#).

Another Persian work is **Hamāqāt-i ahl-i ibahat** or **Radd-i ebāhīyya** (Condemnation of antinomians) which is his *fatwa* in Persian illustrated with [Quranic](#) verses and [Hadiths](#).

The majority of other Persian texts, ascribed to him with the use of his fame and authority, especially in the genre of Mirrors for Princes, are either deliberate forgeries fabricated with different purposes or compilations falsely attributed to him. The most famous among them is *Ay farzand* (O Child!). This is undoubtedly a literary forgery fabricated in Persian one or two generations after al-Ghazali's death. The sources used for the forgery consist of two genuine letters by al-Ghazali's (number 4, in part, and number 33, totally); both appear in the *Faza'il al-anam*.^[66] Another source is a letter known as 'Ayniya and written by Muhammad's younger brother Majd al-Din Ahmad al-Ghazali (d. 520/1126) to his famous disciple 'Ayn al-Quzat Hamadani (492-526/1098-1131); the letter was published in the *Majmu'a-yi athar-i farsi-yi Ahmad-i Ghazali* (Collection of the Persian writings of Ahmad Ghazali).^[67] The other is 'Ayn al-Quzat's own letter, published in the *Namaha-yi 'Ayn al-Quzat Hamadani* (Letters by 'Ayn al-Quzat Hamadani).^[68] Later, *Ay farzand* was translated into Arabic and became famous as *Ayyuha al-walad*, the Arabic equivalent of the Persian title. The earliest manuscripts with the Arabic translation date from the second half of the 16th and most of the others from the 17th century.^[69] The earliest known secondary translation from Arabic into Ottoman Turkish was done in 983/1575.^[70] In modern times, the text was translated from Arabic into many European languages and published innumerable times in Turkey as *Eyyühe'l-Veled* or *Ey Oğul*.^[71]

A less famous Pand-nama (Book of counsel) also written in the genre of advice literature is a very late compilatory letter of an unknown author formally addressed to some ruler and falsely attributed to al-Ghazali, obviously because it consists of many fragments borrowed mostly from various parts of the *Kimiya-yi sa'adat*.^[72]

Influence

During his life, he wrote over 70 books on science, Islamic reasoning and Sufism.^[73] Al-Ghazali distributed his book *The Incoherence of Philosophers*, set apart as the defining moment in Islamic epistemology. The experience that he had with suspicion drove al-Ghazali to shape a conviction that all occasions and connections are not the result of material conjunctions but are the present and prompt will of God.

Another of al-Ghazali's most prestigious works is *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* ("The Revival of Religious Sciences"). The work covers all fields of Islamic science and incorporates Islamic statute, philosophy and Sufism. It had numerous positive reactions, and Al-Ghazali at that point composed a condensed form in Persian under the title *Kimiya-yi sa'adat* ("The Alchemy of Happiness"). Although al-Ghazali said that he has composed more than 70 books, attributed to him are more than 400 books.

Al-Ghazali likewise assumed a noteworthy part in spreading Sufism and Sharia. He was the first to consolidate the ideas of Sufism into Sharia laws and the first to give a formal depiction of Sufism in his works. His works fortify the position of Sunni Islam, contrasted with different schools of thought.

Al-Ghazali had an important influence on both later [Muslim philosophers](#) and [Christian medieval philosophers](#). [Margaret Smith](#) writes in her book *Al-Ghazali: The Mystic* (London 1944): "There can be no doubt that al-Ghazali's works would be among the first to attract the attention of these European scholars" (page 220). Then she emphasizes, "The greatest of these Christian writers who was influenced by al-Ghazali was St. [Thomas Aquinas](#) (1225–1274), who made a study of the Arabic writers and admitted his indebtedness to them, having studied at the [University of Naples](#) where the influence of Arab literature and culture was predominant at the time." In addition, Aquinas' interest in Islamic studies could be attributed to the infiltration of 'Latin Averroism' in the 13th century, especially at the [University of Paris](#).

