

BOOK REVIEW

Abdul-Hamid (Imam) Ghazali: *Ihya Ulum Id-Din (Revival of Religious Thought)*, Vol. 4. Darul-Ishaat Urdu Bazar Karachi-Pakistan, 1993

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Abstract

This book provides a review of the book “*Ihya Ulum Id-Din (Revival of Religious Thought Volume 04)*” the work of Islamic scholar Imam Abdul Hamid Al-Ghazali (Imam Ghazali Translated by Fazlul Karim. Darul Ishaat, Urdu Bazar, Karachi, Pakistan, 1993. This is an original contribution, explained in informative content and written in clear language that is accessible to knowledgeable readers.

Keywords: Imam Al-Ghazali, Ihya Ulum Id-Din, Revival of Religious Thought

Introduction

Imam Ghazali’s concluding volume 4 of his four volumes magnum opus of outstanding learning continues to invoke the topic of his Book of Destructive Evils in its centrality of the Soul. The Soul empowered by knowledge is made to be the origin of the Good and Evil in every human thought and action. Yet, Ghazali points out that within this quagmire of opposing choices by Falsehood, there remains the scope of reformation toward Truth. This empowerment of Truth and Goodness Ghazali extracts from the lessons of the Qur’an, the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad (Sunnah), and the wise instructions of sages.

Ghazali enumerates the following sources of acts of a good Soul or a tarnished Soul: Nafs (inclination), Ruh (spirit), Qalb (heart), Aql (reason), good conduct, education, religious upbringing, good and evil propensities, greed, humility, sexual passion, fornication, excessive food contra moderation, true hunger, calumny, anger, envy, hatred, kindness, worldliness, wealth in its good and bad

implications, generosity, miserliness, power and show, boasting over name and fame, pride, self-esteem. The control and submission to evil and goodness, respectively, that arise, govern, and control the individual are treated by Ghazali as individual traits or destructive evils, as the case may be. Ghazali's moral masterpiece thereby appealed to the individual psychological reconstruction.

Our critique of Ghazali's idealism lies in the impossibility of his individually aggregated social order to exist in its perfect form via incrementally rising along the ranks of blessed knowledge. Ghazali writes in this regard, "The first stage is like the outer cover of a cocoanut. The second stage is the inner cover of a cocoanut. The third stage is the kernel of a cocoanut. The fourth stage is the oil of the kernel. The first stage of Tawhid is to utter by the tongue, 'There is no deity but God'. The second stage is to confirm it by heart. The third stage is like the kernel, which can be seen by inner light or by the way of kashf (purity of heart). This is the stage of those who are nearest to God. The fourth stage is like oil in kernel. He sees nothing but God. This is the stage of the truth. Such an experience Ghazali calls fana-fi-Tawhid, meaning to lose oneself in Tawhid (the monotheistic quiddity)." (edited).

In treating the rewards and punishments as individual acts, such individuals uniformly make up the society at large, and then an ideal society or its depredation to the lowest rung of failure results. Such human and social aggregative conditions are of the idealistic type of rationality that was invoked by the Greeks and later on by the classical and neoclassical marginalist and rationalist scholars. Thereby, according to such independently aggregated ethical or contrarily unethical individuals as oppositely perfected citizens of the societal order, the bestowal of divine Mercy or perdition is interpreted in their independently additive forms. Although Ghazali considers the wide scope of moral and ethical reformation within the construct and bestowing of divine Mercy, the optimal form of the good society that Ghazali aspires for does not reflect the real social experience. On the contrary, the function of knowledge and learning in the states of reflective virtues dispelling evil and perdition, is truly an evolutionary experience rising from lesser to higher levels of excellence, but not attaining ideal optimal states of fana-fi-Tawhid, as Ghazali depicts the necessary ideal state of the Good Society.

