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GHAZĀLĪ AND "*RELIGIONSWISSENSCHAFT*"

Some Notes on the Mishkāt al-Anwār
For Professor Charles J. Adams

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I.

As if to excuse himself for a sin of youth, the "Proof of Islam" Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) intimates in the opening pages of the "Deliverer from the Error" (*Al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*) that he had been a Comparative Religionist of sorts. Given his "thirst after a comprehension of things as they really are," he says, and thanks to his "inborn rationality" (*gharīzatan*) and "God-given nature" (*fiṭratan min Allāh*), he felt free near the age of adolescence from the bonds of "blind imitation" (*taqlīd*) and the constrictions of "inherited beliefs," particularly when he observed that "Christian youths always grew up to be Christians, Jewish youths to be Jews and Muslim youths to be Muslims." Moreover, had he not learned of the Prophetic Tradition which says that "Everyone born is born according to the *fiṭra*: it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian"? Thus he felt moved to discover what that "original nature" (*al-fiṭra al-aṣliyya*) really was, and what the "beliefs accidentally derived (*al-ᶜāriḍa*) from *taqlīd* of parents and masters" really were.[1]

Whatever the autobiographical value of this famous "confession" may be, it certainly implies that the difference between the traditional practice of religion, including his own, and the "natural" or "God-given" capacity of the human mind to know "the truth as it really is," was a genuine problem for Ghazālī. Julian Obermann in his classic if controversial study of Ghazālī's "philosophical and religious subjectivism" considered it to be nothing less than "the most important problem of *Religionswissenschaft*" itself. To Obermann, such a *"Wissenschaft"* rather than the religious tradition of Islam was

1 *Al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl wa'l-Mūṣil ilā Dhī'l-ᶜIzza wa'l-Jalāl* ed. Farid Jabre, Beirut, Librairie Orientale, 1969, 10f./French translation 59ff. I have also used the English translation by W. Montgomery Watt, *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazālī*, Lahore, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1963 (reprint of London, 1953 ed.), 20f. For a recent discussion of the *Munqidh*, see Josef van Ess, "Quelques remarques sur le *Munqiḏ min aḍ-ḍalāl*" in *Ghazâlî: La raison et le miracle*, Table ronde UNESCO, Paris, Maisonneuve et Larose, 1987, 57-68. See also below, notes 92-95.

therefore the true subject matter of Ghazālī's major work, the "Revival of the Sciences of Religion" (*Iḥya' ᶜUlūm al-Dīn*).[2]

The problem is clearly related to a fundamental distinction Ghazālī himself makes in the *Iḥyā'* between two kinds of "sciences": The properly "religious sciences" (*ᶜulūm dīniyya*), by which he means the "legal sciences" (*ᶜulūm sharᶜiyya*), and the "rational sciences" (*ᶜulūm ᶜaqliyya*). The former are those "derived by way of *taqlīd* from the prophets" whereas the latter are rooted in the *fiṭra*, and it is by virtue of the *fiṭra*, says Ghazālī, that every human "heart" is capable, in principle, of knowing the "true realities" (*maᶜrifat al-ḥaqā'iq*) and the "oneness of God" (*maᶜrifat al-tawḥīd*).[3] But while this "subjectivist" optimism concerning the capacity of the human *fiṭra* may have prepared the ground for a philosopher like Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 581/1185) to develop the idea of the *philosophus autodidactus*,[4] it was not, of course, the purpose of the "Proof of Islam" to call the "objective" givens of the religion "derived by way of *taqlīd* from the prophets" into question. The "Deliverer from the Error" on the contrary recommends *taqlīd* of "the prophets" and condemns, in fact, only one kind of "authoritative teaching" (*taᶜlīm*), namely, the one practiced by the followers of the Ismāᶜīlī *imām*;[5] and it seems a safe guess that the "Error" meant was, concretely, the most recent challenge to the established Sunni order in the form of the "new *Daᶜwa*" of Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ (d. 518/1124).[6] Quite generally speaking, Orientalist opinion has come a long way from "appropriating Ghazālī," as Josef van Ess puts it, "with the categories of bourgeois liberalism."[7] Ghazālī's frequent polemics against all those he felt were undermining

2 Julian Obermann, *Der philosophische und religiöse Subjektivismus Ghazālīs: Ein Beitrag zum Problem der Religion*, Vienna and Leipzig, Wilhelm Baumüller, 1921, 108f. Also *ibid.* 1ff. and 86-102.

3 *Iḥyā'* book xxi, *bayān* 6 and 7 (= Cairo, ᶜUthmāniyya, 1352/1933, III, 12f. and 14f.). The passages are discussed by Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies in Al-Ghazzālī*, Jerusalem, The Magnes Press, 1975, 357ff. See also the corresponding passages in Ghazālī's Persian *Kīmiyā-yi Saᶜādat* (ed. Aḥmad Ārām, Tehran, Markazī, 2nd ed. 1333 h.s., 23-27), where he places even more emphasis on the virtues of the human *fiṭrat*.

4 On Ibn Ṭufayl and the *fiṭra* see Léon Gauthier, *Hayy Ben Yaqdhân: roman philosophique d'Ibn Thofail*. 2nd ed., Beirut, Imprimerie Catholique, 1936, introd. xii-xix. The first to discuss Ibn Ṭufayl's *roman philosophique* – under the appropriate heading "Concerning the soundness of the *fiṭra*, and the possibility of independent learning...and to know God with that" – was the well-read Andalusian Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d. 776/1374) in his *Rawḍat al-Taᶜrīf bi'l-Ḥubb al-Sharīf* (ed. Muḥammad al-Kattānī, Beirut, Dār al-thaqāfa, 1970, I, 280-283).

5 *Al-Munqidh* ed. F. Jabre, 28f./French transl. 85-88, and 45/108f. Cf. M. Watt, *The Faith and Practice* 43-46 and 69.

6 Cf. Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1974, II, 183ff. See also below, notes 103-105.

7 J. van Ess, "Quelques remarques..." 57f.

Islam, notably the Ismāᶜīlī "Esotericists" (*al-Bāṭiniyya*), but also the "Philosophers" (*al-Falāsifa*) in general and the "Libertines" (*al-Ibāḥiyya*), make it indeed somewhat difficult to see in him an ancestor of modern *"Religionswissenschaft"* – particularly if that child of the European Enlightenment can be distinguished from more traditional theological concerns by what Charles Adams aptly calls the "irenic" approach to the faith of other men.[8]

On the other hand, it is also a fact that Ghazālī himself wrote a treatise on "enlightenment" of a certain kind, known as "The Niche for Lights" (*Mishkāt al-Anwār*); and this famous treatise, which is presently available in one critical and several traditional editions of the Arabic text, plus no less than four translations into various European languages,[9] would seem to show him capable of a surprisingly relaxed attitude, indeed an "irenic" approach to religions, doctrines and sects – provided that it is entirely authentic. That, however, is precisely the problem raised by W. Montgomery Watt in a thought-provoking though ultimately inconclusive theological analysis of the final section – the "Veils-section" as he calls it – which was published in the *J.R.A.S.* for 1949.[10]

Watt's article was written partly in refutation of the views expressed by the first European student of the *Mishkāt* in particular, the Reverend W.H.T. Gairdner, whose pioneer-study on "the Ghazālī-problem," published (in English) in *Der Islam*, 1914, was in fact almost exclusively devoted to the very same final section on the "Veils."[11] Of course Gairdner's "problem" was not the authenticity of the text, which he took for granted, but whether or not

8 Charles J. Adams, "Islamic Religious Tradition" in *The Study of the Middle East: Research and Scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences* ed. by Leonard Binder, New York, John Wiley & Sons, 1976, 29-95, esp. 38ff. and 49f.

9 The standard edition of the Arabic text is the one published, with an introduction in Arabic, by Abū'l-ᶜIlā' ᶜAfīfī (= A.E. Affifi), Cairo, Qawmiyya, 1383/1964 (hereafter = *Mishkāt*). I have also used the text contained in the anonymous edition *Majmūᶜat Rasā'il al-Imām al-Ghazālī*, Beirut, ᶜIlmiyya, 1406/1986, 5-47 (hereafter = *Mishkāt B*), and the following European translations:
a) W.H.T. Gairdner, *Al-Ghazzālī's Mishkāt Al-Anwār ("The Niche for Lights")*, Lahore, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1952 (reprint of London, 1924 ed.); hereafter = *The Niche*.
b) Laura Veccia Vaglieri and Roberto Rubinacci in *Scritti Scelti di al-Ghazālī a cura di L.V.V. e R.R.*, Torino, Unione Tipografico, 1970, 563-614.
c) Roger Deladrière, *Ghazâlî: Le Tabernacle des Lumières (Michkât Al-Anwâr)*, Paris, Seuil, 1981.
d) ᶜAbd-Elṣamad ᶜAbd-Elḥamīd Elschazlī, *Abū-Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī: Die Nische der Lichter*, Hamburg, Felix Meiner, 1987 (hereafter = *Die Nische*).

10 "A Forgery in al-Ghazālī's Mishkāt?" in *J.R.A.S.* 1949, 5-22.

11 "Al-Ghazālī's Mishkāt al-Anwār and the Ghazālī-Problem" in *Der Islam* 5, 1914, 121-153.

"Ghazālī the Ṣūfi" had remained faithful to "orthodox Islam." Having decided, though not without some hesitation, that "the metaphysic (sic) of Gh. the Ṣūfi was still that of *kalām*, not *falsafa*, just as much as in his pre-Ṣūfī days,"[12] Gairdner nevertheless came back to the question in the introduction to his translation of the whole *Mishkāt*, speaking now of Ghazālī's "tortured thought" and emphasizing that the final section "contains the most numerous and the most interesting problems for the study of Ghazzālī's inner life, thought and convictions"; that it supplies "rich material for an unusually *inside* view of Ghazzālī's real views concerning men, doctrines, religions and sects," and that it amounts to "hardly less than an outline of a philosophy of religion."[13]

This "philosophy of religion," then, was the cause of the dispute over the authenticity of the "Veils-section." For Watt, there could be no such thing as an "unusually *inside* view" if that meant "esoteric." He argued against Gairdner that this philosophy is "definitely Neoplatonic in its outlook"; that this makes it "incompatible" with Ghazālī's "authentic" religious thought as expressed in the *Munqidh* and other works of the later period, including the main part of the *Mishkāt* itself; and that in conclusion, the "Veils-section" but not the rest of the book must be imputed to a presumed "Neoplatonist forger."

Against Watt's "forgery"-theory, ᶜAbdurraḥmān Badawī advanced, apparently already in 1948, the argument that the whole *Mishkāt* is found in a collective manuscript of Ghazālian works which is dated only four years after Ghazālī's death (i.e. 509 A.H.).[14] This is the ms. Şehit Ali Paşa 1712, one of the two used by Affifi for his edition of the standard text.[15] Watt, too, mentions this ms. in his recent article on Ghazālī in *The Encyclopedia of Religion* but chooses to ignore the fact that it contains the *Mishkāt*. Instead, he still maintains that "the facts ... strengthen the case for regarding as inauthentic works which cannot be harmonized with what is expressed in books like the *Munqidh* and the *Iḥyā'*."[16]

In what follows, I shall argue that the "philosophy of religion" of the "Veils-section" is, indeed, "heretical" in the sense in which Watt (*ibid.*) still uses that term, meaning that it "cannot be harmonized" with the theological

12 *ibid.* 140.

13 *The Niche* 6-8 and 65.

14 Abdurraḥmān Badawī, *Mu'allafāt al-Ghazālī*, 2nd ed., Kuwayt, 1977, 193-198. Other Ghazālian works contained in this collective manuscript include, according to Badawī, the following: *Iljām al-ᶜAwāmm* (ibid. 231); *Al-Qiṣṭās al-Mustaqim* (*ibid.* 160-165); *Fayṣal al-Tafriqa* (*ibid.* 166f.).

15 *Mishkāt* introd. 5f.

16 "Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid, al-" in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Mircea Eliade et al., eds., New York, Mac Millan, 1987, V, 541-544, esp. 543. Watt mentions only *Iljām al-ᶜAwāmm* (see note 14 above).

views considered "orthodox" by Watt, although it is by no means "incompatible" with major points made by Ghazālī in the *Iḥyā'*, and certainly not with the major part of the *Mishkāt* itself. The "heretical" nature (in the above sense) of the "Veils-section" seems rather obvious, first of all, from the fact that it actually reproduces basic ideas on *"Religionswissenschaft"* from the "*Risāla* On Doctrines and Religions," i.e. *Risāla 42* of the highly "unorthodox" "Encyclopaedia of the Brethren of Purity" (*Ikhwān al-Ṣafā*), as will be shown below in some detail. As is well-known, the "orthodox" Ghazālī of the *Munqidh* proscribes this "Encyclopaedia" in no uncertain terms, although he acknowledges at the same time that there may be some superficial similarity between the ideas "cited by the author of the Book of the Brethren of Purity in order to entice the credulous to accept his falsehood", and his own.[17] "Worse" still, the "Veils-section" not only incorporates more or less obvious "Neoplatonic" ideas, but specifically "*Baṭinī*" doctrines, which Ghazālī himself had earlier (i.e. in his "*Streitschrift*") identified as such and denounced as "dualism," and places them, moreover, far above ordinary theological and even "philosophical" views (see section iii below). No wonder that the mysterious "doctrine of the 'Vice-gerent' (*al-muṭā*ᶜ)" in which it seems to culminate has puzzled Ghazālī-exegetes since the earliest times, even though it is clearly not identical with the final message of the book (see section iv below).

It must be emphasized again, however, that none of all this seems really "incompatible" with the complex character and thought of a man like Ghazālī. Perhaps, then, it is Professor Watt's concept of Ghazālī's single-minded "orthodoxy," rather than the authenticity of the "Veils-section," which ought to be called into question. Yet in spite of the manuscript Şehit Ali Paşa 1712, and contrary to the now prevailing opinion based on it, it also must be pointed out that the authenticity-question is not yet entirely settled. Some doubt remains with regard to the text as we have it – and it comes from quite unexpected quarters, as will be shown in the final section of this article.

17 *Al-Munqidh* ed. F. Jabre, 26f./83f. and 33/94. M. Watt, *Faith and Practice* 41f. and 53. The possibility of Ghazālī's indebtedness to the Ikhwan has been evoked several times, notably by H. Lazarus-Yafeh (*Studies, passim*) and Susanne Diwald, *Arabische Philosophie und Wissenschaft in der Enzyklopädie... (iii)...*, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1975, 7 and *passim;* but no systematic study of the question has, to my knowledge, appeared so far.

II.

Although apparently written before the *Munqidh* (i.e. before roughly 500 A.H.) though probably not much earlier,[18] the *Mishkāt* is in any case, and even in its undisputed parts, a far more "esoteric" treatise than the latter. Its full title, as referred to by Ghazālī himself in his Persian *summa*, the "Elixir of Happiness" (*Kīmiyā-yi-Saᶜādat*),[19] and confirmed by ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadhānī (d. 525/1132),[20] is actually "The Niche for the Lights and the Filter for the Secrets" (*Mishkāt al-Anwār wa-Miṣfāt al-Asrār*).[21] As we have it, the text is divided into three major "sections" (*faṣl*). The first two among these develop an ontological and epistemological theory derived from the word "light" as found in two parts of the Qur'anic "Light-verse" (24:35), respectively. Thus, Section One, on "God is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth," deals with various categories of physical and spiritual "lights," ending up with the conclusion that God, being the sole "truly existent" (*al-mawjūd al-ḥaqq*), is truly "Light." "Light" is defined in this context as the absolute or ultimate "Reality through which all things appear." It is as such indiscernible or "hidden" precisely because of the "intensity" (*shidda*) of Its (or His) own "manifestness" (*jalā'ishraq, ẓuhūr*).[22] The main theme of Section Two, on the other hand, is the Qur anic "Light upon light" in the second part of the "Light-verse." This is explained in relation to the human "Niche," and in terms of a theory of symbolism strongly reminiscent of Avicenna's,[23] as a gradual

18 That the *Mishkāt* (or part of it) was written before the *Munqidh* may be inferred from the following: 1. it is quoted by Ghazālī in the *Kīmiyā-yi Saᶜādat* (see below, n. 19). 2. This Persian *Kīmiyā* must be the one referred to by Ghazālī in the *Munqidh* (ed. Jabre, 50, line 14) as *Kīmiyā al-Saᶜāda* (cf. Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, *Moralia – Les notions morales dans la littérature persane du 3e/9e au 7e/13e siècle*, Paris, Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1986, 224ff.).

19 *Kīmiyā-yi Saᶜādat* ed. Aḥmad Ārām, 50. Although Ghazālī there refers to his explanation of the "Veils-tradition" in the *Mishkāt*, this does not by itself prove the authenticity of the disputed "Veils-section," because he quotes the Tradition with "seventy veils of light" only (cf. below, note 28). He may, in fact, be referring to a passage in Section Two (*Mishkāt* 67f.).

20 *Shakwā al-Gharīb* ed. ᶜAfīf ᶜUsayrān, 9 (in *Muṣannafāt-i ᶜAynulqużāt-i Hamadānī*, Tehran, University Press, 1341/1962).

21 This full title figures also in some manuscripts, but the apparently oldest ms. has, oddly enough, *Kitāb al-Mishkāt wa'l-Miṣbāḥ* as its title. See A.E. Affifi, *Mishkāt* introd. 3 and 6. The phrase *mishkāt li'l-anwār wa-miṣfāt li'l-asrār wa-mirqāt ilā 'l-ᶜalām al-aᶜlā* occurs in the text itself (*Mishkāt* 74, ult.).

22 *Mishkāt* 54f.; 59; 63f.

23 *Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa'l-Tanbīhāt* ed. J. Forget, Leiden, 1892, 126/A.-M. Goichon, *Livre des Directives et Remarques*, Beirut/Paris, Vrin, 1951, 324ff. (with notes). Ghazālī arranges the five perceptive powers somewhat differently and refrains, notably, from identifying the

process of truth-perception, mapped out on a five-fold scale ranging from physical sensation (the "Niche" itself) to imagination (the "Glass") to primary intellection (the "Lamp"), cogitation (the "Olive-tree"), and pure inspiration of prophets or *awliyāᵓ* (the "Oil that would almost shine by itself").[24] It also contains an interpretation of the Tradition according to which "God created Adam after the Form of the Merciful" (*ᶜalā ṣūrat al-Raḥmān*). This "Form," Ghazālī insists, is the symbol but not the symbolized. Its "presence" (*ḥaḍrat al-raḥma*) enables man to "know" God, even though it is not identical with the "Form of God" (*ṣūrat Allāh*) as such.[25]

Section Three, however, is based on the non-"canonical" though famous Tradition according to which "God has seventy (or "seven hundred" or "seventy thousand") Veils of Light and Darkness: were He to remove them, then the Splendors of His Face would burn everyone reaching Him by his sight (or "everything reached by His sight")."[26] According to Montgomery Watt, the "presumed forger" has "chosen the interpretation of this Tradition as a means of putting his goods into the hands of the customers he cannot gain by lawful means."[27] To substantiate such an accusation, Watt builds his case upon a series of arguments of "form and matter," all of which are designed to demonstrate that there is a real contrast or contradiction between the whole "Veils-section" on the one hand, and the rest of the *Mishkāt* as well as the rest of Ghazālī's later writings in general, on the other hand.

