

# THE PERIOD IN WHICH GHAZALI LIVED: THE SOCIO-POLITICAL SITUATION AND THE SPIRITUAL ENVIRONMENT

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## ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the period of Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, the socio-political situation in the caliphate, the spiritual life and scientific activity of the thinker, as well as the ideas and mystical works that influenced the formation of his ideological, political, cultural and moral views.

**Key words:** socio-political situation, spiritual environment, caliphate, mental and enlightenment crisis, Sufism, heart, mysticism, existence.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The personality of the great thinker, mystic and philosopher Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, who still amazes the minds and enriches the philosophical, cultural, spiritual and moral treasures of mankind beyond bounds of time and space, plays an important role in the development of science. He contributed to the formation of ideological, political, cultural and moral views, contributing to the science of Eastern and Western philosophy with his scientific activity and life. Therefore, the debate over what al-Ghazali is "... a thinker, a philosopher, a jurist, a thinker or a mystic" [1, p.7] has not stopped.

Abu Hamid ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Ghazali was born in 1058 in the village of Ghazala near the city of Tus in Khorasan. Abu Hamid's father died when he was a child [2, p.561]. Al-Azizi, an Iraqi scholar, says that the threat in the name of al-Ghazali is a mistake, that is, the hesitation of the letter "z." [3, p.34] It should be noted that there have been disagreements among researchers for many years about the threat posed by Ghazali's name.

Russian orientalist A. A. Khismatulin states that "Homid's father, Muhammad's son Muhammad, was from the village of Ghazala near the city of Tus, or Tuslik (Ghazzala), a spinner." [4, p.49]. In Arabic, "ghazala" means "spinning", "ghazal" means "yarn". Hence, "gazzal" means "spinner". Montgomery V. Watt also argues that the assumption that Ghazali's father's profession was spinning wool was a mistake.

Al-Ghazali says of himself: "People call me al-Ghazali by adding tashdid-az-za'i, but I am not al-Ghazali. However, I belong to a village called Ghazala" [6, p.27]. Here we can conclude that the Iraqi Arabs were ignorant of the Khorasan Persian language and adapted the Ghazali ratio to their pronunciation. As-Subki narrates that he spun yarn from wool and that this was his father's profession [9, p.82].

Alloma is known in Europe as Abu Hamet, Algazel, Algazelis [10, p.181], and now Alghazali, Algazzali [11, p.186].

After Abulhasan al-Ash'ari, the founders of the Ash'ari school of theology are three persons. They are Abu Bakr al-Baqillani (950-1013), Abulmaali ibn Juwayni (1028-1085) and Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058-1111).

## 2. MAIN BODY

Al-Ghazali's most famous epithets during his lifetime were his nicknames Hujjat ul-Islam (proof of Islam), Zayn-ud-din (adornment of religion), Mahajjat ud-din (center of the religion, the right path), Al-olim ul-awhad and Jamal ul-firak (The uniqueness of the scholars and the beauty of the sects), Mufti ul-umma (Mufti of the Ummah), Jami'u ashtat (or instrument) (summarizing the causes), Al-ulum ul-mubarriz fi-l-manqul minha val-mafhumi (The source of the pure and comprehensible knowledge to be taught), Barakat ul-anam (Blessing of all living beings), Imam aimmati-d-din (Imam of the Imams of Religion) [9, p.41-48].

One of the main sources in the study of the life of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, the situation at that time and the socio-political life is As-Siyyaq li-Tarikh Naysabur, written by Abdulhafir al-Farisi (1059-1135) a quarter of a century after the death of the thinker. However, Abu Bakr ibn al-Arabi, a student and friend of al-Ghazali, narrated important information in his book Al-Qawasim al-Awasim (The Disintegrators and Defenders), in particular, the time when the Imam lived in Baghdad and what he saw.