It is for such a limitation in Ghazali's perfectionist worldview that, a true social order recursively establishing itself subject to

everlasting knowledge induction via the processes of imperfect learning while correcting its fallibility, cannot be explained. Consequently, the various acts of goodness and evils that Ghazali enlists, as pointed out earlier, cannot attain a social order induced by knowledge and learning by way of conscious and continued interaction (discourse) leading to integration (consensus), and thereby to evolutionary learning across a diversity of living experiences across processes, systems, entities.

In the optimal and equilibrium states of Ghazali's fana fi-Tawhid there is no existence of Worldly being and becoming towards higher or lower levels of consciousness that is enabled by the attainment of Soul with knowledge along the endless learning path. Such a state of aspired attainment is like that of a constant level of maximized objective criterion in mainstream socio-economic thinking, as it was for the perfectly moral Greek state of gods, kings, and warriors. The collaborative nature of discourse rested with this group of Greek enlightened agents. In the limit of understanding the attainment of optimal and steady-state equilibrium conditions of maintaining a constant given level of resources, Ghazali's interpretation refers to the Hereafter about the conditions of the material world-system.

Such a conjoint ultimate optimal steady-state equilibrium as the Hereafter about the material world-system is a profoundly noteworthy characterization of moral-material embedding as the indispensable property of all events in the Qur'anic explanation of dynamics of events spanning history. The concrescence of moral-material embedding in characterizing events across history defines the dynamic path of every form of existence from the temporal universe to the Hereafter. Such a deduction flows out of our interpretation of Ghazali's phenomenological world system. The path of events embedding such events is what we refer to as a conscious continuum. We do not find such an analytical fact in Ghazali's explanation of his phenomenology of moral-material embedded knowledge-induced order of learning in everything. Yet it is the dynamic lesson of the Soul endowed by knowledge in the learning world system that the Qur'an presents. The Qur'an (29:20) declares: Say: "Travel through the earth and see how Allah did originate creation; so will Allah produce a later creation: for Allah has power over all things."

Furthermore, the dynamics of learning by unity of knowledge bestowed in 'everything' is affirmed by the Qur'an. Yet, the emanating meaning of inter-entity symbiotic nature as the manifestation of

interacting, integrating, and evolutionary dynamics has not been discovered by Islamic scholars in general. The greatness of Ghazali’s philosophical erudition in quranic knowledge is also subsumed in this critical observation. The dynamic nature of symbiotic learning by the consciousness of the moral-material order of being and becoming is derivable by the higher understanding of the following qur’anic verse (Qur’an 36:36): “Glory to Allah, Who created in pairs all things that the earth produces, as well as their own (human) kind and (other) things of which they do not know.” The symbiotic implication of ‘pairing’ as the most extensive manifestation of the monotheistic (Tawhid) law of the unity of knowledge is presented for human conscious contemplation (fikir, tafaqur).

The formulation below points to the two implications of the nature of the world system with and without the derivation of socio-scientific dynamics from Ghazali’s profoundly peripatetic ideas fused in contextual models. Since the world system according to Ghazali has a cardinality about the Hereafter that is enumerable, therefore we expand Ghazali’s Truth and Falsehood list, $\{e(q); q\hat{I}fana^o(W,S) \text{ \textcircled{S}OUL}\}$, as in Ihya (4). On the other hand, the incommensurate nature of the fullness of relations between Tawhid, World, and Hereafter explains an open multidimensional list of denumerable values.