The period following Ghazali "has tentatively been called the Golden Age of Arabic philosophy" initiated by Ghazali's successful integration of [logic into the Islamic seminary Madrasah](#) curriculum.^[74]

Al-Ghazali also played a major role in integrating [Sufism](#) with [Shariah](#). He was also the first to present a formal description of Sufism in his works. His works also strengthened the status of [Sunni Islam](#) against other schools. The [Batinite \(Ismailism\)](#) had emerged in [Persian](#) territories and were gaining more and more power during al-Ghazali's period, as [Nizam al-Mulk](#) was assassinated by the members of Ismailis. In his *Fada'ih al-Batiniyya (The Infamies of the Esotericists)* Al-Ghazali declared them unbelievers whose blood may be spilled,^[75] and wrote several books on criticism of Baatinyas which significantly weakened their status.

Al-Ghazali succeeded in gaining widespread acceptance for Sufism at the expense of philosophy.^[76] At the same time, in his refutation of philosophers he made use of their philosophical categories and thus helped to give them wider circulation.^[76]

His influences and impact on Sufi thought and Islam at large during the 11th century has been a subject of debate in contemporary times. Some fifty works that he had written is evidenced that he was one of the most important Islamic thinkers of his time. Three of his works, *Ihya' Ulum ad-Din (Revival of Religious Sciences)*, *Tahafut al-Falasifa (The Incoherence of Philosophers)*, and *al-Munqidh min a-alal (Al-Ghazali's Path to Sufism: His Deliverance from Error)* are still widely read and circulated among Islamic scholars today. After the death of Al-Ghazali, it is believed there followed a long era in which there was a notable absence of Islamic philosophers, contributing to the status of Ghazali in the modern era.

The staple of his religious philosophy was arguing that the creator was the center point of all human life that played a direct role in all world affairs. Al-Ghazali's influence was not limited to Islam, but in fact his works were widely circulated among Christian and Hebrew scholars and philosophers. Some of the more notable philosophers and scholars in the west include David Hume, Dante, and St. Thomas Aquinas. Moses Ben Maimon, a Jewish theologian was deeply interested and vested in the works of Al-Ghazali. One of the more notable achievements of Ghazali were his writing and reform of education that laid the path of Islamic Education from the 12th to the 19th centuries. Al-Ghazali's works were heavily relied upon by Islamic mathematicians and astronomers such as At-Tusi.^[77]

Early childhood development was a central focal point of Al-Ghazali. He worked to influence and develop a program to mold the young minds of children at an early age to develop their mind and character. He stressed that socialization, family, and schools were central in the achievement of language, morality, and behavior. He emphasized incorporating physical fitness such as games that were important in the development of young minds to attract the idea of attending schools and maintaining an education. In addition, he stressed the importance of understanding and sharing cultures in the classrooms to achieve a civic harmony that would be expressed outside the classroom and kindness to one another.

In his writings he placed this responsibility upon the teachers. His treatise on early education centered on Islamic laws, God, and memorizing the Qur'an to achieve literary skill. Ghazali emphasized the importance that there should be a dual respect in regard to the teacher and the pupil. Whereas the teacher guides the student and takes the role of a father figure and offers council to the student, and the student respects the teacher as a patriarch. He stressed that the teacher needed to pay attention to the learning paces of his students so that he could help them be successful in academic achievements.

Al-Ghazali was by every indication of his writings a true mystic in the Persian sense. He believed himself to be more mystical or religious than he was philosophical however, he is more widely regarded by some scholars as a leading figure of Islamic philosophy and thought. He describes his philosophical approach as a seeker of true knowledge, a deeper understanding of the philosophical and scientific, and a better understanding of mysticism and cognition.^[78]

In the contemporary world, Al-Ghazali is renowned not only for his contribution to Sufism, Islam, philosophy, or education but his work and ethical approach transcends another boundary into the Islamic business practice. In the *Journal of Business Ethics*, authors Yusif Sidani and Akram Al Ariss explain how Islamic business ethics are governed by the writings of Abu-Hamid Al-Ghazali and even posit that Al-Ghazali is the greatest Muslim since the prophet Muhammad. Traditional Islamist's are influenced by Ghazali's writings since he was indebted to writing about and incorporating Sharia Law. They emphasize, "His mastery of philosophical logic and reasoning earned him the title of philosopher without losing his status as a religious scholar."^[79] Al-Ghazali's reasoning on the use of intellect in combination with the rational and spiritual is an integral part of Muslim society today. Therefore, they approach the business perspective with the same ideology and organizational thought.