The Arab scholar Abdurrahman al-Badawi cites two other historians who lived in the recent period and wrote about the thinker:

1. Ibn Asakir (1105-1176) "History of Madinah Damascus", "Tabyin kazibi al-muftari" (Exposing the slander's lie);
2. Ibn Jawzi, Abulfaraj (1116-1201) "Al-muntazim fi tarikh al-muluk val-umam" (The order of the history of rulers and nations).

They were followed by a number of historians who mentioned Ghazali in the seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries AH [1, p.17]. The main ones are:

1. Yaqut Hamawi (1178-1229) "Mujam ul-buldon" (Anthology of Countries);
2. Ibn Jawzi, Sibti (1186-1256) "Mir'at uz-zamon fi tarikh al-ayan" (The Mirror of Time in the History of Famous People);
3. Muhiddin Nawawi, Abu Zakariya (1233-1278) "Tabaqat ul-fuqaha";
4. Ibn Khalliqan (1211-1282) "Wafayat al-ayan and anba 'abna az-zaman" (Chronology of famous people of the past and memories of their contemporaries);
5. Az-Zahabi, Shamsuddin (1274-1348) "Siyar alam an-nubalo" (Biography of great people);
6. Al-Yafi'i, Abussaodat (1298-1367) "Mir'at ul-jinan and ibrat ul-yaqzan" (The Mirror of Paradise and the Example of Awakening);
7. As-Subki, Tojuddin (1327-1370) "Tabaqat ush-shafi'iyah al-kubro" (Great positions of the Shafii's), "Tabaqat ul-vusto";
8. Ibn Kathir, Abulfido (1301-1373) "Al-bidoya van-nihoya" (The Beginning and the End);
9. Muhammad bin Hasan al-Wasiti, Shamsuddin (1317-1374) "At-tabaqat ul-a'liya fi manaqib ash-shafi'iyah" (Great levels of Shafii's heroism);
10. Ibn Mulaqqan (1323-1401) "Al-uqad ul-muzahhab fi tabaqat hamalat al-mazhab" (The golden branch of the ranks of the scholars of the Madhhab);
11. Ibn Qazi, Shuhba (1377-1448) "Tabaqat ush-Shafi'iyah";
12. Al-Aini, Badruddin (1360-1451) "Iqd ul-juman fi tarikh ahli-z-zamon" (Blessing of pearls in the history of the people of the time);
13. Tosh Kubrozoda (1495-1561) "Miftoh us-sodat" (The key to happiness);
14. As-Safadi, Salahuddin (1556) "Al-wafi bil-wafiyat" (Full information about famous people of the past);
15. Al-Minawi, Abdurrauf (1542-1621) "Al-kawakib ud-durriya fi tarajim as-sodat as-sufiya" (Scattered stars in the biography of Sufis);
16. Al-Aydarus, Abu Bakr al-Adani (1447-1509) "Ta'rif ul-ahyo bi-fazoil al-Ihyo" (Introducing the living with the virtues of Ihyo);
17. Az-Zubaydi, Murtaza (1732-1788) "Ithaf us-sodat al-muttaqin bi-sharhi asrar Ihyoi ulumi-d-din" (Enrichment of pious men by explaining the secrets of Ihyo).

From the beginning of the 20th century, Imam al-Ghazali's philosophical and moral views were reflected in the modern Arab philosopher and orientalist Zaki Mubarak's "Akhlaq inda al-Ghazali" (1925), Ahmad Farid al-Rifai's "Al-Ghazali" (1936), and Mansur Fahmi's "I'trafat". (1943), Solomon Dunya in "Haqiqat fi nazari al-Ghazali" (1947) [1, p.21].

Well-known modern scholars, who were the first to study the views of the thinker perfectly in the West and to analyze their noteworthy aspects are M. Boyjes, P.; J. Menask, N. Resher, D. Selman, D. Pirson, K. Brokkelman, F. Jabre and others. In particular, the "History of Arabic Literature" by the German orientalist Karl Brockelman contains information about the biographies and works of Ibn Sina and Beruni, in addition to Ghazali.