∫ Denumerable evaluation of objective criterion of wellbeing:

$$\underline{M}(\theta) = \cup_{i \in E^H} \cap_{s,p} \{W_{s,p}(\theta, X(\theta), E(\theta))_{s,p}\}_i [\theta \in fana \equiv (\Omega, S) \subset \text{SOUL}]; \quad (1) \quad |$$

$$(d/d\theta)W_{s,p}(\cdot)_i > 0$$

□

Enumerable (linearly and individually independent by entities} in the optimal-equilibrium state:

$$\lim_{\theta} M(\theta \rightarrow fana) = \quad (2)$$

$$\cup_{i \in E^H} W_i\{\theta, X(\theta), \underline{E}(\theta)\}_i [\theta \in fana \equiv (\Omega, S) \subset \text{SOUL}]; (d/d\theta)W_{s,p}(\cdot)$$

$$= 0, \quad \underline{s,p} = 1, 2, \dots$$

Legend:

M denotes divine Mercy at its ultimate. The saying of the Prophet Muhammad is this: Allah says as recorded in Hadith al-Qudsi (divinely inspired prophetic sayings of praises to God): “My Mercy rules over my wrath”.

‘q’ denotes knowledge flows from the primal ontological

premise of the Qur'an (denoted by W), sunnah (denoted by S), and wise sayings of morally inspired sages. [$q\hat{f}ana^o(W,S)\text{SOUL}$].

$W_{s,p}(\dots)$ denotes the objective criterion of planetary wellbeing, with 's' denoting diversity of systems, 'p' denoting diversity of processes of learning in respect of the law of monotheistic unity of knowledge as denoted by, [$\theta \in \text{fana} \equiv (\Omega, S) \subset \text{SOUL}$]. (s, p) = 1, 2, ... across Events spanning History.

$\{\theta, X(\theta), E(\theta)\}$ denotes material choices induced by the moral induction of
 $\{\theta \in \text{fana} \equiv (\Omega, S) \subset \text{SOUL}\}$ in terms of $X(\theta)$ (materiality), $E(\theta)$ events spanning history. (θ, H).

Let, $X'(q)$ denote the enumerable list of destructive evils in Ghazali's enumeration of such passions in the light of the divine law of monotheistic unity of knowledge $\{q\}$. This vector separably in linear individuation includes the actions that follow; and the perdition that are meted out as punishment in the final instance. The enumerable list of destructive evils in this totality of occurrences does not accommodate belief in the Hereafter as the end of History of the learning universe governed by the monotheistic law of the unity of knowledge. Materiality of existence and purpose are thus rendered meaningless in respect of the belief and functioning of the Hereafter, and thereby of Tawhid (monotheistic law).

Contrarily, $X(q)$ denotes springs of goodness progressively reforming out of the list linearly separable list of destructive evils and their punishment. Thereby, gains in actualizing such reformation advance the actualization of experiences in the light of the unity of knowledge as a manifestation of the unitary law of Tawhid as monotheism functioning in details and generality of issues and problems of the world-system as studied.

Time, $t(q)$ is conveyed by $E(q)$. Time assumes its different meanings as temporal countable time in Ghazali's linearly independent events by the individuality of events as moments. In the denumerable knowledge-induced meaning of space and time, equivalently as denumerable events, time reflects topological time. The Qur'an refers to the topological nature of time as dahr. From this

domain, $t(q) \circ E(q)$, is derived as intertemporal time-flow.

'fana' is Ghazali's ideal state of acquisition of Tawhid, a possibility only of the Hereafter as the final event. It is nonetheless, a possibility of evolutionary epistemic monotheistic excellence in the {knowledge, space, time (event)}-dimensions.

Expressions (1) and (2) are further explained in Figure 1 by the three diagrams along the dynamics of Merciful transformation from the state of destructive evil progressively to moral-material perfection in the Hereafter as the end of History spanned by events. The progressively reforming events are shown from E1 to E3. E3 marks the state of moral-material accomplishment in the denumerable fullness of the moral-material evolutionary phenomenological completion. This state is shown by the progressive embedding of the fullness of moral-material inclusive reality by learning according to the law of the unity of knowledge, which is the monotheism of Tawhid according to the Qur'an. This is ontologically explained by the jointness of the Qur'an, the sunnah, and the wise sayings of the sages. E4 is the same as E3. It is shown in the cross-sectional conical view of the evolutionary universe passing through the experience of interaction and integration into evolution to the Hereafter (IIE), the end of history and intertemporal time.