Works

Al-Ghazali mentioned the number of his works "more than 70" in one of his letters to [Sultan Sanjar](#) in the late years of his life. Some "five dozen" are plausibly identifiable, and several hundred attributed works, many of them duplicates because of varying titles, are doubtful or spurious.

The tradition of falsely attributing works to Al-Ghazali increased in the 13th century, after the dissemination of the large corpus of works by [Ibn Arabi](#).^[50]

Bibliographies have been published by [William Montgomery Watt](#) (*The Works Attributed to Al-Ghazali*), Maurice Bouyges (*Essai de chronologie des oeuvres d'Al-Ghazali*) and others.

Abdel Rahman Badawi's Bibliography of all works attributed to Al-Ghazali^[80]

Pages	Content
1–72	works definitely written by al-Ghazali
73–95	works of doubtful attribution
96– 127	works which are almost certainly not those of al-Ghazali
128– 224	are the names of the Chapters or Sections of al-Ghazali's books that are mistakenly thought by him
225– 273	books written by other authors on al-Ghazali's works
274– 389	books of other unknown scholars/writers regarding al-Ghazali's life and personality
389– 457	the name of the manuscripts of al-Ghazali's works in different libraries of the world:

Short List of Major Works of Gazali

Title	Description	Type
<i>al-Munqidh min al-dalal</i>	Rescuer from Error	Theology
<i>Hujjat al-Haq</i>	Proof of the Truth	Theology
<i>Al-Iqtisād fī al-ʾiʿtiqad</i>	The Moderation in Belief	Theology
<i>Iljām al-Awām an Ilm il-Kalām</i>	Bridling the Common Folk Away From the Science of Theological Speculation	Theology
<i>al-maqsad al-asna fi sharah asma' Allahu al-husna</i>	The best means in explaining Allah's Beautiful Names	Theology
<i>Jawahir al-Qur'an wa duraruh</i>	Jewels of the Qur'an and Its Pearls	Theology
<i>Faysal al-tafriqa bayn al-Islam wa-l-zandaqa</i>	The Criterion of Distinction between Islam and Clandestine Unbelief	Theology
<i>Al-radd al-jamil li-ilahiyyat 'Isa bi-sarih al-Injil</i>	The Excellent Refutation of the Divinity of Jesus through the Text of the Gospel	Theology
<i>Mishkat al-Anwar</i>	The Niche for Lights, a commentary on the Verse of Light	Theology
<i>Tafsir al-yaqut al-ta'wil</i>		Theology
<i>Mizan al-'amal</i>	Criterion of Action	Tasawwuf
<i>Ihya'e Ulum-ed'Deen</i>	The Revival of the Religious Sciences	Tasawwuf
<i>Bidayat al-hidayah</i>	The Beginning of Guidance	Tasawwuf
Kimiya-yi	The Alchemy of Happiness [a résumé of Ihya'ul ulum, in	Tasawwuf