The period in which the thinker lived coincided with the Islamic Caliphate, the most advanced period of Muslim civilization, and the beginning of its decline. At the second half of the XI century and at the beginning of the XII century the political situation became much more complicated. In Khorasan, power struggles between the Abbasid caliphs and the Seljuk Turkmen, who had left Movarounnahr, intensified. During such a tumultuous period, the foundations of the Arab Caliphate were eroded as a result of the struggles between the Tahirids, Safavids, Samanids, Qarakhanid Ilikhans, Ghaznavids and Seljuks in Central Asia and Khorasan.

It was during this time of crisis that Ghazali was born into a poor family. Although his father was poor, he was a Sufi and mystic who loved science. His father passed away early and before his death he left the upbringing of his children Muhammad Ghazzali and his brother Ahmad in the hands of a Sufi friend. Alloma's family married a Sufi who earned halal food. From this it is clear that the thinker's interest and inclination towards mysticism was formed by his father from childhood. We later think that this caused Ghazali to turn to mysticism again.

At the age of fifteen, al-Ghazali began to study jurisprudence from Ahmad Rozkani in Tus [3, p.101]. Then he went to Jurjan and studied with Abu Nasr Ismail (1075) for three years. Then he went to Nishapur to study the basics of the method of religion, theology, jurisprudence and philosophy from Abulmaali Abdulmalik al-Juwayni (1085). Al-Ghazali also took lessons from Abu Ali al-Fazl al-Farmadi (1070) on mysticism and its methodology.

Ghazali's education dates back to the Seljuk sultans Alp-Arslan (1063-1072) and Jalal al-Din Malikshah (1072-1092), who ascended the throne after the death of Togrulbek (1063). At that time, political power was in the hands of the Seljuk sultans, and the caliph had influence only in religious, cultural, enlightenment, and ideological rule. Among the Abbasid caliphs, al-Qayyum Billah, al-Muqtadi Billah, and later al-Mustazhir Billah sponsored cultural and scientific activities in the capital, Baghdad.

When Juwayni saw al-Ghazali's rapid acquisition of knowledge, diligence, intelligence, and ingenuity, a grace bestowed upon him. He even described his disciple as "an inexhaustible sea" (bahrun muqdaq). Dr. Ahmad Fuad al-Ahwani, an Arab orientalist, likens Ghazali's relationship with Juwayni to Aristotle's relationship with Plato, and says that the thinker built his religious philosophy in accordance with the Ash'ari creed.

At that time, Nizamulmulk, the minister of the Seljuk Sultan Malikshah, gathered around him prominent scholars of his time. Most of them were jurists, Shafi'i scholars and Ash'ari scholars. Nizamulmulk sponsored the scholars. He founded the Nizami madrassas in Nishapur and Baghdad and attracted famous scholars to teach there. Ghazali, for example, is invited to teach at the madrassa.

Nizamulmulk honored the Sufis, supported the mystics, and he knew mysticism well [1, p.36]. In the Islamic world at that time, a number of works on mysticism were written, the foundations of which were arranged and systematized. The following major works of well-known Sufis on Sufism were popular and well-read among the people before Ghazali:

1. Abu Ali al-Harith ibn Asad al-Muhasibi (781, Basra-857, Baghdad) - The teacher of Sufis such as Junayd al-Baghdadi, Ibn Ata, an-Nuri, Sarri Saqati. Author of *Risolat ul-Mustarshidin*;
2. Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Ishaq al-Bukhari al-Kalabadi or al-Kalabozi (990 or 995 BC, Bukhara) - "The people of at-Taarruf li-madhhab at-tasawwuf";
3. Abulqasim Abdulkarim ibn Hawazan al-Qushayri (986, Ustuva-1072, Nishapur) - "Ar-Risala fi ilm at-tasawwuf";
4. Abu Talib Muhammad ibn Ali al-Makki (998 A.H., Baghdad) - "Qut ul-qulub fi muomalat al-mahbub wa wasf tariq al-murid ila maqam at-tawhid", "Ilm al-qulub";
5. Abu Abdurrahman Muhammad ibn al-Husayn as-Sulami (937, Nishapur-1021) - "Tabaqat us-Sufiyya";
6. Abu Nuaym Ahmad ibn Abdullah al-Isfahani (948, Isfahan-1038) - "Hilyat ul-Awliyya";
7. Abu Nasr as-Sarraj at-Tusi (988 BC) - "Kitab al-luma' fit-tasawwuf";
8. Abulhasan Ali ibn Usman al-Hujwiri (1072 or 1077, Lahore v.e.) - "Kashf ul-mahjub".

It should be noted that al-Ghazali was acquainted with the above-mentioned works, relied on the ideas expressed in them in the creation of *Ihya ulumi-d-din*, and developed ascetic-mystical views. Annemarie Shimmel Muhasibi's methodological approach to mysticism was the basis and mandatory guide for the early Sufis, the teachers of moderate mysticism, "... Ghazali assimilated the ideas of Muhasib in many ways."

However, the economic development of the caliphate led to the division of society into social strata by the tenth century, the merchants and artisans became rich, and the common people became impoverished. During this period, cities grew and their population increased. As the situation in the Khilafah became more complicated, movements with different ideological views began to emerge. The situation in the country is further complicated by the emergence of the Karmatian and Ismaili movements. They begin to fight against the Abbasid caliphs under the slogan of social justice. It was during this period that the leader of the inner-Ismaili sect, Hasan al-Sabbah, named after the mountain elder (Sheikh ul-Jabal), settled in the fortress of Alamut in the Qazvin province of present-day Iran. If the Karmats carried out military operations in an aggressive manner like the bandits, the Ismailis would begin to carry out individual terror. This sect, known as the Hashishis, became known in Europe as the Assassins, and carried out assassinations aimed primarily at physically destroying officials and spiritual leaders they disliked.

As the territory of the Khilafah expanded, new lands were added to it, and peoples of different religions joined, the situation became more complicated and social and religious tensions increased. In such a socio-economic crisis, injustice in society has led to the spiritual depression of the people of the country and the desire of people to turn to the inner world, to seek help from the heart.

During the Seljuk period, a certain period of political tranquility, economic prosperity led to the flourishing of cultural life, the development of science and enlightenment, the development of various philosophical views. At the same time, a number of great and famous scholars emerged from the Nizami Madrasa. In 1091, Caliph al-Muqtadi (who ascended the throne in 1075) summoned al-Ghazali to Baghdad and appointed him a mudarris (on the recommendation of Nizamulmulk) at the Nizami Madrasa [1, p.37].

Annemarie Shimmel says the minister will appoint Nizamulmulk Ghazali as a teacher at the Nizami madrassa in Baghdad. A minister who was a supporter of Ash'ari theology, he founded new types of schools (madrassas) in all regions of the Seljuk kingdom. They were designed to train (Ash'ari) theologians and became a model for the educational institutions of the later Muslim world.

### 3. CONCLUSION

In short, the complexity of Ghazali's time, the socio-political situation, the reforms of Minister Nizamulmulk in the field of enlightenment and education, the various theological ideological movements that emerged in the Caliphate due to socio-economic instability, and the competition between them led to the development of the great scholar and thinker. His main task in such a complex period was to strengthen and protect the Sunni sect. In addition to this task, al-Ghazali was skeptical of the views of the Sophists, scholars, botanists, and mutakallims, and approached the views of the Sufis from a rational and logical-philosophical point of view, justifying the superiority of mystical teachings. According to the thinker, mysticism is



inextricably linked with the divine essence in the spiritual development of man, in the formation and upbringing of his morals.

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