With regard to the form of the "Veils-tradition," Watt rightly points out that Ghazālī usually quotes it with "seventy veils of light" only, not "veils of darkness."[28] While this may have some significance, it is of course purely cir-

"Fire" – for Avicenna = the active Intellect – in this context. In Section One, however, he does identify it with the divine "Spirit" and/or the "Angel of seventy thousand faces" (*Mishkāt*, 52); and Ibn Ṭufayl evidently identifies this particular Angel with the active Intellect (*Hayy Ben Yaqdhan* ed. L. Gauthier, 129, 5-9/French transl. 93f.). See also below, note 171.

24 *Mishkāt* 79-81.

25 *Mishkāt* 71. Note, however, that Ghazālī quotes the same Tradition with *ᶜalā ṣūratihi* in Section One (*Mishkāt* 44), where he applies it purely and simply to the Intellect (*al-ᶜaql*), a "sample from the Light of God" which totally transcends any material dimension.

26 On this Tradition, and its impact on the Sufi concept of the mystical path, cf. my *Nūruddīn Isfarāyinī: Le Révélateur des Mystères*, Lagrasse, Verdier, 1986, esp. 111ff. For further references see also Elschazlī, *Die Nische* 85f. See also Al-Qushayrī, *Al-Risāla*, Cairo, 1379/1959, 43/ Richard Gramlich, *Das Sendschreiben al-Qušayrīs über das Sufitum*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner, 1989, 130, and Ibn ᶜArabī, *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, Cairo 1329 h., vol. 3, 210 (chapter 350).

27 *J.R.A.S.* 1949, 9.

28 *ibid.*, 13. Deladrière's note (*Le Tabernacle*, 99 n. 3) to the effect that Ghazālī "sometimes mentions only the veils of light" is quite misleading. In fact, none of the passages adduced

cumstantial evidence and does not by itself carry much weight as an argument for the "forgery"-theory even in Watt's own presentation. Furthermore, it would entail the additional hypothesis that the introduction to the *Mishkāt* has been manipulated by the "forger" as well, since a full quotation of the Tradition (with veils of light *and* darkness) is found there in the first place;[29] and one can always argue against this that the major theme of the treatise explains the presence of "veils of darkness" anyway: in Section One, there is after all the duality of "the Heavens *and* the Earth," and Section Two ends with a short comment on the Qur' anic "darkness-verse" (24:40).

Watt also contends that "the Veils-section has no preparation made for it in the previous part." Even the paradoxical "veiling" (*iḥtijāb*) of the "utterly Manifest," alluded to at the end of Section One, does not, in Watt's opinion, "prepare in the slightest for the explanation of the Veils-tradition as found in the existing texts of the *Mishkāt*."[30] Yet the opening page of Section Three refers precisely to this paradoxical "veiling" of the "Manifest" (*mutajallin*).[31] God being "manifest in Himself and to Himself" (*mutajallin fī dhātihi li-dhātihi*), the text state, "the Veil necessarily exists [only] in relation to something subject to it (*maḥjūb*, = "veiled"); and those subject to it among the creatures are of three kinds (*qism*, henceforth = "classes"): those veiled by sheer darkness, those veiled by pure light, and those veiled by light joined with darkness." In fact, this explanation of the Tradition provides the basis for nothing less than a systematic classification of all conceivable human attitudes vis-à-vis the "utterly Manifest" in terms of their relative "veiledness" including, to begin with, the total absence of any religious attitude (*ta'alluh*, cf. below) in "those veiled by sheer darkness." They constitute the "primitive" or "first class." The "second class" will be made up of all those "veiled by light joined with darkness," and it includes the religions of the "idol-worshippers" as well as famous theological doctrines of the *Mutakallimūn*, whereas the "third class," i.e. "those veiled by pure lights," refers to cosmological doctrines held by the "Philosophers," among others (see below).

This basic structure is evidently intended to be all-comprehensive in a logical and not in an empirical or historical sense. It cannot be exhaustive

from the *Iḥyā'* by either Watt or Deladrière has the Tradition with "veils of darkness." See also above, n. 19, and below, n. 185.

29 According to Watt (*J.R.A.S.* 1949, 22), it "of course could have been added by the forger." Badawī (*Mu'allafāt* 198) and Affifi (*Mishkāt*, introd. 31) on the contrary take it as an argument in favor of the authenticity.

30 *J.R.A.S.* 1949, 11ff.

31 *Mishkāt* 84, 5.

anyway, as only "the prophetic power" (*al-quwwa al-nabawiyya*) would be able to comprehend "all the seventy thousand veils."[32] Although the end of the "Veils-section" does suggest the availability of absolute Truth in this "prophetic power," exemplified in the figures of Abraham and Muhammad who are, of course, the prototypes of the Sufi "Attainers" (*al-wāṣilūn*, class 3.4.),[33] this text does *not* advocate any particular "orthodoxy." Nor is it a "pantheistic" treatise in the sense that it would obliterate the essential distinction between the "One manifest in Himself and to Himself" and his "divine *show*" in the *phainomena*.

Ghazālī in several places of the *Iḥyā'* actually alludes to such a "phenomenology" of the "Veils of Light" and its "ambiguity" (*iltibās*), notably in relation to Abraham's "Lords" (Sūra 6:76, cf. below) and Ḥallāj's *Anā 'l-Ḥaqq*.[34] In *Al-Maqṣad al-Asnā fī Sharḥ Maᶜānī Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā* he applies the same logic of ambiguity systematically to the problem of the "knowability" of God through the divine Attributes.[35] Perhaps the most telling example illustrating the apparent contradiction between "knowability" and "unknowability" of God is one which Ghazālī cites at various occasions, namely, the originally Buddhist tale of the "Elephant and the Community of the Blind": each among the blind having identified the part of the Elephant he happened to touch upon with an object already "known" to him (such as a pillar) was actually right from his point of "view" (*ṣadaqa min wajhin*), although they were of course altogether unable to "know" the Elephant as such.[36] A connection between this parable and the "Veils-tradition" is in fact suggested

32 *ibid.* 84, 12.

33 *ibid.* 91-93. Abraham stands for the one who gradually "ascends" to reach "attainment" at the end; Muhammad for the one who is right from the beginning granted the experience of "manifestation" (*tajallī*). Gairdner in *The Niche* 13f. confuses the issue, contrary to his own earlier analysis in *Der Islam* 1914, 129.

34 *Iḥyā'* book xxx, *bayān* 2, *ṣinf* 3 (= Cairo 1933, III, 346ff.). Other passages on this "phenomenology" of the "light-veils": book xxxvi, 1, *bayān* 2 (= IV; 275f.); book x, 1, *bayān* 1 (= Cairo 1958, I, 306); book xviii, 1, *bayān* 2 (= II, 247). On *iltibās* and "phenomenology," cf. Henry Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, Paris, Gallimard, 4 vols., 1971-1972, index s.v. *amphibolie*.

35 *Al-Maqṣad al-Asnā* ed. Fadlou A. Shehadi, Beirut, Dar El-Machreq, 1971, 42-59. See also the general discussion of the problem by F. Shehadi in his *Ghazālī's Unique Unknowable God*, Leiden, Brill, 1964.

36 *Ihya'* IV,6 and *Kimiya* 50f. Fritz Meier, "Das Problem der Natur im esoterischen Monismus des Islams" in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1946*, Zürich, Rhein-Verlag, 1947, 174ff. *Idem, Bahā'-i Walad: Grundzüge seines Lebens und seiner Mystik,* Acta Iranica 27, Leiden, Brill, 1989, 198, n. 15.

by Ghazālī himself in the relevant passage of the *Kīmiyā-yi Saᶜādat* (see below, n. 116).

Now any phenomenological approach to religion may be characterized, as Charles Adams has pointed out, by "two important concerns": one is the principle called *epoché* or "bracketing" one's own convictions, the other being "the construction of taxonomic schemes for classifying phenomena across the boundaries of religious communities, cultures and even epochs"; and while the former is surely "irenic" by definition, the latter, the *logos* of taxonomic schemes, is bound to introduce criteria which tend to reflect the ultimate values of the observer himself.[37] The same thing may be said, with only a small grain of salt added, about the "Veils-section": it is certainly an exercise in *epoché*; and the taxonomic logic of the "veils" reveals perhaps more about the ultimate values of the author than any particular doctrine to be derived from it. As far as those *implicit* values are concerned, one can only agree with Watt's general characterisation of the "Veils-section": it is, as he puts it, "definitely Neoplatonic in its outlook."[38] But so is the rest of the *Mishkāt*! It is neither self-evident, nor does Watt demonstrate, that "the rest of the *Mishkāt*, on the other hand, is, as definitely, not Neoplatonic."[39] It may well be that the theory of lights propounded in Section One "is not an instance of *explicit* profession of a Neoplatonic doctrine" (emphasis added),[40] as Watt argues, following Gairdner's linguistic argument to that effect; but there is no "explicit profession of this sort" in the "Veils-section" either – a claim Watt simply takes over from Averroës for the sake of his argument, as we shall see later (section iv). As a matter of fact, Neoplatonic (and Platonic) influence on the undisputed part of the *Mishkāt* seems far more obvious, and has been amply demonstrated by A.J. Wensinck;[41] and Ghazālī himself evidently felt obliged to explain its alledgedly "philosophical doctrine" (*sukhan-i falāsifa*) when challenged by his theological opponents, as is clear from a Persian letter, written probably in 503 or 504 A.H.[42]

Particularly damaging for Watt's *argumentum a contrario* is the fact that traces of one and the same particular source – and one certainly *not* to be clas-

37 "Islamic Religious Tradition" 49-52.

38 *J.R.A.S.* 1949, 8.

39 *ibid.*

40 *ibid.*, 15. Gairdner, *Der Islam* 1914, 138f.

41 "Ghazālī's Mishkāt al-anwār (Niche of Lights)" in *Semietische Studien uit de nalatenschap van Prof. Dr A. J. Wensinck*, Leiden, A.W. Sijthoff's Uitgeversmij N.V., 1941, 192-212.

42 *Makātīb-i Fārsī-i Ghazzālī bi-nām-i Faẓāyil ul-Anām min Rasāyil Ḥujjat ul-Islām* ed. ᶜAbbās Iqbāl, Tehran, Sanā'ī/Ṭahūrī, 1363 (reprint of 1333/1954 ed.), 12. For the date of this letter, see Dorothea Krawulsky, *Briefe und Reden des Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ġazzālī*, Freiburg i. Br., Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1971, 17. German translation *ibid.* 79.

sified as "not Neoplatonic"! – can be identified in all three sections of the *Mishkāt*. This common source is the already mentioned *Risāla 42* of the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā*. Ghazālī's conclusion in Section One, about God's "hidden manifestness" – which, as we have seen, prepares for the theme of the "Veils" – was already formulated in that *Risāla* in almost exactly the same terms.[43] Similarly, Ghazālī's allusion in Section Two (repeated in a slightly varied form in Section Three) to Moses' refusal to answer Pharaoh's question about the "quiddity" (*māhiyya*) of the "Lord of the worlds" (cf. Sūra 26:23) has its proper place in the very same context in *Risāla 42*.[44] It is not very surprising, then, that the "Veils-section" should share more than a few points with this particular source.

This is evident, first of all, in the universalistic approach to religion which is common to both. The Ikhwān go as far as to make it perfectly plain that "the Truth (*al-ḥaqq*) exists in all religions (*fī kull dīn mawjūd*) and (may) occur on everyone's lips," just as "pseudotruth (*shubha*) is conceivable to occur in every human being."[45] The "worst of all people," according to them, are "those who have no *dīn* and who do not believe in the Day of Reckoning."[46] Their prime example of such people are the "Materialists" (*Dahriyya*),[47] who are described as imperfect thinkers capable of understanding the causes of particular things but unable to grasp the efficient cause of the universe.[48] This is because their intellect is affected by "many accidental ills" such as pride, envy, greediness, hate, partisanship, "tribalist fanaticism" (*al-ḥamiyya al-jāhiliyya*) and arrogance, all of which are responsible for its misguided use by the "Pharaohs" (*al-farāᶜina*) and the "armies of Iblis."[49] If there is one concrete group the Ikhwān consistently blame for false "analogical reasoning" (*qiyās*), these people are quite obviously the "Dialectitians" (*ahl al-jadal, al-ṭā'ifa al-mujādila*), that is to say, the *Mutakallimūn* whom they openly identify as "ennemies of the pious" and "adversaries of the Brethren of Purity."[50] By contrast, the

43 *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā wa-Khullān al-Wafā*, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1377/1957, vol. 3, 513: *lam yafut man fātahu wijdānuhu min ajli khafā'i dhātihi ... wa-lākin min shiddati ẓuhūrihi wa-jalālati nūrih*. Cf. *Mishkāt* 64, 2-3: *Fa-lā yabᶜudu an yakhfā wa-yakūna khafā'uhu li-shiddati jalā'ihi, wa-al-ghaflatu ᶜanhu li-ishrāqi ḍiyā'ih*.

44 *Rasā'il* vol. 3, 513f. Cf. *Mishkāt* 68, 10-17 and 90, 16-18. Cf. below, note 84.

45 *Rasā'il* vol. 3, 501.

46 *ibid.* 451.

47 *ibid.* 455f.; 459ff.; 520.

48 *ibid.* 455f. See also Ian R. Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists: An Introduction to the Thought of the Brethren of Purity*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1982, 25ff.

49 *Rasā'il* vol. 3, 457ff.

50 *ibid.* 535ff. Cf. 408; 419; 438ff.; 444; 446; 448; 467.

"best doctrine for all" is, according to the Ikhwan, the belief that the world was originated by a wise Creator in the best possible way; that He has angels, appointed to preserve the world order (*amr, niẓām*), and intermediaries who are selected from among the humans; that to act in accordance with His biddings and forbiddings is best for the humans and not beyond their capacity, and that they are "facing" (*mutawajjihūn*) Him from the Day of their creation until the Day they "meet" Him, being transferred from lower stages to higher ones, less perfect to more perfect ones.[51] Of course this doctrine also informs the *"religionswissenschaftliche"* theory advanced by the Ikhwān. It implies the idea of *Urmonotheismus* combined with the basic assumption that humans are of two kinds: "most" are inclined to seek the pleasures of this world, but "many" are attracted to "religiousness" (*tadayyun*), piety and asceticism. The Prophets and divine Messengers were sent to the humans for no other purpose than to "strengthen" (*ta'kīd*) their natural attraction to religion, and to "better" what they had already chosen to adhere to with their intellects. Thus the pre-Islamic Arabs were actually "being religious (*yatadayyanūn*) by worshipping idols", and "approaching God." Of course the idols were "bodies without speech," whereas prophets are human "speakers" (*nāṭiqūn*) resembling the angels in their "pure souls" (*nufūsihim al-zakiyya*), so that approaching God through them rather than through the idols is obviously "better" and "truer."[52] This point appears to be a rather unmistakeable reference to an Ismāᶜīlī theory of substitution, as found notably in the *Kitāb al-Iftikhār* of Abū Yaᶜqūb al-Sijistānī (written around 360 A.H.),[53] and it is also implied in the *ta'alluh* accorded to the "idol-worshippers" in the "Veils-section" (see below). However, the Ikhwān also point out that "idol-worship" itself is the result of a degeneration of star-worship, which in turn originated from angel-worship, which was the way of the "ancient philosophers"; and "those who know God as He ought to be known do not approach Him by means of anything but Himself."[54]

All this and much more is explained by the Ikhwān at great length in one and the same *Risāla* "On Doctrines and Religions." The preceding summary

51 *ibid.* 452f.

52 *ibid.* 481f.

53 *Kitāb al-Iftikhār* ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib, Beirut (?), Dār al-Andalus, 1980, 28f. For a discussion of this passage, see Faquir Muhammad Hunzai, *The Concept of Tawḥīd in the Thought of Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. after 411/1021)*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, McGill University, 1986, 48 and 51f. According to Sijistānī, obedience to the Imams is comparable to idol-worship as a way of "approaching God" although it is, of course, more "beautiful" (*aḥsan wa-ajmal*) since the Imams are "bearers of knowledge" (*ḥamalat al-ᶜilm wa'l-rāsikhūna fīhi*) whereas the idols are "dead bodies" (*Iftikhār* 29, 5-10).

54 *Rasā'il* vol. 3, 482f.

is, of course, by no means exhaustive. Its purpose is, rather, to bring fundamental ideas which seem to constitute the very core of the religious and "scientific" outlook of the Ikhwan into sharp focus. The same ideas are also constitutive of the *"Religionswissenschaft"* of the final section of the *Mishkāt*, as the following section of this article should bring to evidence: opposition to any kind of "materialism," in thought as well as in behavior; criticism of the "analogical reasoning" of the *Mutakallimūn*; a pronounced feeling of empathy for the "religiousness" of the "idol-worshippers"; and, last but not least, the idea of a "progress" or, rather, a spiritual ascent of humanity as a whole. To be sure, the latter idea is not expressed in the "Veils-section" in terms of a "transfer from lower stages to higher ones"; it is rather implied in the classification system itself. Each among the three "classes" is divided into two or more "sorts" (*ṣinf*), which are, in turn, sometimes subdivided into numbered varieties called "groups" (*firqa*) or "tribes" (*ṭā'ifa*) as the case may be. I have indicated this by giving each variety the corresponding number of classification (in brackets if not explicit in the text itself). Besides, wherever this seems possible and meaningful, an attempt to identify the various divisions and subdivisions will be made by way of a running commentary.

III.