Figure 1 shown by its diagrams explains how the divine function of Mercy in the Qur'an reforms a fallen sinner in respect of his commitment to three (example) modes of independently poised destructive evil acts contained within a closed enumerable set of sins, E1. E1 comprises destructive evils, such as Passionate inclinations, sinful acts committed, and punishment by Perdition. Divine Mercy forgives the sinner by the function of divine knowledge that reforms by recognition of the law of the unity of knowledge in all acts and experiences, E2. Thereby, the enumerable embodiment of progressively transformed destructive evils into goodness opens up E2 into E3 as a denumerable set of good values. The transformation of the three sub-sets of the events E1-E2 into the knowledge-induced set of learning events according to the monotheistic law of unity of knowledge (Tawhid and Tawakkil), realizes the countless evolutionary experiences of moral-material inclusion along the path of actualization of the Tawhidi law across denumerable domains of interaction, integration, and evolutionary learning in unity of knowledge in denumerable events across the conscious continuum of history. Such a conscious embrace of the divinely ontological law

denoted by $\{q\hat{I}Soul \hat{I} (W,S)\}$, implies the reformation of the Soul by its conscious actualization of monotheistic oneness (unity of knowledge), the Truth realism of the good actions in the world-system, and fullness of belief in the Hereafter. This totality marks the passage of reformed events into goodness across the conscious continuum of history that closes in the Hereafter. The experience towards such a realization of true reality is premised in the model of evolutionary learning according to the monotheistic law of unity of knowledge.

The resulting transformation of Ghazali's theory of psychology of individualism from the lowest to highest levels of moral actualization inclusive of physicalism, explains the profound meaning of critical realism. Its theoretical characterization and application in experiences of the world system with moral-material embedding is analytically formalized by the string relationship as follows. This depicts the path of the conscious continuum from Tawhid as the law of the unity of knowledge to Tawhid in its actualization optimally as manifest law in the Hereafter through the studying and interpreting the details and generality of the world-system.

Such an application to socio-scientific issues and problems is one applied aspect of Ghazali's possible extension of the individuated psychological model to the broadest vista of socio-scientific realism. Critical realism is the field of analytical philosophical study of the resulting analytical objective and formalism of the True Reality. The Qur'an (69:1-3) declares: "The Sure Reality! What is the Sure Reality? And what will make you realize what the Sure Reality is?"

Now as far as JOCRISE studies theoretical and practical problems and issues of the social order, Ghazali's extension of the individual psychological conditions of moral-material embedding can be adduced to apply to social issues. An example in this regard is the moral issue to embed the valid context of the social contract of the disenfranchised. In this case, it becomes the moral duty to uphold the artifacts as objects of materiality for the wellbeing of the otherwise referred to as the disenfranchised. Consequently, the disenfranchised people cannot be enslaved in such a demeaning class. Instead, such needy people ought to be dispensed their claim as equally valuable citizens within the entire coverage of the social contract. The moral-material dispensing of the social contract is thereby attained. Ghazali's profound theory of morality now applies to the uplift of the needy by the power of the social contract. As in the case of moral amelioration explained above from event E1 to event

E4, this moral-material context can be explained as the freedom of the otherwise referred to as the disenfranchised, to a respectable group by claim at the progressively respectable of society at large. Indeed, society now becomes a moral-material entity governed by the law of unity of knowledge.

Diagram 1:E1	Diagram 2:E2	Diagram 3:E3	Diagram 4:E4
The enumerable individuated states of destructive evils	Progressive sformation into moral liberation: Mercy	Ultimate state of nsformation to denumerable evolution moral state: Mercy	Depiction of moral-material (IIE) into numerability: Cross-sectional conical evolutionary view of E3

Figure 1

Ghazali’s progressive possibility of purification of Soul by the Mercy of the monotheistic law of the unity of knowledge and the purposeful actualization of existence