sa'adat	Persian]	
<i>Nasihah al-muluk</i>	Counseling Kings in Persian	Tasawwuf
<i>al-Munqidh min al-dalal</i>	Rescuer from Error	Tasawwuf
<i>Minhaj al-'Abidin</i>	Methodology for the Worshipers	Tasawwuf
<i>Fada'ih al-Batiniyya</i>	The Infamies of the Esotericists, a refutation of esoteric Sufism in general and Isma'ili doctrines in particular	Tasawwuf
<i>Maqasid al-falasifa</i>	Aims of the Philosophers written in the beginning of his life, in favour of philosophy and presenting the basic theories in Philosophy, mostly influenced by Avicenna's works	Philosophy
<i>Tahāfut al-Falāsifah</i>	The Incoherence of the Philosophers), [Book refutes the Greek Philosophy aiming at Avicenna and Al-Farabi; and of which Ibn Rushd wrote his famous refutation <i>Tahāfut al-Tahāfut</i> (The Incoherence of the Incoherence)	Philosophy
<i>Miyar al-Ilm fi fan al-Mantiq</i>	Criterion of Knowledge in the Art of Logic	Philosophy
<i>Mihak al-Nazar fi al-mantiq</i>	Touchstone of Reasoning in Logic	Philosophy
<i>al-Qistas al-mustaqim</i>	The Correct Balance	Philosophy
<i>Fatawy al-Ghazali</i>	Verdicts of al-Ghazali	Jurisprudence
<i>Al-wasit fi al-mathab</i>	(The medium [digest] in the Jurisprudential school)	Jurisprudence
<i>Kitab tahzib al-Isul</i>	Pruning on Legal Theory	Jurisprudence
<i>al-Mustasfa fi 'ilm al-isul</i>	The Clarified in Legal Theory	Jurisprudence
<i>Asas al-Qiyas</i>	Foundation of Analogical reasoning	Jurisprudence
<i>The Jerusalem Tract</i> ^[81]		Jurisprudence

Reception of work

According to [William Montgomery Watt](#), Al-Ghazali was considered to be the [Mujaddid](#) ("Revivier") of his age. Many, perhaps most, later Muslims concurred and, according to Watt, some have even considered him to be the greatest Muslim after Muhammad.^[33]

As an example, the Islamic scholar al-Safadi stated:

Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad, the Proof of Islam, Ornament of the Faith, Abu Hamid al-Tusi (al-Ghazali) the Shafi'ite jurist, was in his later years without rival ^[84]

and the jurist, al-Yafi'i stated:

He was called The Proof of Islam and undoubtedly was worthy of the name, absolutely trustworthy (in respect of the Faith) How many an epitome (has he given) us setting forth the basic principles of religion: how much that was repetitive has he summarised, and epitomised what was lengthy. How many a simple explanation has he given us of what was hard to fathom, with brief elucidation and clear solution of knotty problems. He used moderation, being quiet but decisive in silencing an adversary, though his words were like a sharp sword-thrust in refuting a slanderer and protecting the high-road of guidance. ^[85]

The Shafi'i jurist al-Subki stated:

"If there had been a prophet after Muhammad, al-Ghazali would have been the man ". ^{[86][87]}

The Deobandi Scholar, [Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi](#), said,

“If Islam was not haqq (true religion) then Imam Ghazali would not be a muslim”

Also a widely considered [Sunni](#) scholar, [Al Dhahabi](#) in, his praise of Al Ghazali, wrote: "Al-Ghazzaali, the imaam and shaykh, the prominent scholar, Hujjat al-Islam, the wonder of his time, Zayn al-Deen Abu Haamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Toosi al-Shaafa'i al-Ghazzaali, the author of many books and one possessed of utter intelligence. He studied fiqh in his own town, then he moved to Nisapur in the company of a group of students. He stayed with the Imaam al-Haramayn and gained a deep knowledge of fiqh within a short period. He became well-versed in 'ilm al-kalaam and debate, until he became the best of debater."^[89]

Ibn Rushd ([Averroes](#)), a rationalist, famously responded that "to say that philosophers are incoherent is itself to make an incoherent statement." Rushd's book, *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*, attempted to refute al-Ghazali's views, but the work was not well received in the Muslim community.^[90]

According to historian Firas Alkhateeb, "When one reads Imam al-Ghazali's works at a very superficial level, one can easily misunderstand what he is saying as anti-scientific in general. The truth, however, is that al-Ghazali's only warning to students is to not fully accept all the beliefs and ideas of a scholar simply because of his achievements in mathematics and science. By issuing such a warning, al-Ghazali is in fact protecting the scientific enterprise for future generations by insulating it from being mixed with theoretical philosophy that could eventually dilute science itself to a field based on conjecture and reasoning alone."^[91]