1. "Those veiled by sheer darkness," i.e. the "Primitives" of this system, are obviously not those of a vulgar theory of evolution, but the "Atheists" (*al-mulḥida*). Like the "worst of all people" of the Ikhwān, but with a literal quote from the Qur'an (Sūra 9:45), they are defined in our text as "those who do not believe in God and the Last Day." They are of two "sorts":

> 1.1. "[Thinkers] who, searching for a cause [to explain the existence] of this universe, assigned it to Nature (*al-ṭab*^{c})."

They are "veiled by sheer darkness," we are told, because "'Nature' refers to an attribute embedded and inherent in material bodies," and bodies are "dark" since they are not aware of themselves and of "that which proceeds from them" – an anti-materialist argument one would rather expect to see in a work of Suhrawardī *shaykh al-ishrāq*, although it is not inconsistent with Section One of the *Mishkāt* itself.[55] These "naturalist" thinkers are plainly not the ones

55 Shihâboddîn Yaḥyâ Sohravardî, *Kitab Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq: Opera Metaphysica et Mystica II* ed. Henry Corbin, Bibliothèque Iranienne vol. 2, Tehran/Paris 1952, Arabic text 109f. Id., *Le Livre de la sagesse orientale*, traduction par Henry Corbin ed. Christian Jambet, Lagrasse, Verdier, 1986, 100f.

so called (*al-ṭabīᶜiyyūn*) in the *Munqidh*, but correspond rather to the *Dahriyya* mentioned there.[56] More precisely, they are, like the *Dahriyya* of the Ikhwān, incapable of recognizing the true "cause" of the universe, which they are nevertheless "searching."

1.2. Those who do not even "search for the cause," pre-occupied by their own "selves" (*nafs* in Sufi terminology) as they are, belong, oddly enough, to the "second sort." Like those with "intellects affected by many ills" in the terminology of the Ikhwān, they seem to be a sort of materialists by accident. According to the standard text they are subdivided into the following "groups":

1.2.1. The Hedonists (veiled by *shahwa*, or the appetitive soul)
1.2.2. The Polemicists (veiled by ferocity. Examples given: non-sedentary Arabs [Aᶜrāb] and the Kurds)
1.2.3. The Greedy ("worshippers of the *dirham*")
1.2.4. The Ambitious.

The last-mentioned are said to be somewhat more "advanced" than the previous groups, believing as they do that happiness consists (not in sheer satisfaction of the *nafs* but) in social values such as prestige, reputation, exercise of authority (*nufūdh al-amr al-muṭāᶜ*), or spending money for attractive attire rather than for more immediate needs. However, since their real motivation is vain-glory (*murā'āt*), they are nonetheless "veiled" by the sheer darkness of their own "selves."

[1.3.] Although the "first class" consists only of two "sorts" as indicated above, there is an additional "community" (*jamāᶜa*). They are those who proclaim the monotheist formula *Lā ilāha illā 'llāh* out of fear, or in order to seek advantage from the Muslims, or out of mere "tribalist loyalty" (*taᶜaṣṣub*) to the practice of their "fathers." This "community" evidently covers both non-Muslim monotheists living in a Muslim context, and ordinary Muslim conformists following "inherited beliefs," as Ghazālī puts it in the introduction to the *Munqidh* (above, p. 19). Although all of these belong to the "primitive class," they seem to occupy a borderline-status between "darkness" and "light" – not unlike the "first stage" of *tawḥīd* and of *dhikr* in scales given elsewhere by Ghazālī.[57]

2. The "second class," i.e. those "veiled by light joined with darkness," is of three "sorts," each covering several subdivisions. The three "sorts" are for-

56 *Al-Munqidh* ed. F. Jabre 19/72. M. Watt, *Faith and Practice* 31.

57 *Iḥyā'* book xxxv, *bayān* 2 (Cairo 1933, IV, 212f.) and *Kīmiyā* 799f. (four stages of *tawḥīd*; see below, notes 180-183). – Four stages of *dhikr: Kīmiyā* 205f. – Six stages of *tawḥīd* in Ghazālī's Persian letter of 503 or 504 A.H. (*Makātīb-i Fārsī* ed. Iqbāl, 15-20/Krawulsky, *Briefe* 83-93).

mally distinguished with regard to the origin of their "veils of darkness": sense-perception (*ḥiss*); imagination (*khayāl*); "false analogical reasoning" (*muqāyasāt ᶜaqliyya fāsida*).[58] They can easily be identified as being, respectively: Polytheists (From the "Idol-worshippers" to the "Dualists"); Monotheist "Corporealists"; Muslim "Attributists."

2.1. The "first sort" consists of the following "tribes":

2.1.1. The "Idol-worshippers"

2.1.2. A "Community among the Remote Turks, having neither *milla* nor *sharīᶜa*" (see below)

2.1.3. The "Fire-worshippers"

2.1.4. The "Star-worshippers"

2.1.5. The "Sun-worshippers"

2.1.6. The worshippers of "Absolute Light comprehensive of all lights of the universe," who are – nevertheless – "Dualists" (see below)

Interestingly, all these "tribes" are treated with obvious sympathy. Even though they are all supposed to be "veiled" by the "darkness of sense," none of them is "veiled by pure darkness" like the truly "primitive class." What distinguishes them altogether from the latter, is that "not one of them is quite incapable of transcending self-centeredness, of religiosity (*ta'alluh*)[59] and of a yearning for the knowledge of their Lord." In fact, they rather play the role of a kind of "noble savage"-figures. The point is that their "light-veils" – as opposed to their "dark veils of sense" – belong altogether to the divine "Attributes" or "Lights" (*ṣifāt Allāh wa-anwāruh*). Contrary to Gairdner's reading,[60] this is the case even with the pure "idol-worshippers" (2.1.1.). Their "light-veils" are those of "glory" (*ᶜizza*) and "beauty" (*jamāl*), because they believe that "their Lord" is "mightier" (or "dearer", *aᶜazz*) than everything, and they therefore make "the most beautiful figures" from the most precious materials and worship them as gods.

Two "tribes" appear in a particularly favorable light: the "remote Turks without *milla* or *sharīᶜa*" (2.1.2.) and the Iranian "Dualists" (2.1.6.). The for-

58 *Mishkāt* 87, 11 and 89, 17-18.

59 *Mishkāt* 87, 12-13. Elschazlī, *Die Nische* 57f., totally misunderstands the passage. Ghazālī himself defines *ta'alluh* in *Al-Maqṣad* (ed. Shehadi, 65, 2-4) as the religious attitude *par excellence*, whereby man's heart and mind are "submerged in God" in such a way that he "sees none other nor turns to any other." See also Makkī, *Qūt al-Qulūb*, Cairo, 1381/1961, II, 142: the "friends of God" *ta'allahū ilayhi wa-lam yakun fī ṣudūrihim ghayruh* – which may well be Ghazālī's source for this usage of *ta'alluh*. The term seems nevertheless built on a Greek model (Cf. *apotheosis*) and is, in any case, frequently found in writings of "Neoplatonic" inspiration (cf. *J.A.O.S.* 107, 1987, 482). See also below, notes 168-170.

60 *The Niche* 164 (probably based on erroneous text as in *Mishkāt B* 42, 13-14. For the correct text see *Mishkāt* 87, 19-20).

mer are especially interesting. While they seem to be a variety of those vague groups normally classified by Muslim heresiographers as *ḥulūlī* or "incarnationist" – perhaps, as was suggested by Hellmut Ritter,[61] the pseudo-Manicheans of Abū Shakūr al-Sālimī (later half of the 5th century A.H.) since like those "Manicheans" they are said to prostrate themselves before beautiful persons, trees, horses and the like – the point to be noted is that our text actually absolves them from the sin of *ḥulūl*. It quite explicitely states that "they are more deeply engaged in beholding the light than the idol-worshippers, because they worship absolute beauty (*al-jamāl al-muṭlaq*), not individual bodies (*dūna 'l-shakhṣ al-khāṣṣ*), and do not consider it [i.e. the light of beauty] particular to any thing." They are also superior to the "idol-worshippers," our text implies, because the "Beauty" they worship is given by Nature, not man-made. All this could be de-coded, I think, as a reference to the Ismāᶜīlī Neoplatonists of Khurāsān and in particular, Abū Yaᶜqūb al-Sijistānī and Abū'l-Ḥaytham al-Jurjānī, both of whom, according to Persian Ismāᶜīlī texts of the 5th century A.H., held the peculiar doctrine that "the beauty of Nature is spiritual."[62] It should be noted that about at the same time, the equally Persian but very "orthodox" Sufi Hujwīrī (Jullābī) condemns such doctrines as sheer heresy.[63]

As for the "Dualists" (2.1.6.), they share with the "remote Turks" the distinction of having reached the conception of an "Absolute." They are, however, the most "advanced" of this "sort" – evidently because they worship a Lord who has "no associate in His luminosity," which is also what distinguishes them from the "Sun-worshippers" (2.1.5.); and they clearly have a doctrine quite similar to the one propounded by Ghazālī himself in Section One of the *Mishkāt*. Their "dualism" is not condemned, at least not explicitely. On the contrary, the text simply states, rather matter-of-fact, that, having seen Evil in the world, they considered, out of *tanzīh* for their Lord (like the Muᶜtazila!) that this should not be attributed to Him. Thus they postulated a "Struggle" (*munāzaᶜa*) between Him and "Darkness" and assigned (the cause of) the world to Light and Darkness, "sometimes" (*rubbamā*) calling the one Yazdān and the other Ahriman.[64]

61 *Das meer der seele: mensch, welt und gott in den geschichten des Farīduddīn ᶜAṭṭār*, Leiden, Brill, 1955, 453f.

62 Abû Yaᶜqûb Sejestânî, *Kashf al-Maḥjûb* ed. Henry Corbin, Bibliothèque Iranienne vol. 1, 2nd ed. Tehran, Ṭahūrī, 1358/1979, 49-51. *Commentaire de la qasîda ismaélienne d'Abû'l-Haitham Jorjânî* ed. H. Corbin and Moh. Mo'in, Bibliothèque Iranienne vol. 6, Tehran/Paris, 1334/1955, Persian text 58f., French introd. 38ff.

63 ᶜAlī b. ᶜUthmān al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf ul-Maḥjūb* ed. Valentin A. Zhukovskij, Leningrad, 1926, 337/R.A. Nicholson, *The Kashf...* (E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series, xvii), Leiden/London, 1911, 260.

64 *Mishkāt* 89, 1-6. Cf. below, note 185.

Between the "Turks" and the "Iranians," there are the remaining three "tribes," i.e. the "Fire-worshippers" (2.1.3.), the "Star-worshippers" (2.1.4.) and the "Sun-worshippers" (2.1.5.). They are probably made up to provide a logical transition from lords earthly to lords heavenly. The scale is of course reminiscent of, though not identical with, the theme of "Abraham's ascent" from "star-worship" to higher celestial "lords" to pure monotheism (Sūra 6:76ff.) – a theme of central significance in Ghazālī's thought, which is found not least in Section Two of the *Mishkāt* itself[65] as well as in the "Veils-section" (class three, see below), but also in the *Iḥyā'* and the *Kīmiyā*.[66] Not surprisingly, the Ḥanbalī theologian Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200) resented Ghazālī's "Bāṭinism" in this kind of Qur'an-interpretation; what seems more surprising is that he does not cite the *Mishkāt* but the *Iḥyā'*.[67] In any case, however, he had a point. Long before Ghazālī, the arch-Bāṭinī of Khurāsān (and teacher of Sijistānī), Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Nasafī (d. 331/942), was criticized by his more prudent fellow-Dāᶜī, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, for having taken the same Qur'anic theme to mean "Abraham's spiritual ascent" through the *ḥudūd*.[68]

2.2. With the following "sort" (i.e. those "veiled by the darkness of imagination"), we are back in the professedly monotheistic world. Although this "sort" is supposed to be beyond the "veil of sense," the scale starts here with the most grossly anthropomorphist "imagination" of a Being (literally) "sitting (*qāᶜidan*) on the Throne"; a contrast which is all the more striking as we have just been informed about the most lofty ideas of the "Dualists" and other "tribes" of the preceding "sort." Three "ranks" (*rutba*) are mentioned in a very summary manner. They represent an ascending order of sophistication, of course within the limits of their "veil of imagination":

[2.2.1.] The "Corporealists" (*al-mujassima*. No example given.)

[2.2.2.] "All sorts of Karrāmiyya"[69]

[2.2.3.] Those who denied all attributes of "corporeality" except the direction "above" (probably the "moderate Karrāmiyya").[70]

65 *Mishkāt* 67f.

66 *Iḥyā'* III, 346f. and *Kīmiyā* 49f.

67 *Talbīs Iblīs*, Beirut, Dār al-Waᶜy al-ᶜArabī, n.d., 186, 2-7. H. Lazarus-Yafeh (*Studies* 332) seems to refer to the same passage.

68 See Heinz Halm, *Kosmologie und Heilslehre der frühen Ismāᶜīlīya: eine Studie zur islamischen Gnosis*, Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner, 1978, 70 and 225f.

69 Cf. Shahrastani, *Livre des religions et des sectes*, traduction avec introduction et notes par Daniel Gimaret et Guy Monnot, Leuven, Peeters (UNESCO), 1986, 531ff. and 347-361 (with notes).

70 *ibid.* 349ff. Gairdner (*Der Islam* 1914, 124f.) thinks that the reference is to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and the Ḥanbalites. This is not impossible; but the Ḥanbalites are more likely included in the following "sort" (i.e. 2.3.1.).

2.3. Whereas the above-mentioned (i.e. 2.2.3.) were still tied up with the "imagination" of spatiality, und thus unable to penetrate the world of the intelligibles (*al-maᶜqūlāt*) even at an elementary level, the "third sort" was free from that limitation. They were, however, "veiled by the darkness of false analogical reasoning" since they "worshipped a god who is hearing, seeing, speaking, knowing, powerful, willing, living" – these famous "divine Attributes" being understood by them "in accordance with what is suitable with their own attributes." They turn out to be none other than the *Mutakallimūn*. Three "famous" doctrines are briefly alluded to. They are not identified as such in the text; but the reference is clearly to the Ḥanbalites, the Ashᶜarites and the Muᶜtazilites, respectively:

[2.3.1.] Some said: "His Speech is sound and letter, like our speech."[71]

[2.3.2.] Some others, more advanced, denied this but argued that His Speech is "like our mental speech (*ka-ḥadīth nafsinā*), not sound and letter.[72]

[2.3.3.] Still others, also unable to understand the true meaning of the Attributes, "fell back into spiritual anthropomorphism (*tashbīh min ḥayth al-maᶜnā*) even though they denied them [the Attributes] in words." Thus they argued that the divine "Will" (*irāda*) is "originating" (*ḥāditha*), like our will, and corresponds to a purpose, as is the case with us.[73]

Of course the above scale must raise questions about the authenticity of our text as long as Ghazālī's own convictions are assumed to be Ashᶜarite throughout. Not only are the Ashᶜarites, at least by implication, placed one degree below the Muᶜtazilites because they committed "open" *tashbīh*; it is only at the other end of this scale, with the Philosophers who constitute the "first sort" of the following "class," that we reach "those veiled by *pure* light". Needless to say that Montgomery Watt explains this superiority of the Philosophers by having recourse to his presumed "Neoplatonist forger," his argument being that "in the *Munqidh* al-Ghazālī speaks with approval of his criticisms of the Neoplatonists in the *Tahāfut*."[74] The case for a forgery might seem stronger still, if one adds to this a passage from Ghazālī's "creed" (*K.*

71 Assuming that the "Speech" is considered to be uncreated, this is the Ḥanbalī position. Cf. Shahrastani, *Livre* 321f., note 39.

72 The Ashᶜarite position. Cf. Shahrastani, *Livre* 267f., n. 14 and 321f.

73 *Mishkāt* 90, 3: I substitute *baᶜḍuhum* after *wa-kadhālika*; for this is clearly a third doctrine. Ghazālī himself identifies it as Muᶜtazilite in the *Iqtiṣād fi'l-Iᶜtiqād* (Ankara, Nur Matbaasi, 1962, 103: the world is originated *li-irādatin ḥādithatin ḥadathat lahu lā fī maḥall*). More particularly, the doctrine alluded to can be identified as that of the two Jubbā'ī (cf. Shahrastani, *Livre* 265f., notes 2 and 3; and *ibid.* 120 for the *tashbīh* of the Muᶜtazila).

74 *J.R.A.S.* 1949, 17

qawāᶜid al-ᶜaqāᶜid in the *Ihyā'*) which was recently discussed by George Makdisi.[75] Ghazālī there enumerates exactly the same four groups, from the Ḥanbalites to the Philosophers, and presents them in such a way that his sympathies appear to lie not even with the Ashᶜarites, but with the most "traditionalist" Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal: the hero of "traditionalist" Islam is praised for his firm attitude against the "opening of the gate of *ta'wil*," while the Ashᶜarites are depicted as the ones who opened it by allowing *ta'wil* of the divine Attributes, the Muᶜtazlilites went further and the Philosophers knew no restrictions at all.[76] Yet this is not the whole story. Immediately after this expression of sympathy for Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's "firmness," Ghazālī is in fact himself widely "opening the gate of *ta'wil*," though not exactly in the manner of the *Mutakallimūn* or the Philosophers. He defines his own position on this question as follows:

> "The right middle between total decomposition (of sacred texts, *inḥilāl kullihi*) and Ḥanbalite inflexibility (*jumūd al-ḥanābila*) is a subtle and difficult point, which can be grasped only by those made successful by God. They perceive things through a divine light (*nūr ilāhī*), not through listening (to mere words). Once the hidden side of things (*asrār al-umūr*) is unveiled to them as it really is, they examine the traditional texts. They then confirm whatever is in agreement with their contemplation through the light of certitude, and apply *ta'wīl* to whatever is different (*wa-mā khālafa awwalūhu*)."[77]

This second part of Ghazālī's statement totally changes, it seems to me, any impression of "Sunnī traditionalism" which its first part might seem to convey if taken out of context. In fact, it is not even in line with the "orthodox" kind of Sufism Ghazālī is usually supposed to stand for. His insistence on the necessity of divinely inspired *ta'wīl* whereever the "light of certitude" contradicts the mere words of traditional holy Writ would undoubtedly have been a particularly disturbing example of the "errors of the Sufis" for an "orthodox" Sufi author like Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988).[78] It is, however, perfectly compatible with the fundamental tenet of Shīᶜism about the necessity of divinely inspired *ta'wīl*, and certainly consistent with Ghazālī's own concept of the "transcendent Spirit prophetical" (for which see below), the only obvious difference to Shīᶜism being that Ghazālī does not, of course, identify the legitimate source of *ta'wīl* with the *imām*, but is being rather "subjectivistic," to use

75 "Al-Ghazâlî, disciple de Shâfiᶜî en droit et en théologie" in *Ghazâlî: La raison et le miracle*, 49.

76 *Iḥyā'* book ii, 2 *in fine* (= Cairo 1958, I, 92, 7-28).

77 *ibid.* lines 28-31. Maqdisi (*op. cit.*) translates only the first part of this statement.

78 *Kitāb al-Lumaᶜ fī'l-Taṣawwuf* ed. R.A. Nicholson, E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series XXII, reprint London, Luzac, 1963, Arabic text 430f. Cf. Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam*, Leiden, Brill, 1970, 162.

Obermann's term again. In any case, this one example from Ghazālī's "creed" should be evidence enough to make the point that authenticity and "orthodoxy" are not simply interchangeable terms in the case of the "Proof of Islam." Consequently, no case for a "forgery" of the "Veils-section" can be made on the mere basis of its "incompatibility" with Ghazālī's presumed "orthodoxy."

3. The "third class" (*qism* 3.), i.e. "those veiled by pure lights," is again divided into three "sorts." It nevertheless includes a "fourth sort" called "the Attainers" (*al-wāṣilūn*); but these are no longer said to be "veiled" even by "pure lights." They seem to occupy some sort of a borderline status at the upper end – not unlike the professed "Monotheists" among the "Atheists" (1.3.), or the "Dualists" among the Polytheists (2.1.6.), the moderate Karrāmiyya among the "Corporealists" (2.2.3.) and the Muᶜtazilites among the "Attributists" (2.3.3.) – except that there is no further "class" beyond the third. As for the meaning of "pure light," it is not made explicit at this stage in the text. The context, as well as an important passage in Section One, on the absolute superiority of reason over sense and on the ultimate "veil of reason" (*ḥijāb al-ᶜaql*),[79] leave however little doubt that we are now among those guided – or "veiled" – by *pure* reason, not by the "*darkness*" of "false analogical reasoning."

> 3.1. "The first sort, ... knowing the true meaning of the attributes and realizing that 'speech', 'will', 'power', 'knowledge' and the like cannot be applied to His attributes as they are applied to man, avoided describing (*taᶜrīf*) Him by them. (Nevertheless), they described Him in relation to the creatures, as did Moses in reply to Pharaoh's question 'And *what* (*mā*) is the Lord of the worlds?' (Sūra 26:23). Thus they said: 'the Lord, transcending the meaning of these attributes, is the mover (*muḥarrik*) and orderer (*mudabbir*) of the Heavens'."

According to Montgomery Watt, such reluctance to describe (or define) God by attributes is "exactly what we should expect from a writer connected with the school of Ibn Sīnā, for it was the normal thing for various philosophically-minded groups to accuse the Ashᶜarīyah of falling into *tashbīh*."[80] It should however be kept in mind that some early Muᶜtazilites were famous in the first place for refusing any kind of *qiyās* with regard to the divine attributes,[81] and the most fervent among the opponents of this kind of "analogical reasoning"

79 *Mishkāt* 44f. See also below, note 211.

80 *J.R.A.S.* 1949, 7.

81 Notably ᶜAbbād b. Salmān (or b. Sulayman). Cf. Josef van Ess, "The logical structure of Islamic theology" in *Logic in Classical Islamic Culture* ed. by G.E. von Grunebaum, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1970, 43.

were the Ismāᶜīlīs.[82] In any case, the anti-"antropomorphism" of these "philosophically-minded groups" would have to be located somewhere between Muᶜtazila and Philosophy; and the "first sort" can better be explained if we assume that Al-Kindī rather than Ibn Sīnā is meant. The extant part of Kindī's "First Philosophy" ends with an allusion to God as the "mover" (*muḥarrik*) and unique "agent" (*fāᶜil*) of creation, the "true One ... who transcends the attributes (attributed to Him by) the godless (*ṣifāt al-mulḥidīn*)."[83]

Of course the Qur'anic Moses does not refer Pharaoh to the "Mover of the Heavens," but to the "Lord of the Heavens and the Earth" (Sūra 26:24). This Qur'anic "answer to Pharaoh" is however quoted in Section Two of the *Mishkāt*, where Ghazālī interprets it similarly as a deliberate avoidance of the "quiddity" (*māhiyya*, the answer to the question "*What* is...") and as an indirect description (*taᶜrīf*) of God by reference to His creative "acts" (*afᶜāl*).[84] At the same time, he hints there at two other prophetic *exempla*: "Muhammad's answer to the Bedouin," i.e. *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ* (112:1-4) and the final stage of "Abraham's ascent," i.e. his "turning the face to 'He who' (*alladhī*) originally created..." (Sūra 6:79); and this, as will become transparent in what follows, corresponds to the stage of the "Attainers."

The "second sort" of this "class" marks, as it were, the first step in "Abraham's ascent" – his realization that the stars are not "the Lord" – as re-enacted by the Philosophers. They understood that the conclusion of the "first sort" was premature since the planetary "heavens" (spheres) appear to be moved by a number of individual agents moving in different ways. So they concluded that there must be an all-comprehensive Sphere whose unique Mover, then, could be said to be "the Lord":

> 3.2. "The second sort was more advanced than the preceding, taking into account that it was evident to them that there is plurality in the heavens, that the mover of each heaven severally is (therefore) another entity (*mawjūd*) to be called an angel (*malak*) and involving plurality, and that the relation of these (angelic entities) to the divine lights is the relation of the stars. So it dawned upon them that these heavens are comprised under another sphere, through whose motion the daily movement of the whole is

82 As is evident for example from the irony displayed against all "attributist" theologians in the first chapter of Sijistānī's *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* (cf. *Sejestânî: Kashf* ed. H. Corbin, notably 2, 10-12 and 6, 18-8, 15). Cf. also Shahrastani, *Livre* 555 and below, n. 98.

83 *Kitāb al-Kindī ilā'l-Muᶜtaṣim Billāh fī'l-Falsafa al-Ūlā* ed. Aḥmad Fu'ād al-Aḥwānī, Cairo, 1948, 142f. /*Al-Kindī's Metaphysics: A Translation...* by Alfred L. Ivry, Albany, SUNYP, 1974, 114. On the question of Kindī's relation to the Muᶜtazila, see Ivry, *ibid.* 26ff. Cf. also Jean Jolivet, *L'intellect selon Kindī*, Leiden, Brill, 1971, 108 and 109ff.

84 *Mishkāt* 68, 10-17.

communicated. As a result (they concluded that) the Lord is the one who moves the outermost body which comprises all the spheres, since plurality is excluded in his case."

The above description of the "second sort," vaguely reminiscent of a famous passage on celestial spheres and the ultimate "unmoved Mover" in Book Lambda of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (1073a - 1074b), is doubtless intended to represent the Peripatetic cosmology of the Islamic "Philosophers" in general. It is, however, an extremely simplified version, and Ghazālī himself gives a far more accurate description in both the *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifa* and the *Tahāfut*.[85] In particular, the "second sort" appear to ignore the specifically Neoplatonic ingredient of the philosophical tradition, which is the crucial point criticized by Ghazālī in the *Tahāfut* as "darkness upon darkness," namely, the "emanation of the One from the One."[86] For Avicenna, the First Emanation or the "First Caused" (*al-maᶜlūl al-awwal*), i.e. the Prime Intellect, is the final cause of universal motion; and the proximate cause of the motion of that "outermost body" is certainly not "the Lord" but its own Soul.[87] However, it may be suggested that the idea that this mover should be "the Lord" has something to do with the fact that the all-comprehensive Sphere was generally identified with the "Throne" (*ᶜarsh*). A later admirer of Ghazālī's, the Sufi ᶜAlā' al-Dawla al-Simnānī (d. 736/1336), even accused Avicenna of having confused the "Throne" with the "absolute Mover" (*muḥarrik-i muṭlaq*).[88]

Interestingly enough, the discovery of the logical necessity of a proximate cause other than "the Lord" in order for the latter *not* to become "involved" directly in the process, now constitutes the very mark of the "progress" of the "third sort." As will be shown in what follows, this group is, in fact, representing just that Neoplatonic element which was missed by their "predecessors." Having realized that "the Lord" of the "second sort," though removed from "plurality" thanks to the all-comprehensive sphere, was still di-

85 *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifa* ed. Sulaymān Dunyā, Cairo, Dār al-Maᶜārif, 2nd ed. 1379/1960, 280ff. *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa* Cairo, Al-Maṭbaᶜa al-Khayriyya, 1319h., 28f. and 57-60/ Simon van den Bergh, *Averroës' Tahāfut al-Tahāfut (The Incoherence of the Incoherence)*, E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 1954, reprinted as one volume London, 1978, 107-116 and 285-300.

86 *Tahafut* 29, 12/Van den Bergh 116.

87 Relevant passages are found in A.-M. Goichon, *Lexique de la langue philosophique d'Ibn Sīnā (Avicenne)*, Paris, Desclée de Brower, 1938, 41 (s.v. *al-jirm al-aqṣā*) and 67 (s.v. *ḥarakat al-kull*). Cf. also the discussion of celestial motion in *Al-Najāt* (ed. M.T. Dānish-pazhūh, Tehran, Dānishgāh, 1364h. s., 624-652 and *Al-Ishārāt* (ed. J. Forget, 136; 160ff.; 167f.; 210/A.M. Goichon, *Directives* 347; 402ff.; 415f.; 507ff.).

88 Amīr Iqbāl-i Sijistānī, *Chihil Majlis* ed. N. Māyil Hiravī, Tehran, Adīb, 1366h. s., 92 (cf. *ibid.* 330)./H. Cordt, *Die sitzungen des ᶜAlā' ad-dawla as-Simnānī, Zürich*, Juris-Verlag, 1977, 77.

rectly related to physical motion, they concluded that he could only be an angel – superior, to be sure, to the angelic movers of the previous "sort" in the same way as the "moon" is superior to the "stars," but still a "servant," not "the Lord." In other words, they re-enacted what appears to be the second step of this "Abrahamic ascent":

> 3.3. "The third sort was more advanced than the preceding. They held that direct communication of motion to the [celestial] bodies requires the existence of an act of service to the Lord of the worlds, an act of worship (*ᶜibāda*) and obedience (*ṭāᶜa*) to Him, on the part of one of His servants called an 'angel', whose relation to the pure divine lights is the relation of the moon among the physical lights. Thus they assumed that the Lord is the one obeyed by virtue of [the act of obedience performed by] that mover (*huwa 'l-muṭāᶜ min jihat hādhā 'l-muḥarrik*), the Lord most high thereby becoming a mover of the whole by way of the Order (*bi-ṭarīq al-amr*), not directly. As for the precise meaning [reading *tafhīm*] and quiddity of that Order, there is a mystery which is beyond the comprehension of most minds, and which is beyond the scope of this book."

Thus there seem to be two celestial "Movers" according to this most "advanced" doctrine: the "lunar" Angel and the "Lord of the worlds," who is presumably taking the part of the "*sun*," although his "solar" identity will be spelled out only by the "Attainers" (below 3.4.). This "solar" Lord moves the world only by being "obeyed," i.e. indirectly, "by way of the Order" (or "Command", cf. the expression *nufūdh al-amr al-muṭāᶜ*, above 1.2.4.), whereas the one who actually moves the celestial bodies through his act of "worship" or "obedience" is the "lunar" Angel. Celestial motion as an act of rational/angelic "worship" or "obedience" to the divine *amr* is by itself a famous theme of philosophical Qur'an-interpretation which can be traced to al-Kindī,[89] and Avicenna also hints at "some sort of angelic or spherical worship" (*ᶜibādatun mā malakiyya aw falakiyya)* as the cause of celestial motion, although he speaks more frequently about the Soul's "desire" or "love" (*ᶜishq*) for perfection.[90] In the present context, I would suggest that the "lunar" Angel simply stands for the Neoplatonic World-Soul (*nafs, psyché*), and that the "solar" Lord is, consequently, the *nous* or the universal Intellect (*al-ᶜaql* or *al-ᶜaql al-kullī*). This is not necessarily incompatible with Gairdner's suggestion that the mysterious "Lord-obeyed," or the "Vice-gerent" as he calls him, must

89 Richard Walzer, *Greek Into Arabic: Essays on Islamic Philosophy*, Oxford, Cassirer, 2nd impr. 1963, 196-199.

90 *Al-Najāt* ed. Dānishpazhūh, 626-636, notably 632, 15 for celestial "worship." The theme of the Soul's "desire" or "love" is, of course, the subject of Avicenna's *Risāla fī Māhiyyat al-ᶜIshq* (ed. A. Ateş, Istanbul, Ibrahim Horoz Press, 1953).

be what the Qur'an calls "the Spirit" (*al-rūḥ*),[91] especially as Ghazālī frequently uses *rūḥ* and *ᶜaql* interchangeably (see also below). However, much confusion has arisen from the fact that the difference between the doctrine under discussion and the final message of the *Mishkāt* has not been sufficiently recognized, as Elschazli rightly points out; yet his own attempt to identify the "third sort" simply with "Greek philosophy" explains neither why this "philosophy" has in this text such a high place as to be made virtually the most "advanced" world-view, nor does it really do justice to the peculiar character of either the "third sort" or the "Attainers."[92] It seems more appropriate, therefore, to clarify first of all the precise nature and identity of this "third sort among those veiled by pure lights." Who indeed are they meant to be?

A comparison with the structure of Ghazālī's *Munqidh* provides the key, I think, to a very simple answer to that question. As is well-known, Ghazālī confines himself in that work to an examination of the doctrines of four distinct groups of "Seekers after the Truth," which he mentions at first in the following order: 1. the Theologians (*al-mutakallimūn*), 2. *Al-bāṭiniyya*, 3. the Philosophers (*al-falāsifa*) and 4. the Sufis (*al-ṣūfiyya*). At the same time, however, he indicates – and indeed the structure of the whole book confirms – that he is *not* discussing the four groups in that order, but in accordance with the one he himself claims to have followed in studying their respective doctrines, namely: 1. Theology (*ᶜilm al-kalām*), 2. Philosophy (*ṭarīq al-falsafa* or *ᶜilm al-falsafa*), 3. Ismāᶜīlism (*taᶜlīm al-bāṭiniyya* or *madhhab al-taᶜlīm*) and 4. Sufism (*ṭarīq al-ṣūfiyya* or *ṭuruq al-ṣūfiyya*) – so that in actual fact, Ismāᶜīlism occupies the third and not the second place, i.e. after "Philosophy" and just before "Sufism."[93] It is important to note that the same four distinct groups of

91 *The Niche* 32-45. Gairdner's argument that *Al-Muṭāᶜ* refers to the "mysterious Agent of Revelation" called *muṭāᶜ* in Sūra 81:21 seems however somewhat doubtful. The usage of this term does not by itself require identification with any particular "agent" or "vicegerent," angelic or human, but may be understood *in abstracto* as the final cause of the act of obedience, or simply as an adjective qualifying "the lord" of the "third sort," just as *al-amr* is qualified by *al-muṭāᶜ* in the text of the "Veils-section" itself (*Mishkāt* 86, 15). If, on the other hand, *al-muṭāᶜ* is understood as referring to a "person," it still cannot be identified with either the angel Gabriel or the prophet Muhammad, as Gairdner rightly pointed out (pace R.C. Zaehner, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, New York, Schocken paper ed., 1969, 173, and Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, paper ed., 1978, 223f.). See also below, notes 108-115; 120-124; 138-141; 152-153; 171.

92 Elschazlī, *Die Nische* introd. xxxff.

93 *Al-Munqidh* ed. F. Jabre 15/67f.; cf. M. Watt, *Faith and Practice* 26ff. Surprisingly, Josef van Ess ("Quelques remarques..." 65f.) seems to assume that the first enumeration of the four "groups" is identical with the order actually followed by Ghazālī.

"Seekers" are presented in exactly the same ascending order – with the Ismāᶜīlīs, under the name *ismāᶜīliyān*, occupying the third place – at the end of a purely philosophical treatise in Persian which is attributed to Ghazālī's famous compatriot and contemporary, the poet and mathematician ᶜUmar-i Khayyām.[94] The point which counts for our purpose, however, is neither Ghazālī's possible indebtedness to Khayyām, which Josef van Ess seems to take for granted,[95] nor the actual sequence of events in Ghazālī's life, but the simple fact that Ghazālī evidently regarded this "literary cliché" – whoever "invented" it – as significant enough to model his own life-story after it. Precisely because the *Munqidh* reproduces a "cliché" or, in other words, an ideal model of the "Quest," we should not be surprised to find the same structure applied to the taxonomic logic of "*Religionswissenschaft*" in the final Section of the *Mishkāt*.

Now, since Theologians and Philosophers have already been dealt with in the "Veils-section" (above 2.3. and 3.2., with 3.1. probably representing an intermediary position), and since the Sufis are, of course, the "Attainers" still to be discussed (below 3.4.), the conclusion that the "third sort" should represent Ismāᶜīlism as the "missing link," so to speak, between Philosophy and Sufism, seems quite obvious at least from the structural point of view.

As for content, the same conclusion may be suggested. I would recall here, first of all, Nasafī's interpretation of Sūra 6:76ff. (already referred to above, note 68), where Abraham's "sun" and "moon" are interpreted to mean the "Predecessor" (*sābiq*) and the "Follower" (*tālī*), or the "Intellect" (*ᶜaql*) and the "Soul" (*nafs*), respectively, i.e. the two supreme *ḥudūd* of the spiritual

94 For the Persian text of the treatise attributed to Khayyām, see e.g. the facsimile-edition ᶜUmar-i Khayyām, *Rasā'il/Traktati*, Moscow, Akad. Nauk, 1962/1961, Arabic/Persian part 108-115. For an English translation of the relevant passage, see e.g. S.H. Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, revised edition, London, Thames and Hudson, 1978, 20. For studies of Ghazālī's "autobiography" in the light of literary models, see H. Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies* 36f. and J. van Ess, "Quelques remarques..." 64-68.