Al-Ghazali has been seen by Orientalist scholars as causing a decline in scientific advancement in Islam, because of his refutation of the new philosophies of his time. He saw danger in the statements made by philosophers that suggested that God was not all-knowing or even non-existent, which strongly contradicted his conservative Islamic belief.^[91] This position has been challenged, however.^{[92][93]} The following statement made by Al Ghazali has been described as evidence that he was not against scientific advancement: "Great indeed is the crime against religion committed by anyone who supposes that Islam is to be championed by the denial of mathematical sciences"^[51]

Economic philosophy

Most aspects of Al-Ghazali's life were heavily influenced by his Islamic beliefs, and his [economic](#) philosophy was no exception. He held economic activity to a very high level of importance in his life and thought that others should as well, as he felt that it was not only necessary for the overall benefit to society but also to achieve spiritual wholeness and salvation. In his view, the worldly life of humanity depended on the economic activity of people and so he considered being economically active to be a mandated part of the [Sharia](#) law.^[94]

He established three goals of economic activity that he believed were part of one's religious obligation as well as beneficial to the individual: "achievement of self-sufficiency for one's survival; provision for the well-being of one's progeny; and provision for assisting those in economic need."^[94] He argued that subsistence living, or living in a way that provides the basic necessities for only one's family, would not be an acceptable practice to be held by the general population because of the detrimental results that he believed that would bring upon the economy, but he acknowledged that some people may choose to live the subsistence lifestyle at their own will for the sake of their personal religious journey. Conversely, he discouraged people from purchasing or possessing excessive material items, suggesting that any additional money earned could be given to provide for the poor.^[94]

Al-Ghazali thought that it should not be necessary to force equality of income in society but that people should be driven by "the spirit of Islamic brotherhood" to share their wealth willingly, but he recognized that it is not always the case. He believed that wealth earned could be used in two potential manners. One is for good, such as maintaining the health of oneself and their family as well as taking care of others and any other actions seen as positive for the Islamic community. The other is what Al-Ghazali would consider misuse, spending it selfishly on extravagant or unnecessary material items.^[94]

In terms of trade, Al-Ghazali discussed the necessity of exchanging goods across close cities as well as larger borders because it allows more goods, which may be necessary and not yet available, to be accessible to more people in various locations. He recognized the necessity of trade and its overall beneficial effect on the economy, but making money in that way might not be considered the most virtuous in his beliefs. He did not support people taking "excessive" profits from their trade sales.^[94]

Quantum mechanics

In 1993, Karen Harding's paper "Causality Then and Now: Al Ghazali and Quantum Theory" described several "remarkable" similarities between Ghazali's concept of occasionalism and the widely accepted [Copenhagen interpretation](#) of [quantum mechanics](#). She stated: "In both cases, and contrary to common sense, objects are viewed as having no inherent properties and no independent existence. In order for an object to exist, it must be brought into being either by God (al-Ghazili) or by an observer (the Copenhagen Interpretation)." She also stated:^{[95][96][97]}

In addition, the world is not entirely predictable. For al Ghazali, God has the ability to make anything happen whenever He chooses. In general, the world functions in a predictable manner, but a

miraculous event can occur at any moment. All it takes for a miracle to occur is for God to not follow His 'custom.' The quantum world is very similar. Lead balls fall when released because the probability of their behaving in that way is very high. It is, however, very possible that the lead ball may 'miraculously' rise rather than fall when released. Although the probability of such an event is very small, such an event is, nonetheless, still possible.

See also

- [Mujaddid](#)
- [Nasîhatnâme](#)