95 J. van Ess, *ibid.* 66. Fritz Meier (in *W.Z.K.M.* 52, 1953, 160f.) also assumes *"einen literarischen Zusammenhang"* but does not elaborate. I am inclined to doubt that Ghazālī got the idea from Khayyām, for two reasons: a) even if the Persian treatise is indeed Khayyām's and was written before 494/1101 (and thus before the *Munqidh*), as van Ess argues (on the basis of its being dedicated to Mu'ayyid al-Mulk; cf. *Rasā'il* 108, 3-4), the relevant passage on the "four groups" might still have been added later since it comes at the very end (*Rasā'il* 114f.) and has little to do with the rest of the treatise; b) the anecdote of Ghazālī's visit at Khayyām's to discuss questions of astronomy, to which van Ess (*ibid.*) also refers, far from implying that Ghazālī might have been receptive to Khayyām's teaching, rather suggests the contrary (cf. Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūrī, *Nuzhat al-Arwāḥ* ed. Khūrshīd Aḥmad, Ḥaydarābād, ᶜUthmāniyya, 1396/1976, II, 49f.; summarized by E.G. Browne, *LHP* II, 251). Cf. also below, n. 142.

hierarchy generally known in 4th/10th century Ismāᶜīlism under these Neoplatonic names.[96] Ghazālī was of course familiar with this terminology, as is evident from his famous "*Streitschrift*," the *Faḍā'iḥ al-Bāṭiniyya* (written 487 A.H. in support of the ᶜAbbāsid caliph Al-Mustaẓhir and therefore also known as the *Mustaẓhirī*), where he tries to demonstrate that the "Bāṭinī" doctrine of the Intellect and the Soul amounts to a dualism of "two eternal gods" and a creationism without Creator given that, as he puts it, "their double existence has no First in terms of time, except that the one is the cause of the existence of the other" and that "the 'Predecessor' created the world by means of the 'Follower', not by himself."[97] It is not difficult to se that the same theological critique could easily be addressed to the "third sort among those veiled by pure lights" of the *Mishkāt*. For just as the "Bāṭinīs" of the *Mustaẓhirī* do not seem to recognize any Creator beyond the "Predecessor" or the Intellect, so the "third sort" of the *Mishkāt* do not seem to recognize any Lord beyond the "Obeyed one" or the "sun"; and just as the "Predecessor" creates only by means of the "Follower" according to the *Mustaẓhirī*, so the "Obeyed one" of the *Mishkāt* needs the "lunar" Servant-Angel to have the moving actually done. As a matter of fact, the "third sort" of the *Mishkāt* would have made a better target of Ghazālī's anti-Ismāᶜīlī polemics than the real Ismāᶜīlī Neoplatonists of the Fāṭimid period he seems to have had in mind, such as Sijistānī (4th/10th century), Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. after 411/1021) or Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. ca. 470/1077), for they consistently emphasize that the Prime Intellect is itself "created beyond time" as the "First-Originated" (*al-mubdaᶜ al-awwal*). To be sure, the Intellect *is* according to them the absolutely "First" in existence, or the First Substance; but contrary to Ghazālī's (probably deliberate) misunderstanding, they distinguish this mythico-metaphysical "Predecessor" from its own "Originator" (*al-mubdiᶜ*) who, following the logic of their radically apophatic theology, must not be qualified by any "attribute" or simple negation thereof, including the attribute "existence" itself.[98] Fur-

96 See Heinz Halm, *Kosmologie* 53-66 and 128-138. Cf. also Shahrastani, *Livre* 556f. with the notes by D. Gimaret. For Nasafī's text, see Halm, *ibid.* 225f.

97 Ignaz Goldziher, *Streitschrift des Ġazālī gegen die Bāṭinijja-Sekte*, Leiden, Brill, reprint 1956, German part 44f./Arabic 8f. (extract only). The full text with the passage referred to is found in *Faḍā'iḥ al-Bāṭiniyya* ed. ᶜAbdurraḥmān Badawī, Cairo, Qawmiyya, 1383/1964, 38, 9-13. See also *ibid.* 39, 5ff. (this text should be collated with the Ghazālī-quotes in the Ismāᶜīlī reply by ᶜAlī b. al-Walīd, *Dāmigh al-Bāṭil wa-Ḥatf al-Munādil* ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib, Beirut, ᶜIzz al-Dīn, 1403/1982, I, 134, 15ff.; 140, *ult.* ff.; 142, 5ff.).

98 After Henry Corbin's *Histoire de la philosophie islamique* (2nd ed., Paris, Gallimard, 1986, 122-128), a number of studies have dealt with this fundamental aspect of Ismāᶜīlī theology in particular, notably: Paul E. Walker, "An Ismāᶜīlī Answer to the Problem of Worshipping the Unknowable, Neoplatonic God" in *American Journal of Arabic Studies* 2, 1974, 7-21; Wilferd Madelung, "Aspects of Ismāᶜīlī Theology: The Prophetic Chain and the God Be-

thermore, if the Intellect does, then, play the role of the "Lord" in a sense, it is at the same time also the Prime "Worshipper": "gushing forth" from the divine Order (*amr*) or the creative Logos (*al-kalima*) with which it is, in fact, "united" (*muttaḥid*) according to Sijistānī,[99] it is also the one that performs the prime "act of worship" (*ᶜibāda*) by celebrating the *shahāda (Lā ilāha illā Allāh)* at the very center of the cosmos to be.[100] An idea of cosmic motion nevertheless comes into play only at the level of the "Follower" or the Soul according to Sijistānī's (in this respect unmitigated) Neoplatonism,[101] whereas Kirmānī, adopting the Peripatetic system of the "ten Intellects," also identifies the Prime Intellect with the "Prime Mover."[102]

Of course the proposed identification of the "third sort among those veiled by pure lights" with Ismāᶜīlism as seen by no one else than Ghazālī could be questioned on the grounds that this summary of a Neoplatonic cosmology does not seem to contain any reference to the major target of Ghazālī's writings against the Ismāᶜīlīs of his own time, i.e. the absolute authority of the *Imām* known as the doctrine of "teaching" (*taᶜlīm*).[103] Against this objection, two points should however be taken into consideration. Firstly, the doctrine of the cosmic Pair automatically implies in Ismāᶜīlism the idea of the "two foundations" (*asāsān*) of the "world of religion" (*ᶜālam al-dīn*), i.e. prophethood and imamate, and secondly, there was a difference in this respect between Fāṭimid Ismāᶜīlism and the "new" Persian *Daᶜwa* centered in Alamut. In Fāṭimid Ismāᶜīlism, the relationship between the "Predecessor" and his "Follower" paralleled that between the Prophet and his "Legatee" (*waṣī*, i.e. ᶜAlī, the "foundation" of the imamate), so that the place of the Intellect corresponded to

yond Being" in *Ismāᶜīlī Contributions to Islamic Culture* ed. S.H. Nasr, Tehran, Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1977, 51-65; Shigeru Kamada, "The First Being: Intellect (*ᶜaql/khiradh*) as the Link Between God's Command and Creation According to Abū Yaᶜqūb al-Sijistānī" in *The Memoirs of The Institute of Oriental Culture*, The University of Tokyo, No. 106, March, 1988, 1-33; Ian Richard Netton, *Allah Transcendent,* London and New York, Routledge, 1989, 210-222.

99 *Kitāb al-Iftikhār* ed. M. Ghālib, 26, 17-18 (read *al-wāḥid al-mutakaththir al-mutazāyid* in line 17, as in the ms. copy belonging to the library of the late Henry Corbin). *Kitāb al-Yanābīᶜ* ed. Henry Corbin in *Trilogie Ismaélienne*, Bibliothèque Iranienne vol. IX, Tehran/Paris 1340/1961, Arabic text 16, 11-13/French 34f.

100 *Kitāb al-Yanābīᶜ* ed. H. Corbin, Arabic 56ff./French 76ff. According to Nāṣir-i Khusraw, the *ᶜibāda* is re-enacted at every level of the intellectual and religious hierarchy (the *ḥudūd*), in keeping with their respective capacity. See *Six Chapters or Shish Fasl* ... ed. W. Ivanow, Leiden, Brill, 1949, Persian text 28f./English 66f.

101 *Kitāb al-Yanābīᶜ* ed. H. Corbin, Ar. 27, 8-11/Fr. 48 and Ar. 62, 11-63, 3/Fr. 84f. See also Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Khwān ul-Ikhwān* ed. ᶜAlī Qawīm, Tehran, Barani, 1338h.s., 67, 4-8; 70, 6-7; 185.

102 *Rāḥat al-ᶜAql* ed. Kamil Hussein and Mustafa Hilmy, Leiden, Brill, 1952, 89-94.

103 *Faḍā'ih al-Bāṭiniyya* ed. ᶜA. Badawī, 17. Cf. above, notes 5 and 6.

that of the Prophet, whereas in the "new" *Daᶜwa* this place was given to the *Imām* as the present manifestation of the Logos (the *kalima*).[104] Interestingly, the theme of Abraham's spiritual ascent from the "stars" to the "moon" to the "sun" (Sūra 6:76ff.) was again taken up in this milieu. But now, as we know from a passage in Ṭūsī's *Taṣawwurāt*, the "stars" signified Abraham's encounter with a *Dāᶜī*, the "moon" his meeting the higher rank of the *Ḥujjat*, and the "sun" his turning towards the *Imām*, the "greatest Lord"; and Ṭūsī emphasizes that only the "stars" and the "moon" are to be counted among "those that set" (*al-āfilīn*).[105] Although the *Taṣawwurāt* of course represents a development of the "new" doctrine which Ghazālī could not possibly have witnessed, he may nevertheless have known about this or a similar interpretation of "Abraham's spiritual ascent"; and he certainly would not have accepted this kind of "*Imām*-worship" as a valid way of worshipping "the One who originally created." Indeed this may be one of the reasons why the "Attainers" of the *Mishkāt* precisely "turn away" from the "Obeyed one" as well (see below). At the same time, however, there is no escaping the conclusion that if the "Veils-section" is authentic, then Ghazālī must have been far more impressed by the Ismāᶜilī synthesis of Neoplatonic philosophy and Islam, or "reason and revelation," than he cares to let us know in either the *Mustaẓhirī* or the *Munqidh*.

At any rate, the "Veils-section" is by no means the only piece of evidence to suggest that Ghazālī in fact adapted "Bāṭinī" speculation to suit his own Sufi world-view. Particularly interesting in this regard is a long passage on cosmology in his late Persian *summa*, the *Kīmiyā-yi Saᶜādat*. The passage is also remarkable in so far as it shows that the "Proof of Islam" was prepared to go further in allowing "influence of the stars" in this Persian *summa* than in the corresponding passage of the *Iḥyā'*,[106] and it certainly helps explaining exactly what he could have meant by "the Obeyed one" in the *Mishkāt*. He says:

> "The stars and the (four) Natures and the twelve Houses of the Sphere of the fixed stars and the Throne which is beyond all, are in one respect like a king having a private chamber (*ḥujra'ī khāṣṣ*), wherein his *vazīr* resides. Around that chamber, there is a portico with twelve doors, with a deputy (*nā'ib*) of the *vazīr* sitting at each. Seven mounted lieutenants (*naqīb*) turn outside around those twelve doors, taking the Order (*farmān*) of the deputies, which has reached them from the *vazīr*, and placing four lassos into the hands of those four foot-soldiers who throw them out, (thereby) sending one group – by virtue of the Order (*bi-ḥukm-i farmān*) – to the (royal) presence, moving another group far from it, honoring one group and punishing another. Now the

104 Cf. the comparative chart given by Henry Corbin in *Trilogie ismaélienne*, French part III, 60ff.

105 *The Rawdatu't-Taslim commonly called Tasawwurat by Nasiru'd-din Tusi* ed. and transl. W. Ivanow, Leiden, Brill, 1950, Persian 115, 7-14/English (incomplete) 132f.

Throne is the private chamber and the residence of the *vazīr* of the kingdom, for he is the closest Angel (*ki vay firishta-yi muqarrabtarīn ast*). The Sphere of the fixed stars is that portico, and the twelve (zoodiacal) Houses are those twelve doors. The deputies of the *vazīr* are other angels whose rank is one degree below that of the closest Angel, and to each one, a different task is entrusted. The seven Planets are the seven mounted lieutenants who turn up at the doors, where they receive various kinds of orders. As for the four Elements, i.e. fire, water, air and earth, they are like those four servant foot-soldiers; they do not travel out of their home-land. Finally, the four Natures, i.e. warm, cold, wet and dry, are like the four lassos in their hands."[107]

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this "kingdom" is the rather patent absence of the "King" himself. Not unlike the unknowable "Originator" (*al-mubdiᶜ*) of the Ismāᶜīlīs, this "King" is not even in his proper place! His "private chamber," which is the "Throne" (*ᶜarsh*), i.e. the ultimate Sphere beyond the sphere of the fixed stars, is in fact occupied by the "Vizier"; and it is the "Vizier," not the "King," who moves the world by way of the divine "Order" (*farmān* = *amr*). This "Vizier," or the "closest Angel," is clearly the same figure as the "Obeyed one" of the *Mishkāt*, and plays the same role as the Intellect (or the "First-Originated") of the Islamic Neoplatonists. As for the Twelve and the Seven, they seem to be substituting in this version for the World-Soul, i.e. the "lunar" Angel of the *Mishkāt*.[108]

All this leaves little doubt indeed that Montgomery Watt's "Neoplatonist forger" of the "Veils-section" was in reality no one else than the "Proof of Islam" himself. As was already pointed out by Gairdner, Ghazālī has no objection even in the *Tahāfut* to identifying the Prime Intellect with an Angel.[109] In the undisputed part of the *Mishkāt* itself, he speaks of "intellectual lights" of the Higher World, or "luminous substances" of the *Malakūt*, as "angels" and even as "lords" (*arbāb*); and they are symbolized in the physical world by the sun, the moon and the stars.[110] He also points out there that this angelic hierarchy has "countless ranks," from the "closest" (*al-aqrab*), i.e. "the one whose rank is close to the divine Presence which is the source of all lights," to the "lowest" (*al-adnā*), and that "it is quite likely that the rank of Isrāfīl is above the rank of Jibrīl (Gabriel)."[111] This again shows that Ghazālī is hardly following conventional "orthodoxy" even in this undisputed part of the *Mishkāt*.

106 *Iḥyā'* book xxxii, 2, 2, *bayān* 2 (= Cairo 1352/1933, IV, 101f.)

107 *Kīmiyā* ed. A. Ārām, 51f.

108 The zoodiac and the number twelve are hardly less important in Ismāᶜīlism than the number seven. See e.g. *Kitāb al-Yanābīᶜ* ed. H. Corbin, Ar. 13ff./Fr. 25-33.

109 *Der Islam* 1914, 136.

110 *Mishkāt* 59 and 67f.

111 *Mishkāt* 53. Elschazlī (*Die Nische* 20) seems to think that *al-adnā* does not mean "the lowest" but refers to an angel still "closer" (to God) than "the closest."

It is according to classical Shīᶜite Ḥadīth that the "Spirit" (*al-rūḥ*) of prophetic revelation (Sūra 42:52), or the *rūḥ min amr rabbī* (Sūra 17:82), is "a creature mightier than Jibrīl and Mīkā'īl. It was with the Prophet, and it is with the Imāms, guiding them."[112] This tradition may well have inspired Ghazālī's notion of the "transcendent Spirit Prophetical" (*al-rūḥ al-qudsī al-nabawī*) which is also special to "some *awliyā'*."[113] On the other hand, the context of our *Kīmiyā*-passage would seem to allow a straightforward identification of the "Vizier on the Throne," i.e. the "closest Angel," with Isrāfīl (the Angel of Resurrection). For this Angel is clearly the macrocosmic equivalent of the microcosmic "vital spirit" (*rūḥ-i ḥayavānī*) located in the "heart" of man, and Ghazālī explicitely identifies that "spirit" as "your Isrāfīl."[114] The elevation of Isrāfīl to the top of the cosmic hierarchy is rather in line with a specific Sufi tradition of uncertain origin: the one known as the "Ḥadīth of ᶜAbdallāh b. Masᶜūd," which defines the Sufi universal hierarchy of *awliyā'* in such a way that the "Pole" (*quṭb*) is the one "whose heart is after the heart of Isrāfīl."[115]

It also should be noted that the purpose of the whole "astronomy" in the *Kīmiyā* is not to explain the *cosmos* as such. Ghazālī mentions it as an example to illustrate the theme of Abraham's ascent through the "veils of light," referring to the *Miskhāt* for a fuller explanation of this topic, and just after the parable of the "Elephant and the Community of the Blind."[116] The message is quite obviously that doctrines, however sophisticated they may be, are still

112 Ḥadīth from Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq, reported by Kulaynī, *Al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfī* ed. ᶜAlī Akbar Al-Ghaffārī, Tehran, Dār al-kutub al-islāmiyya, 3rd ed., 1388h.q., I, 273. Also reported by Ṣaffār al-Qummī (d. 290/903) and quoted as such by Ṣadr al-dīn al-Shīrāzī (Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *Kitab al-Mashaᶜir* ed. Henry Corbin, Bibliothèque Iranienne vol. 10, Tehran/Paris 1342/1964, Arabic 59/French 204). In another variant (*ibid.* 61f./207), the "Spirit" is said to be a creature mightier than Jibrīl, Mīkā'īl *and* Isrāfīl. In Ismāᶜīlism, the same three angels (known also under other names) form a pentad together with the two supreme *ḥudūd* (i.e. the Soul and the Intellect), but it remains unclear whether Isrāfīl or Jibrīl occupies the higher place among the five (cf. Henry Corbin, *Etude préliminaire pour le "Livre réunissant les deux sagesses"* [Nāṣir-i Khusraw's *Jāmiᶜ ul-Ḥikmatayn*], Bibliothèque Iranienne vol. IIIa), Tehran/Paris 1332/1953, 91-112 and Heinz Halm, *Kosmologie* 67.

113 *Mishkāt* 77, 13 and 81, 4. Note that this "spirit" is the fifth among the five perceptive powers (above, n. 24), and that the "spirit" which according to Shīᶜite Ḥadīth (cf. preceding note) is exclusively with the Prophet and the Imams, is also additional to four other kinds of "spirit" (Kulaynī, *op.cit.*, I, 271f.). Cf. also *Kitāb al-Mashāᶜir* ed. H. Corbin, Ar. 62f./Fr. 207f. and Corbin's note 115.

114 *Kīmiyā* ed. A. Ārām, 48, 8.

115 Cf. my art. *"Walāyah"* in *The Encyclopedia of Religion* XV, 320. To my knowledge, the oldest source for this *ḥadīth* is Abū Nuᶜaym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā' wa-Ṭabaqāt al-Aṣfiyā'* vol. I, Cairo, 1351/1932, 8f.

116 *Kīmiyā* 49-51. Like Abraham (before reaching the final stage of his "ascent"), the *munajjim* (= Ismāᶜīlī?) says *hādhā rabbī* to the "veils of light"...

"veils of light." For Ghazālī goes on to point out what happens when a person suddenly feels so sad that he wishes to leave this world: the physician would call it "melancholy" (*mālīkhūliyā*) and prescribe a concoction of antimon as remedy; the physicist would attribute it to excessive dryness in the brain of the patient, caused by wintry air, so that no healing will occur before Spring comes; the astrologer (*munajjim*) would say that this is a case of "black bile" (*sawdā* = melancholy) which originates from Mercury being in undesirable conjunction with Mars, and this state will not better as long as Mercury does not join the "two Auspicious ones" (Venus and Jupiter) or reach them at a distance of three zoodiacal Houses.[117] "All of them are right," says Ghazālī, "but this is the limit of their knowledge." What they do not know, he continues, is that this person was judged in the divine Presence to be in "happiness" (*saᶜādat*), and that the two expert lieutenants called Mercury and Mars were sent out in order for the foot-soldier "air" to cast the lasso "dryness" into his brain, thereby causing aversion for the pleasures of this world and calling him to the divine Presence...[118] This radical change of values is also the critical point which distinguishes the "Attainers" of the *Mishkāt* from all those "veiled by pure lights": they are simply no longer interested in explaining the "Order" of the cosmos. "Turning their face" from all celestial "movers," they re-enact the third and final step of "Abraham's ascent":

> 3.4. "The Attainers are only a fourth sort. To them, it was manifest in addition that this 'Obeyed one' is (still) qualified by an attribute which contradicts pure oneness and total perfection on account of a mystery which it is not in the scope of this book to reveal, and that the relation of this 'Obeyed one' [to the true Being (*ilā 'l-wujūd al-ḥaqq*)] is the relation of the sun, among the (physical) lights, [to Pure Light (*ilā 'l-nūr al-maḥḍ*)]."

Even without the words omitted in Affifi's edition (in brackets above),[119] the irony contained in this highly controversial statement can hardly be overlooked. It shockingly implies that the "Attainers" are superior to their "class"-mates for the very same reason which accounts for the superiority of the Iranian "Dualists" of our text (above, 2.1.6.) over the other "tribes" of their "sort." For just as those "Dualists" were distinguished from the "sun-worship-

117 *Kīmiyā* 52.

118 *ibid.*

119 *Mishkāt* 91, 13-16. Affifi nevertheless quotes the text repeatedly withouth these omissions in his introduction (25, 1-2 and 29, 9-10), apparently on the basis of the traditional Egyptian edition of 1907, which is also the one translated by Gairdner (*The Niche* 172). See P.M. Bouyges S.J., "Algazeliana I" in *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 8, 1922, 482-485. The text in *Mishkāt B* 45f. appears to reproduce the traditional Egyptian version but with some errors and other omissions.

pers" (2.1.5.) on account of their realization that the sun is not, after all, identical with "absolute Light," so the "Attainers" are now distinguished from those who are presumably worshippers of the "Obeyed one" because they alone realize that the latter is not identical with the *absolute* One (*aḥad*, cf. below). Clearly the "mysterious attribute" which, according to the standard text, "contradicts pure oneness and total perfection," refers to nothing else than the mere fact that this "Lord" is still being "obeyed," in addition to being "One," or to "the Order" (*al-amr*) as his "attribute," which amounts to the same thing. To interpret this passage as a somewhat "extended form" (*imtidād*) of Ash^{c}arite attributism, as Affifi, doubtless in order to "save" Ghazālī's "orthodoxy," has proposed to do,[120] is rather to stretch Ash^{c}arism beyond recognition; for it was part and parcel of that "orthodoxy" to regard *al-amr* as an attribute eternally inherent in the divine Essence itself.[121] In order to make the statement under discussion Ash^{c}arite, one would have to do exactly what some copists of the text apparently felt impelled to do, namely, to read *lā tunāfī* instead of *tunāfī*, so that the mysterious attribute would *not* "contradict pure oneness" – a reading which Affifi himself, rightly of course, rejects.[122] Affifi's additional remark to the effect that Ghazālī went beyond "simple" Ash^{c}arism by putting it into the form of "a new logos-theory held among the Muslim sects (*al-islāmiyyīn*)"[123] seems therefore more to the point. Indeed one could say that the distinction between the "pure One" and the "Obeyed one" brings the "Attainers" one step closer to the real Ismā^{c}īlī Neoplatonists (as opposed to the fictional ones of the "third sort"), since it was characteristic of their doctrine to totally isolate the "unknowable" One by attributing *al-amr* to the Intellect (or the "First-Originated") called also, for that very reason, *al-wāḥid al-mutakaththir*.[124] Yet the "Attainers" are clearly not "orthodox" Ismā^{c}īlīs either. From the point of view of that "orthodoxy," they would in effect be violating the hierarchical principle of the intermediaries (the *ḥudūd*) by "attaining," precisely, the "unattainable" One beyond the "Obeyed one." The point is, rather, that they are mystics in the Neoplatonic sense of the term – and in the sense in which Avicenna may be said to have been a mystic.

120 *Mishkāt* introd. 25.

121 Cf. Shahrastani, *Livre* 320 (with Gimaret's note 29), and my remarks in *Bulletin Critique des Annales Islamologiques* 5, 1988, 65.

122 *Mishkāt* 91, 14 (with Affifi's note 7 and introd. 25, note 2). More variants in Bouyges, "Algazeliana I" 483f.

123 *Mishkāt* introd. 25.

124 See above, n. 99. Cf. also Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Jāmi^{c} ul-Ḥikmatayn* ed. H. Corbin and Moh. Mo'in (Bibliothèque Iranienne III), 146, 17-149, 4. For Kirmānī's position on this point, see *Rāḥat al-^{c}Aql* 73-75 and th discussion in F. Hunzai, *The Concept of Tawḥīd*... (unpubl. thesis, cf. above n. 53) 88ff.; 169f.; 178ff.

Being the only ones, among all the groups surveyed in the "Veils-section," to distinguish between the cause of universal motion and the cause of existence itself, they are, in fact, in line with the truly Neoplatonic tradition which is the one followed by Avicenna in his "nobler" proof of the existence of God, "from existence" itself; and it should be noted that Avicenna himself in the *Ishārāt* points out that this "nobler" proof is the one which distinguishes the "saints" (*al-ṣiddīqūn*).[125] Only this explains why the "Attainers" "turned their face from" *all* the celestial "Movers," including "the one who *ordered* celestial motion" (*wa-min alladhī amara bi-taḥrīkihā*), to "He who originally created (*alladhī faṭara*) the Heavens" and why, as a result of this Abrahamic *via negativa*, they "attained an Existent one (*mawjūd*) who transcends everything reached by human sight or insight."[126]

This is an unmistakeable reference, it seems to me, to two major points made by Ghazālī in the undisputed part of the *Mishkāt*: the doctrine of the "face of God" in Section One (see below) and, of course, the interpretation of Abraham's "turning his face" (Sūra 6:79) in Section Two.[127] As was noted earlier, Abraham, unlike Moses in Ghazālī's interpretation of Sūra 26:24, does not even "describe the Lord" by referring to His creative "acts," but points to "He who" (*alladhī*). That means, Ghazālī explains, that the mystic (*sālik*) at the final stage of his "ascent" reaches a point where he "turns his face" from the "sun," because the sun, being "greater" and "higher" (than the moon), is *eo ipso* "related" to something "less perfect" – whereas the act of "turning his face to He who originally created" is by itself "undetermined" (*ishāra mubhama*), given that "the concept of He who" (*mafhūm alladhī*) is, as such,

125 For this Neoplatonic tradition (i.e. Proclus, Philoponus) and Avicenna's contribution, see Herbert A. Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity, Creation and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 1987, 89f. and 281-288. The reference is to *Ishārāt* (ed. Forget 146f./Goichon, *Directives* 371f.). As Davidson (*ibid.* 287) rightly notes, Avicenna adds "a Sufi theme"; but one wonders why he refers to the 13th-century Egyptian Sufi Ibn ᶜAṭā' Allāh al-Iskandarī to make this point. Avicenna in fact is alluding to a central point in classical Sufism, namely, Junayd's distinction between two kinds of *maᶜrifa* as reported by Abū Bakr al-Kalābādhī in the *Kitāb al-Taᶜarruf li-Madhhab Ahl al-Taṣawwuf* (ed. ᶜAbd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, Cairo, 1380/1960, 64, 3-7/transl. A.J. Arberry, *The Doctrine of the Sufis*, Cambridge University Press, 1966, repr. Lahore, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1976, 52f.). Since Kalābādhī died in 385/995 in Bukhārā (cf. Arberry, *ibid.* introd. x), the city where Avicenna lived at that time as a youth of fifteen years, he might well have heard about that Sufi theme from Kalābādhī personally. Note that the word *siddīqūn* used by Avicenna corresponds to the "elect" (*al-khawāṣṣ*) in Kalābādhī's report. For Ghazālī's *siddīqūn* see below, n. 179.

126 *Mishkāt* 91, 16-92, 3. I have omitted details which may or may not have been part of the original text. Cf. *Mishkāt B* 45, 21-23 and Gairdner, *The Niche* 172.

127 *Mishkāt* 67f.

beyond any conceivable referent; and "what is beyond any relation is the True First (*al-awwal al-ḥaqq*)."[128] It is surely not without significance that Ghazālī should see a reference to the same "unrelated" One (*aḥad*) in "Muhammad's answer to the Bedouin", i.e. Sūra 112:1-4 whose meaning, he points out, is precisely that "His relation is to transcend *any* relation."[129] Consequently, it is not surprising that Abraham and Muhammad should be the only two prophetic prototypes of the true "Attainers" at the end of the "Veils-section" (cf. n. 33). As for Gairdner's disappointment with the "bankrupt conclusion" (sic) of this text,[130] it reveals doubtless more about his own theological predisposition than about Ghazālī's.

IV.

But what exactly is, then, the relation between the "Obeyed one" and the "unrelated" One – or between the "sun" and "absolute Light" – according to the "Attainers"?

One famous answer to that question was given some seventy years after Ghazālī's death by his great critic among the philosophers, Averroës. As is well-known, Averroës in several places of his *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* expresses his dismay – probably not without a touch of malice on his part – at Ghazālī's "acceptance of the metaphysics of the Philosophers" in the *Mishkāt*.[131] A somewhat more specific criticism of this sort is found in one of Averroës' earlier works, the *Kashf ᶜan Manāhij al-Adilla* (completed in 575/1179-80). The relevant passage was discussed at length by Gairdner in the first place; but it was also adduced by Watt as a major witness in the case against the "Neoplatonist forger." It may be translated as follows:

> "Then he [Ghazālī] comes up with his book known as *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, speaks in it about the degrees of those knowing God (*darajāt al-ᶜārifīn bi-'llāh*) and says that all of them are subject to a veil (*maḥjūbūn*) except those who believe that God is other than the Mover of the First Heaven – He being (then) the One from whom this Mover emanates (*wahuwa 'lladhī ṣadara ᶜanhu hādhā 'l-muḥarrik*). And this is an open pro-

128 *ibid.* 67, 19-68, 7.
129 *ibid.* 68, 7-10.
130 *The Niche* introd. 51.
131 *Averroes' Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* (transl. Van den Bergh) I, 69 and 146 and Van den Bergh's notes in vol. II, 53f. and 95

fession on his part of the doctrines of the Philosophers in theology (*al-ᶜulūm al-ilāhiyya*, i.e. metaphysics), though he has said in several places that their theology, unlike their other sciences, is (but) a set of conjectures."[132]

The debate generated by Averroës' remarks on Ghazālī's theological inconsistency constitutes by itself a rather illuminating example of that European "appropriation of Ghazālī" which was noted by van Ess, though the categories used in this particular instance were hardly those of "bourgeois liberalism." Both Gairdner and Watt in effect wished to defend *their* "orthodox" Ghazālī – i.e. the one who supposedly gave the final blow to "philosophy" – against Averroës, who therefore had to be wrong one way or another. Gairdner, emphasizing the difference between philosophical emanationism and theological creationism, pointed out that no explicit "profession" of the doctrine of emanation is, in fact, found anywhere in the *Mishkāt*.[133] Up to this point, Gairdner was undoubtedly right, particularly as far as the "Veils-section" is concerned, where such terms as *suḍūr* or *fayḍ* do not even occur. However, it should be remembered that Avicenna himself also uses "creationist" language – notably *ibdāᶜ* for the "immediate origination" of the Prime Intellect,[134] and the Ismāᶜīlī Neoplatonists were even explicitely "creationist" by insisting that the Intellect (contrary to the Soul) does not itself "emanate" from anything prior to it in existence, but ist "originated beyond time" *ex nihilo*.[135] In any case, it certainly does not follow from Gairdner's negative linguistic evidence that "the metaphysic of Gh. the Sufi was still that of *kalām*, not *falsafa*, just as much as in his pre-Sufi days."[136] Such a conclusion seems indeed blatently incompatible with the "philosophy" of the "Veils-section," particularly in view of the low status assigned there, precisely, to the dialectics of *kalām* (see above, 2.3.). Montgomery Watt, on the other hand, finds himself in total agreement with Averroës – if only to make him, in effect, the first victim of the presumed "Neoplatonist forger" of the "Veils-section." To this end, he himself rephrases Averroës in even sharper, theological language by asserting that the "Veils-section" is based on "the principle that, since God is absolutely One, He cannot stand in direct relation to more than one entity," and then simply af-

132 The Arabic text of this passage is given by Gairdner, together with an English translation, in *Der Islam* 1914, 133. Cf. Ibn Rushd, *Manāhij al-Adilla fī ᶜAqā'id al-Milla* ed. Mahmūd Qāsim, Cairo, 1955, 183.

133 *Der Islam* 1914, 137ff.

134 Cf. A.-M. Goichon, *Lexique* 18-20.

135 *Ibdāᶜ* according to them occurs neither from matter nor from a form which would be preexisting in God's knowledge, but radically *lā min shay'* (= *na az chīz*). Cf. e.g. Sijistānī, *K. al-Yanābīᶜ* ed. H. Corbin, Ar. 25 and 76-79. Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Jāmiᶜ ul-Ḥikmatayn* ed. H. Corbin and Moh. Mo' in, 211-224. Cf. F. Hunzai, *The Concept*... 84ff.; 156ff.; 164ff.; 173ff.

136 *Der Islam* 1914, 140.

firms that "an explicit profession of this sort" is found in the text under discussion.[137] Such, however, is manifestly not the case, either. The "Veils-section" has neither an explicit "profession" of the doctrine of "emanation," nor can it be pressed into the classic Neoplatonic formula *Ex uno non fit nisi unum* as rephrased by Watt, since there is clearly no question of a "direct relation" between the absolutely un-related "He who originally created" (*alladhī faṭara*) and *any one* among the "originally created" celestial entities in particular, including the "Obeyed one." However, if the idea of a "direct relation" between God and "one other entity" Watt attributes to the "Veils-section" can be found anywhere in the *Mishkāt*, it is, in fact, in the undisputed Section One – the "other entity" in question being, es we shall see in a moment, the "Face of God" (*wajh Allāh*).

Averroës was nevertheless right in one crucial point. He correctly observed that Ghazālī at least implies in this work that the only ones *not* "subject to a veil" are those who do *not* identify God with the "Mover of the First Heaven" (i.e. the "Obeyed one"). As was noted earlier, this by itself is sufficient evidence for Ghazālī's acceptance, not rejection, of Avicenna's distinction between the cause of universal motion and the cause of existence itself. Moreover, as was recently shown by B.S. Kogan, it was this distinction between the two "First" ones rather than the "emanation" of the one from the other which constituted the real problem of Avicennism for Averroës himself: having himself made it in his own "Neoplatonic period" (i.e. in the *Epitome*), he later rejected it with the purely Aristotelian argument that the first real Substance cannot possibly be prior to the Mover of the universe.[138] Thus, while Averroës may have overstated his case against Ghazālī somewhat polemically by imputing to him a doctrine of "emanation," his criticism of the distinction between the two ultimate entities was not only legitimate, but is perfectly understandable from the point of view of his own, Aristotelian, "orthodoxy." Perhaps the same reluctance to recognize a *real* distinction between God and the "Obeyed one," rather than a "superficial reading" of Ghazālī, as Gairdner thought,[139] explains the admittedly ambiguous statement of a "recent writer" (*baᶜḍ al-muta'akhkhirīn*) quoted with disapproval by Ibn Ṭufayl or, to be more

137 *J.R.A.S.* 1949, 16f.

138 "Averroes and the Theory of Emanation" in *Mediaeval Studies* 43, 1981, 384-404, notably 396f. Our passage from the *Kashf* would seem to constitute another early evidence for Kogan's "developmental hypothesis." It would be interesting to compare Averroës' personal development with a similar modification of Neoplatonism that occurred earlier within Ismāᶜīlism (from Sijistānī's Neoplatonism to Kirmānī's Peripatetism).

139 *Der Islam* 1914, 146.

precise, in the introduction to Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy b. Yaqẓān.*[140] According to this version, the anonymous critic argued that the denial of the absolute oneness of "that Being" (*hādhā ᶜl-mawjūd*) by the "Attainers" implied the absurd belief that the "True First has in His essence some sort of plurality." Ibn Ṭufayl himself, speaking through the voice of "Ḥayy b. Yaqẓān" in the text of the narrative itself, seems to have taken an intermediate position: the immaterial "essence" (*dhāt*) of the highest cosmic Sphere is neither identical with the essence of the "Truly One" (*al-wāḥid al-ḥaqq*), nor is it the Sphere itself (*nafs al-falak*), nor is it really distinct from either – just as the image of the sun reflected in a pure mirror is neither identical with the sun itself, nor with the mirror as such, nor is it really distinct from either.[141]

Some fifty years before this Andalusian controversy was even raised, the same problem was evidently discussed in Ghazālī's immediate neighbourhood. I am referring to ᶜAyn al-Quḍat al-Hamadhānī (executed in 525/1131), a disciple of Ghazālī's brother Ahmad and himself a controversial figure whose significance as a "Ghazālian" Sufi openly embracing Avicenna still remains largely unexplored.[142] In his Arabic *Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq*, ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt opens the discussion by making, first of all, a clear distinction between two kinds of rational proof of the existence of God as the One prior to everything else (*al-qadīm*, the "Eternal one"): the proof from "motion" (*al-ḥaraka*), and the proof from "existence" (*al-wujūd*) itself. While the former is clear and sufficient, he says, it is cumbersome and can actually be dispensed with by those following the "straight path." In this context, ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt ironically "excuses" Ghazālī

140 Text and translation of this passage in Gairdner, *ibid.* Cf. *Hayy Ben Yaqdhân* ed. Léon Gauthier, Arabic 17f./French 15f. There is some doubt as to whether the introduction to *Ḥayy b. Yaqẓān* was actually written by Ibn Ṭufayl himself. For a discussion of this question, see Parveen Hasanali, *Ibn Ṭufayl's "Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān": An Analytic Study*, unpublished M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1987, 49-51.