Notes

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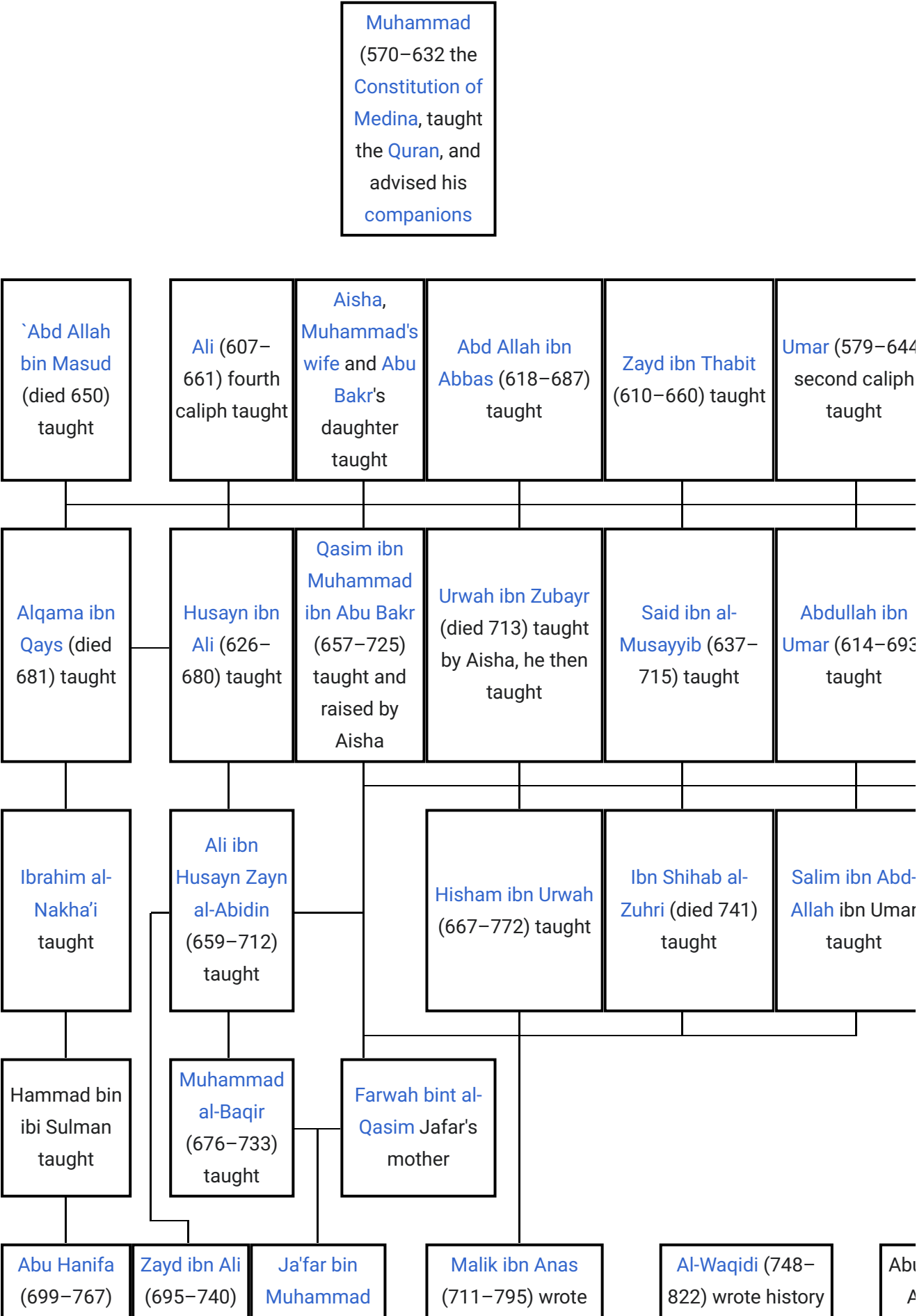
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Ibn Babawayh (923–991) wrote Man la yahduruhu al-Faqih jurisprudence followed by Twelver Shia	Sharif Razi (930–977) wrote Nahj al-Balagha followed by Twelver Shia	Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (1201–1274) wrote jurisprudence books followed by Ismaili and Twelver Shia	Al-Ghazali (1058–1111) wrote The Niche for Lights, The Incoherence of the Philosophers, The Alchemy of Happiness on Sufism	Rumi (1273) wrote Masnavi, Shams-e Tabrizi on Sufism	
Key: Some of Muhammad's Companions	Key: Taught in Medina	Key: Taught in Iraq	Key: Worked in Syria	Key: Travelled extensively collecting the sayings of Muhammad and compiled books of hadith	Key: Worked in Iran

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