141 *Hayy Ben Yaqdhân* ed. Gauthier 127/92. Note that Ibn Ṭufayl appears to be adopting the Peripatetic system of the "Ten Intellects" here. The highest cosmic "essence" is therefore not identical with the one he identifies with the "Angel of seventy thousand faces" (cf. above, note 23).

142 For a preliminary study, see my "Two Types of Mystical Thought in Muslim Iran: An Essay on Suhrawardī *Shaykh al-Ishrāq* and ᶜAynulquẓāt-i Hamadānī" in *The Muslim World* 68, 1978, 187-204 and 70, 1980, 83f. ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt praises Avicenna in several places of his Persian *Tamhīdāt* (ed. ᶜAfīf ᶜUsayrān, *Muṣannafāt-i ᶜAynulquẓāt-i Hamadānī*, Tehran, Dānishgāh, 1341/1962, index s.n. Abū ᶜAlī-i Sīnā). His positive attitude to philosophy may also be seen reflected in the fact that Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Bayhaqī (*Tatimmat Siwān al-Ḥikma*, Persian translation by Munshī-i Yazdī ed. Ṣ. Mḥd. Mishkāt, Tehran, 1318h.s., 73) and Shahrazūrī (*Nuzhat al-Arwāḥ* ed. Kh. Aḥmad II, 53) make him a disciple not only of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, but also of ᶜUmar-i Khayyām (in a marked contrast to Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, cf. above, n. 95).

for having spent "nearly ten folios on establishing the Eternal one" in his famous work on *Kalām, Al-Iqtiṣād fī' l-Iᶜtiqad.*[143]

The "proof from existence," on the other hand, is also based on rational speculation; but it is "absolutely certain" (*al-ḥaqq al-yaqīn*) according to our thinker. It rests on the axiom that "existence" as such is "the most general of all things" and may be divided into "that which has a beginning" (= *al-ḥādith*) and "that which has no beginning" (= *al-qadīm*). Now the former presupposes the latter, "given that it is not in the nature of that which has a beginning to exist by itself; for that which exists by itself must exist by necessity, and it is inconceivable that that which is necessary by itself has a beginning." The "proof from existence" may, then, be put into the simple form of a demonstrative syllogism known as the "connective conditional" (*al-sharṭī al-muttaṣil*): "If (it can be assumed that) there is (at least) one existent in existence, then it necessarily follows that there is one without beginning (*qadīm*) in existence. ... But existence is known as a matter of fact. ... Therefore, the existence of an existent without beginning is necessary."[144]

Even this rational "certitude," however, turns out to be unsatisfactory when it comes to the discussion of God in his *essential* oneness. Immediately after these preliminaries, ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt leads right into the heart of the matter by stating the following:

> "There is no doubt, for those having insight penetrating the veils of the Unseen and the curtains of the *Malakūt*, that there exists an entity (*maᶜnā*) from which existence emanates (*ṣadara ᶜanhu 'l-wujūd*) in the most complete mode. This (entity) is the one referred to this side of the Veil, in the language of the Arabs, as 'God most high' (*Allāhu taᶜālā*). I mean by 'those having insight' those who perceive the existence of that entity without scholastic premisses such as are used by the rationalists. That entity is above and beyond having to adjust its essential Reality (*ḥaqīqa*) to the speculation of any viewer other than Itself. It transcends the ambition of anyone wishing to make such a thing possible. Thus It is exalted by its own essence, not by something other than Itself.[145] Its own essence and self requires such exaltation above any other, just as the sun requires by its own essence, through the perfection of the power of its manifestation (*fī kamāl sulṭān ishrāqihā*), to be exalted beyond the reach of the view of the bats. ... But the sun, in the simile just used, does not adequately represent the perfection meant, since its existence is derived (*mustafād*) from another, together with all its attributes; and there is no existent in existence that would have an essence truly deserving reality of existence (*yaḥiqqu lahā ḥaqīqat al-wujūd*), except the 'Unique Pre-

143 *Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq* ed. ᶜAfīf ᶜUsayrān (in *Muṣannafāt*), 11f. The "excuse" amounts of course to a criticism of *kalām* in the context.

144 *ibid.* 12f. For the "connective conditional" see Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt* ed. Forget, 78/translation by Shams C. Inati, *Ibn Sīnā: Remarks and Admonitions Part One: Logic,* Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984, 145.

145 *Zubda* 13, 17: I read *lā ghayr dhātihi* instead of *la ᶜan dhātihi.*

vailing' one (*al-wahid al-qahhar*),[146] who is beyond all perfections as perceived by prophets and 'those brought near', let alone the imperfections fancied about Him by those of weak insight."[147]

The sun, inadequate though it is as a metaphor for the one "entity beyond the Veil" or the "essence truly deserving reality of existence," is nevertheless ᶜAyn al-Qudāt's priviledged image for this unique ultimate Reality. But it is neither the Aristotelian Prime Mover, nor one of Ibn Tufayl's cosmic "essences." It is, rather, "existence" itself, which emanates as such, "in the most complete mode," from God – a point which clearly anticipates the "existentialist revolution" brought about much later, against Suhrawardī's "essentialism," by Mullā Ṣadrā (cf. below, n. 158). What makes the sun inadequate as a metaphor is the fact that its existence is itself "derived from another." But this simply means that the sun, unlike the "One," is not "one" by its own essence. ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt explains this in another passage of the *Zubda* where, evidently drawing on Avicenna's distinction between essence and existence, he introduces a purely conceptual distinction between two kinds of "oneness" into the technical language of Sufism: *aḥadiyya* and *waḥda*. I shall translate these here as "oneness of essence" and "oneness of existence," respectively:

"The essence of the Necessary Being (*dhāt wājib al-wujūd*) has as its concomitant 'oneness of existence' (*waḥda*). How could it be otherwise, when 'oneness of essence' (*aḥadiyya*), which is more particular than 'oneness of existence', is its concomitant? For it is impossible that its particularity, which exists as its property, exists as the property of any other among the essences. (By contrast), 'oneness of existence' is (also) a concomitant of the sun, since there is no second to it in existence, whereas 'oneness of essence' is not its concomitant, since the existence of a second to it is possible (= conceivable). Now if you consider the relation which the Essence itself necessarily has to itself, you will find it to be absolutely one (*muttaḥida*), with no plurality at all; and if the hearts of the 'spiritual pilgrims' (*al-sālikīn*, i.e. the mystics) contemplate that Essence with the heart's eyes, they find it to be exactly such, without a difference. However, given the plurality of the relations of that Essence to the other existents – the latter rightfully having existence from that necessary Essence (only), not from themselves –, the 'pilgrims' inevitably have to use metaphorical language (literally: to "change the expressions") when referring to It, so that the true meanings of these relations may be conveyed thereby to the weak-minded. Thus, if the Essence is (regarded as being) related to the emanation (*ṣudūr*) of the existents from It – it being understood that they are *possibilia* (= contingents) and that the 'possible' is in need of a 'necessary' which existentiates it – then, considering[148] this relation (of existentiation), the relation between It and the existents is called 'Power' (*qudra*), and it may be called 'Will' (*irāda*) under (consideration of) another relation. And the hearts (= minds), because of their weakness, fancy that there is a (real) difference between 'the Powerful' and

146 e.g. Sūra 40:60.
147 *Zubda* 13, 12-14, 7.
148 *ibid.* 39, 15: I read *summiyat ᶜinda* instead of *summiyat ᶜanhu*.

'Power', or 'the Willing' and 'Will'. This is as far as the speculation of the intellects can reach."[149]

As will be noticed, ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt qualifies theological attributism as a metaphorical way of speaking about the relationship between the One and the Many, which is more properly expressed in terms of a philosophy of emanation. However, even "emanation" is still an improper way of speaking about the One Reality according to our Sufi thinker. It explains only the existence of that which does not deserve to be called "existent" in its own right, which right belongs exclusively to the One "related to Himself" only. While conceding to the "rationalists" that the existence of the world can best be explained through emanation of existence from this One, ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt insists at the same time that the "point of view of the intellect" is itself superseded by "the stage beyond reason" (*al-ṭawr alladhī warā' al-ᶜaql*), i.e. the "view of the mystics" (*naẓar al-maᶜrifa*)[150] – and on this point, he is, of course, in total agreement with Ghazālī.[151] In support of the "rationalist" view, he nevertheless points out that "the truth in this matter, according to what dawns upon our intellects, is to say that existence emanates (*fāḍa*) first from God upon the First Existent (*al-mawjūd al-awwal*)," suggesting that this "First Existent" is the "closest Angel," i.e. the "closest [to God], in the view of the intellect, among all existents."[152] This remark is by itself highly interesting in our context, since it comes from a Sufi thinker closely associated with Ghazālī's own milieu. Now ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt never mentions the "Obeyed one" of the "Veils-section," nor does he imply that this "First Existent" or "Closest Angel" is originated. He does however identify it with "the Spirit" of Sūra 78:38. "The existence of this Spirit," he says, "is a condition for (any) other thing to be prepared completely to receive the light of eternal Power (i.e. existence), and the preparedness of that thing is conditioned by the existence of the Spirit just as the preparedness of the Spirit (itself) is unconditioned."[153] But while the existence of this "First Existent" is a necessary condition for the man of reason to explain the order (*tartīb*) following which things proceed to existence, this "order" itself becomes totally irrelevant in the higher view of the mystics, for the simple reason that in their view, strictly no thing is in reality "closer" to God than any other. "They see his Beingness (*huwiyya*) along with (*musāwiqa*) all existents, exactly as the 'scholastics' (*al-ᶜulamā'*) see it along with the First Existent ... or rather, they do not in fact see Him with the existents as the scholastics see Him

149 *ibid.* 39, 6-18.
150 *ibid.* 63; 66; 92-100.
151 Cf. H. Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies* 297-307.
152 *Zubda* 63, 16-18.
153 *ibid.* 64, 1-3.

with the Prime Intellect (*al-ᶜaql al-awwal*), but they do see the place from which the existents proceed (*maṣdar al-mawjūdāt*) as multiple, and the totality of the existents as a (mere) atom in relation to Its magnitude."[154] Therefore, if "God comprehends everything in knowledge" (Sūra 65:12), this can only mean that "*He is* the many and the whole, and that everything other than Him is not even a part or one, except by virtue of the face [of that thing] which is turned towards His totality and plurality (*illā min al-wajh alladhī yalī kulliyyatahu wa-kathratahu*)."[155] To elucidate this paradoxical conclusion, ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt turns again to the image of the sun: "though it is one, and the rays emanating from it are many, the truth is to say that the sun is the many and the rays are the one."[156]

Ostensibly, this "supra-rational" doctrine contradicts, as ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt himself does not fail to point out, the doctrine of "those who claim that God does not know the particulars"[157] – in other words, one of the famous "heresies" attributed to the "Philosophers" by Ghazālī in the *Tahāfut*. But to conclude from this that ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt joined the ranks of the "orthodox" against the "heretics" would be just as misleading as is any attempt to interpret Ghazālī's *Mishkāt* – with or without the "Veils-section" – as a work propagating "the metaphysic of *kalām*" against *falsafa*. The *Mishkāt* is, on the contrary, one of the reasons why "philosophy" not only survived in the Muslim East, despite its ennemies, but was actually able to reach a second apogee in the work of Mullā Ṣadrā al-Shīrāzī (d. 1050/1640); and ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt seems to have played a key-role in this "Eastern" development of *kalām*, philosophy and mysticism *combined*.[158]

154 *ibid.* 66, 6-15. Cf. 76-78.

155 *ibid.* 21, 12-15. For the "Face" see also *ibid.* 38, 3-7 and 51, 7-18. For a more "poetic version" of this concept, see Carl W. Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism*, Albany, SUNYP, 1985, 75f.

156 *ibid.* 21, 15-17.

157 *ibid.* 22.

158 Despite the unquestionable influence of Suhrawardī (*ishrāqī*) and especially Ibn ᶜArabī on Mullā Ṣadrā, it could be argued that his own understanding of "God's knowledge of everything" is actually more in line with Ghazālī's and ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt's "monism" than with theirs. Like ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt, Mullā Ṣadrā identifies this "knowledge" with actual "existence" in its totality. Cf. *Kitāb al-Mashāᶜir* ed. H. Corbin, Arabic 50-56/French 177-192, and Ṣadrā's criticism of the views of Suhrawardī and Ibn ᶜArabī on the subject of "God's knowledge" in the *Asfār al-Arbaᶜa* (lithogr. ed. III, 37), conveniently summarized by Fazlur Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, Albany, SUNYP, 1975, 146ff. In his *Tafsīr Āyat al-Nūr* (ed. M. Khvājavī, Tehran, Mawlā, 1362h.s., 142), Ṣadrā suggests that Ghazālī's definition of "light" in the *Mishkāt* as "that through which things appear" is in agreement with the doctrine of the "imams of philosophy" (*a'immat al-ḥikma*). The same definition was also quoted, with enthusiastic approval, by ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt (*Tamhīdāt* ed. ᶜUsayrān, 255); cf. also above, n. 22. A similar definition of "light" is given by Ghazālī in *Maqṣad* (ed. Shehadi, 157).

Interestingly, one of the points used by the *ᶜulamā' al-ᶜaṣr* to build up their case against ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt was, as he himself points out in his *Shakwā al-Gharīb*, his "supra-rational" doctrine of Being.[159] His defense to the effect that the same ideas, such as

> our doctrine concerning the Maker (*ṣāniᶜ*) of the universe, that He is the source of existence and the point whence existence proceeds (*maṣdar al-wujūd*), that He is the whole, that He is the real existence, and that everything else is in its own essence nul and void, perishing and passing away – in short: a non-existent 'existing' only in so far as the Eternal Power constitutes its existence (*tuqawwimu wujūdahu*)

could be found all over the works of the "Proof of Islam," notably the *Iḥyā'*, the *Mishkāt* and the *Munqidh*,[160] was apparently to no avail. His argument was nevertheless a strong one, especially as regards his reference to the *Mishkāt*. In fact, the theologically shocking doctrine of the divine "face" (*wajh*) of all things is explained at length by Ghazālī himself in Section One of the *Mishkāt*; and what is more is the fact that it is found in a sub-section titled *ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqā'iq*, the only one in the entire treatise to be so distinguished. Speaking of the "peak" of the spiritual ascent of the mystics (*al-ᶜārifūn*) from the "lowland of the metaphorical," Ghazālī explains:

> "They witnessed directly (*bi 'l-mushāhada al-ᶜiyāniyya*) that there is 'nothing in existence but God'[161] and that 'Everything is perishing except His Face' (Sūra 28:88). Not that it (i.e. the "thing")[162] perishes at a certain point in time! No; it is eternally perishing. It would be inconceivable otherwise; for whatever is other than It is pure not-being (*ᶜadam maḥḍ*) if considered in its own essence. In view of the 'face' (*wajh*) to which existence flows from the True First (*al-awwal al-ḥaqq*), it is seen as existent, [but] not in its own essence, only in view of the face turned to (or "close to") its existentiator (*min al-wajh alladhī yalī mūjidahu*). What exists, therefore, is only the Face of God. Everything has two faces: one [turned] to itself, and one [turned] to its

159 *Shakwā al-Gharīb* ed. ᶜUsayrān (in *Muṣannafāt*), 9f./A.J. Arberry, *A Sufi Martyr: The Apologia of ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadhānī*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1969, 32f.

160 *ibid.*

161 Famous *dictum* summarizing ontological *tawḥīd*, attributed by ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt to Maᶜrūf al-Karkhī (*Tamhīdāt* 256). Others, like Najm-i Rāzī and Simnānī, attribute it to Junayd (cf. *Der Islam* 50, 1973, 56).

162 Read *lā annahu* with Affifi (*Mishkāt* 55, 16), not *li-annahu* as e.g. *Mishkāt B* 17, 17 has it. Affifi's reading is confirmed by Ghazālī himself in his Persian version of exactly the same point (*Makātīb-i Fārsī* ed. Iqbāl, 20, 16). Elschazlī (*Die Nische* 22) has the pronoun refer to "God" rather than to "everything" and therefore translates *hālikun*, contrary to grammar and sense, as *"derjenige, der vergänglich macht."*

> Lord. In respect of its own face, it is not-being, and in respect of the face of God, it is existent. Thus there is no existent except God *and His Face* (emphasis added)."[163]

Note that the image of the "Face of God" plays here exactly the role of the one entity to which existence emanates from the One; and it is for this reason that – contrary to ordinary Qur'an interpretation – it is clearly *not* taken to mean the divine "Essence" itself. But neither is it a separate reality such as the "Obeyed one" of the "Veils-section." The "Face of God" is surely not "originated," nor has it anything to do with the physical motion of the universe. Rather, it is nothing else than the "flow" of existence itself;[164] and nothing except the One "exists" in "reality" by virtue of its own essence. All things are, therefore, pure "not-being" by virtue of themselves – exactly as all "veils of light and darkness" are ultimately just that: "Veils."

A similar idea is conveyed a little later in the text on the basis of another famous Qur'anic verse involving the image of the "Face of God" (2:115):

> "All lights rise to the Light of lights, which is their origin and prime source, that is, God most high by Himself, without associate. All other lights are borrowed, and the real is only His light. All are His light – or rather: He is the whole, or rather: there is no Beingness (He-ness, *huwiyya*) to any other, except metaphorically speaking. There is no light except His; and the other lights are lights in view of the 'face' turned towards Him,[165] not by themselves. Thus the face of everything having a face is facing Him and turned in His direction.[166] 'Whithersoever you turn, there is the Face of God' (Sūra 2:115). No divinity, therefore, except He; for 'divinity' (*al-ilāh*) means (precisely) that to which the faces[167] are turned in worship and *ta'alluh*."[168]

Ghazālī evidently considers this idea to be the most important of the whole *Mishkāt*, and "if you do not understand it, it is because you are unaware of the *ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqā'iq* just mentioned."[169] It is also the point which connects the

163 *Mishkāt* 55, 13-56, 5. The idea of the "two faces" of everything may be seen as a generalisation of Avicenna's famous doctrine of the "two faces" of the soul. As A.-M. Goichon (*Directives* 495f.) notes, Ghazālī was of course familiar with this idea.

164 Partly based, it seems, on this Ghazālian understanding of the "Face of God," ᶜAzīz-i Nasafī distinguishes between the "essence" (*dhāt*), the "soul" (*nafs*) and the "face" (*wajh*) of God. See Fritz Meier, "Das Problem der Natur..." 220-225. Ghazālī's and ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt's "monism" could best be classified, in terms of ᶜAzīz-i Nasafī's distinction between *aṣḥāb-i nār* and *aṣḥāb-i nūr* (for which see Meier, *ibid.* 187ff.), as "fire-monism." See also below, note 171.

165 Translation according to *Mishkāt B* 21, 4-5 (but reading *yalīhi* instead of *talīhi*) Cf. *Mishkāt* 60, 9.

166 *ibid.* 60, 10: add *muwajjihūn* after *dhī wajhin*. Cf. *Mishkāt B* 21, 5.

167 Read *al-wujūhu muwalliyatun naḥwahu* with *Mishkāt B* 21, 6. Cf. *Mishkāt* 60, 11.

168 The whole passage *Mishkāt* 60, 6-11. *Mishkāt B* 21, 7 has *ta'līh* instead of *tal'alluh*. On *ta'alluh* see above, note 59.

169 *Mishkāt* 60, 14-15.

"Veils-section" most obviously with the major part of the bock; indeed the whole "*Religionswissenschaft*" of that disputed Section is hardly more than an application of this principle of *ta'alluh* to mankind at large. One is reminded of Nathan Söderblom's alledged dictum: "There is a living God, I can prove it by the history of religion!"[170] But the "history of religion" does not come to an end even with the purest of all "veils of light" according to our text. The "Veils-section" rather terminates the divine "show" by dropping the "Veil" altogether. The ultimate Reality of "Light" turns out to be the "Fire" that not only "kindles the Lamp" but also "burns" everything other than Itself out of whatever "existence" it may wish to claim of its own.[171] The final message is that the true "Attainers" are not only unable to "see" anything but the divine "Essence" in its "Beauty" (*jamāl*); they are, as the "Veils-tradition" itself suggests, literally "burnt" by the "Splendors of His Face." The "Power of the Majesty" (*sulṭān al-jalāl*) overwhelms them in their own essence, in such a way that only the "True One" (*al-wāḥid al-ḥaqq*) "remains" and "everything but His Face" is, indeed, "perishing" in their "taste" (*dhawq*).

Professor Watt, unwilling to see any connection despite an explicit cross-reference to "Section One" in the text of the "Veils-section" itself,[172] dismisses this return to the "Face of God" as "merely a quotation from the Tradition which is being interpreted" by the "presumed forger."[173] According to Watt, the "taste" of the "Attainers," in order to be Ghazālian, ought to be based on the theological virtues of "faith" (*īmān*) and "knowledge" (*ᶜilm*), which are mentioned once in Section Two,[174] rather than on "a subtle metaphysical theory, about the distinction between God and the Obeyed-One."[175] In order to back up his own "forgery"-theory, Watt also finds a contrast between the final message of the "Veils-section" and Ghazālī's idea of *tawḥīd* as outlined by the latter in book xxxv (*K. at-tawḥīd wa 'l-tawakkul*) of the *Iḥyā'*.[176] A closer examination of the relevant passage on the "four stages of

170 Discussed by Charles J. Adams, *Nathan Söderblom as an Historian of Religions*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1955, 125f.

171 As was mentioned earlier (above, n. 23), Ghazālī refrains from explaining the "fire" of the "Light-verse" directly, contrary to Avicenna. Yet in Section One of the *Mishkāt*, he speaks about the "fire" which "kindles the prophetic lamps," comparing it with the divine "Spirit" and/or the "Angel of seventy thousand faces" (*Mishkāt* 52), and in Section Two, he points out that only those who "see" (evidently the same) "fire" can be "burnt," not those who "hear" about it (*Mishkāt* 70). Now in Section Three, i.e. the "Veils-section," it becomes clear that only those "burnt" are the true "Attainers" (*Mishkāt* 92).

172 *Mishkāt* 92, 12.

173 *J.R.A.S.* 1949, 8f.

174 *Mishkāt* 78.

175 *J.R.A.S.* 1949, 11.

176 *ibid.* 15ff.

tawḥīd"[177] shows, however, that the message is rather the same. Here is, in brief, a summary:

Stages one and two are compared to the "husk" and the "shell" of the nut, while stages three and four are like the "kernel" and the "oil," respectively. The first stage refers to the "Hypocrites" (*al-mūnafiqūn*; cf. class 1.3. of the "Veils-section"), while the second stage means "ordinary (Muslim) belief" (*iᶜtiqād al-ᶜawāmm*) and includes, explicitely, the profession of *tawḥīd* by the *Mutakallimūn* (cf. 2.2. and 2.3. of the "Veils-section").[178]

> "The third stage consists in witnessing it (i.e. *tawḥīd*) by way of unveiling (*kashf*) thanks to the light of the truth (*nūr al-ḥaqq*). This is the stage of 'those brought near' (*al-muqarrabūn*). At this stage, (the *muwaḥḥid* still) sees many things, yet he sees them, despite their plurality, as emanating from (*ṣādiratan ᶜan*!) the 'Unique Prevailing' one (*al-wāḥid al-qahhār*).
>
> At the fourth stage, (however), he sees nothing in existence (*fī 'l-wujūd*) but One (*wāḥidan*). This is the witnessing of the 'Saints' (*al-ṣiddīqūn*). The Sufis call it 'annihilation in *tawḥīd*' (*al-fanā' fī 'l-tawḥīd*) because (such a *muwaḥḥid*), not seeing anything but One, does not see himself either, ... which means that he is annihilated from both the vision of himself and of (all other) creatures (*al-khalq*)."[179]

Watt's interpretation of these passages is, again, based on his assumption that the triadic scheme *īmān – ᶜilm – dhawq* is the predominant pattern in Ghazālī's later thought. One might go along with his equation of stage two with *īmān* and *ᶜilm*; but there is nothing to suggest that the "unveiling" (*kashf*) at stage three must be rendered as "direct mystical experience."[180] *Kashf* is a neutral term; and if Watt were right, it would be difficult to see why there is a fourth stage at all, and why only the experience of the "Saints," at stage four, is compared with Sufi *tawḥīd*. It seems more likely, therefore, that this "unveiling" is not yet that of mystical *dhawq*; and the "light of the truth" which allows "those brought near" to see "many things emanating from the Unique Prevailing one," or from the unique "Agent" (*fāᶜil*), as Ghazālī clarifies a little later,[181] may well be that of pure Reason (as opposed to the "analogical reasoning" of the *Mutakallimūn*). At any rate, there is hardly much of a difference between this "unveiling" and that which leads "those veiled by pure lights" of the "Veils-section" up to the "Obeyed one," whereas the difference between stages four and three in the *Iḥyā'*-passages is exactly what distinguishes the

177 *Iḥyā'* IV, 212, 2-34. Cf. *Kīmiyā* 799ff.

178 *Iḥyā'* IV, 212, 10-16. For Ghazālī's "esoterism" as reflected in his attitude towards the *Mutakallimūn*, cf. H. Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies* 349-411, especially 355 and 385-388.

179 *Iḥyā'* IV, 212, 6-10.

180 *J.R.A.S.* 1949, 16.

181 *Iḥyā'* IV, 212, 16. The "third stage" is therefore also called *tawḥīd al-fiᶜl* (*ibid.*, line 33).

190 H. Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies* 256 and 480.

"Attainers" from the rest of the "third class." The *muwaḥḥid* at stage four no longer "turns to plurality" (*al-iltifāt ilā 'l-kathra*) at all, but to the "true One" (*al-wāḥid al-ḥaqq*).[182] Consequently, Watt's argument that the idea of pure oneness suggested by the "Veils-section" forms a contrast with the unity of the *tawḥīd*-passages because that unity, according to Watt, "is quite compatible with, and normally seems to presuppose, a plurality of relations in God,"[183] must be rejected for this reason alone.

V.

Besides "philosophical doctrine," what seems to have caused offense in Ghazālī's *Mishkāt* from an early date is its marked "Iranism"; and the first to blame such "un-Islamic views" (*kalimāt-i kufr*) on a forger was, apparently, no one else than Ghazālī himself. Unlike Watt, however, Ghazālī did not suggest that the "forger" wished to sell his *own* goods by such unlawful means. He rather accused a jealous colleague for having tried to denigrate his good name by making an attempt, though unsuccsessfully, to circulate "altered" copies of the *Mishkāt* and the *Munqidh*.[184]

Whatever the truth of this rather odd story may be, the fact is that the "Veils-section," but not the rest of the *Mishkāt*, is indeed distinctly "Iranian" in its outlook (cf. especially 2.1.6.); and it does seem strange that Ghazālī himself should have wished to even imply that the "dualism" of the pre-Islamic Iranians was for all intents and purposes identical with his own doctrine of "Light." Such expression of sympathy for the *Majūs* would be less surprising if someone other than Ghazālī, but close to him, gave the *Mishkāt* its final touch; and a possible candidate for such editorial work might – just might – have been ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt.[185] On the other hand, there appears to be no good reason to suspect someone like ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt, who was quite open about his own sympathies, of a real "forgery"; and "Iranism" alone, just like "Neoplatonism," is in any event hardly a sufficiently clear criterium to determine the issue.[186]

182 *ibid.*, line 34.

183 *J.R.A.S.* 1949, 17.

184 *Makātīb-i Fārsī* ed. ᶜA. Iqbāl, 3 and 11/Krawulsky, *Briefe* 16 and 63. Cf. Josef van Ess, "Quelques remarques..." 59f.

185 For his "Iranism" cf. *The Muslim World* 68, 1978, 200. Also note that ᶜAyn al-Quḍāt quotes the "Veils-tradition" with "seventy thousand veils of light *and darkness*" (*Tamhīdāt* 102); cf. above, notes 26-28.

186 Given that "Iranism" is one of the major reasons why the second part of *Naṣīḥat ul-Mulūk* is now considered highly suspect (Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, *Moralia* 392ff.) or simply

The already mentioned manuscript Şehit Ali Paşa 1712, which is dated only four years after Ghazālī's death, undoubtedly provides a strong argument, but not an absolute guarantee of authenticity. It remains unclear to me what makes Elschazlī think that this manuscript should be considered virtually identical with the autograph.[187] As described by Affifi, this manuscript "contains many mistakes, textual corruptions and grammatical errors."[188] Moreover, none among the more than 35 other known manuscripts of the *Mishkāt* seems to be dated earlier than 739 A.H.,[189] so that there appears to be a gap of more than 200 years without manuscript evidence. Under these circumstances, the external evidence from sources such as Averroës and Ibn Ṭufayl (or his compiler) is still of prime importance. Yet Ibn Ṭufayl, according to H. Lazarus-Yafeh, quotes authentic works of Ghazālī along with spurious ones.[190]

Lazarus-Yafeh bases her own assurance that "the end of the 'Mishkāt' must be considered as authentic as the whole book" on two kinds of evidence: first, her own linguistic analysis, which "showed no important differences," and second, on the little-known fact that Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) discussed Ghazālī's *Mishkāt* at length in his Qur'an Commentary (*Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* = *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, ad Sūra 24:35). Lazarus-Yafeh does not, however, elaborate on that second point. She merely notes that "the great Qur'an commentator ... already knew that Al-Ghazzālī's 'Mishkāt' included the last section, considered as spurious by Watt."[191]

Unfortunately, however, the matter is a little more complicated than that. For one thing, even a brief glance at Rāzī's *Tafsīr* shows that, far from confirming "the last section" or "the end" of the *Mishkāt* as we know it, it in fact contradicts the standard version in both form and matter. On the other hand, a recently discovered Persian discussion of the *Mishkāt*, which is attributed to the same Rāzī, contradicts the *Tafsīr*-version in several respects. I shall first discuss the Arabic *Tafsīr*-version.

spurious (Patricia Crone, "Did al-Ghazālī write a Mirror for Princes? On the authorship of *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*" in *Jerusalem Studies of Arabic and Islam* 10, 1987, 167-191), one could be tempted to jump to a similar conclusion as far as the "Veils-section" is concerned. However, that kind of *qiyās* would be no better than any other, and the two cases are, in fact, quite different. The most important difference is that the "Iranism" of the "Veils-section" has nothing to do with the "royal ideology" of the *Naṣīḥat*.

187 *Die Nische*, introd. xiii.

188 *Mishkāt*, introd. 6.

189 Judging from the surveys given by Bouyges, "Algazeliana I," 484, and Badawī, *Mu'allafāt*, 193ff. Also note that the ms. Berlin 3207 omits the "Veils-section."

190 H. Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies* 256 and 480.

191 *ibid.* 42; cf. 280f. and 336.

To begin with, the discussion of the "Veils-tradition" does *not*, there, constitute the "last section" at all, but the second (*al-faṣl al-thānī*), and it is followed by a "third section" (*al-faṣl al-thālith*) on the "symbolism" (*tamthil*) of the "Niche." In this "third section" Rāzī discusses ten different traditional interpretations of the second part of the Qur'anic "Light-verse." Interpretation nr. 5 is explicitely identified as that of "*al-shaykh* al-Ghazālī"; and it is simply a summary of the doctrine of the five perceptive powers as we know it from Section Two of the *Mishkāt*.[192] Interpretation nr. 6 is a summary of Avicenna's version of the same. All this comes after a long "first section" (*al-faṣl al-awwal*) in which Rāzī, after a brief survey of traditional interpretations of the first part of the "Light-verse," mentions the fact that "*al-shaykh* al-Ghazālī" wrote the book known as *Mishkāt al-Anwār* as a commentary on the Qur'anic verse under discussion, and that he ventured in it the opinion (*zaᶜama*) that God is "light" in reality, and that the only "Light" is He. At this point, Rāzī also states his own purpose, which is to summarize Ghazālī's argument and even to add further points in support of it before going to decide on whether or not it is sound. In fact this is quite literally what he does, so far as Section One of the *Mishkāt* is concerned, over six big pages of his *Tafsīr*. The only additional point, identified as such by Rāzī, is that he proudly offers thirteen more proofs of the superiority of the "light of reason" over the "light of the physical eye," i.e. twenty all in all, instead of only seven like Ghazālī.[193] Note, however, that he says nothing about Ghazālī's controversial interpretation of the divine "Face" (*wajh Allāh*), although he does explain its philosophical basis, namely, the emanation (*ifāḍa*) of the "light of existence" upon the contingents which are, by themselves, pure "not-being."[194] At the end of this long section, he takes four lines to suggest that the reported Ghazālīan doctrine amounts to identifying God as "light" with God as "creator (*khāliq*) of the universe" and "creator of the perceptive powers," thus being in agreement with his own as well as with the traditional interpretations of the "Light-verse," although "God knows best."[195]

As for Rāzī's Section Two, i.e. the discussion of the "Veils-tradition," Ghazālī's name is not mentioned again. It is however clear that Rāzī is quoting the first few lines of the standard "Veils-section" almost literally, with

192 *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, Cairo, 1354-1357h., vol. XXIII, 233, 6-234, 16 (beginning of the "third section" on p. 231).

193 *ibid.* 224-230 (beginning of the "first section" on p. 223).

194 *ibid.* 229, 11-24.

195 *ibid.* 230, 24-28. Perhaps the words *kalām mustaṭāb*, followed by *wa-lākin*, should be read as *kalām ghayr mustaṭāb*? But even so, I cannot understand on what grounds Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant* 160, concludes that Rāzī in this discussion "felt strongly compelled to argue against such views."

"seventy veils of light and darkness" plus the variants of the Tradition as given in the standard text, as well as the first theoretical explanation of "veiledness" as not being applicable to God himself, and the division of those "veiled" into three "classes" (*qism*). But then he goes on identifying the three classes in a way which is completely at variance with the whole "philosophy of religion" under dispute. The "first class" according to the *Tafsīr*-version, i.e. "those veiled by sheer darkness," are those who are so pre-occupied with material attachments that they do not even ask the question whether the existence of a Necessary Being can be inferred from the fact that objects of sense-perception do exist (in other words, they correspond to class 1.2. of the standard version).[196] By contrast, those who do ask that question belong, according to the *Tafsīr*-version, to the "second class," i.e. "those veiled by a mixture of light and darkness." They are "veiled by light," Rāzī explains, in so far as they are capable of forming the concept of self-sufficiency (*taṣawwur māhiyyat al-istighnā' ᶜan al-ghayr*), which is indeed an attribute of the divine Majesty, but they are "veiled by darkness" in so far as they wrongly attribute that quality to something that does not rightly possess it, such as material bodies. "Some indeed believe that the contingent is not in need of a determining agent (*mu-'aththir*) at all; others, who do not[197] accept this, take the agent in the contingent things to be their 'natures' (*ṭabā'iᶜ*), or their movements, conjunctions and separations, or their relations to the movements of the Spheres or to the entities moving the Spheres. All these belong to this class."[198] After this, Rāzī presents the "third class," i.e. "those veiled by pure light," by stating briefly that there is no way to the knowledge of God except through recognition of both the negative and the relational Attributes, and that, since the divine Attributes are infinite, there always remains a veil no matter how far man's ascent through them may reach.[199]

The contrast to the standard version is striking, particularly with regard to the relative positions of philosophy and theology. While the standard version places the "naturalist" philosophers at the very bottom of the scale (1.1.) but those who look to the movers of the spheres almost at the top (3.1. - 3.3.), Rāzī in his *Tafsīr*-version places them altogether into the "second class" and reserves the highest or "third class," despite his philosophical language, for just the kind of theological attributism which Watt's Ghazālī ought to have placed there had he written the "Veils-section" himself! Now assuming that Rāzī did in fact summarize the "Veils-section" as he "knew" it, and that he did it as

196 *Tafsīr* vol. XXIII, 231, 4-10 (beginning of the "second section" on p. 230).
197 *ibid.* line 17: I read *lā yusallimu* instead of *yusallimu*
198 *ibid.* lines 11-19.
199 *ibid.* lines 20-26.

faithfully as he reproduced the other two Sections of the *Mishkāt*, this would of course be evidence *in favour* of Watt's "forgery"-theory, not against it. However, it seems at least equally conceivable that the one who "cheated" in effect was Rāzī – in other words, that he was trying to do nothing else than what so many others, before and after him, tried to achieve with other means: to "save" the image of Ghazālī the "orthodox" theologian. Indeed it seems rather unlikely that the great Qur'an Commentator should *not* have "known" the standard version when it was known already in 575 A.H. even in Andalusia; and there is some evidence that he did. This leads us to the above-mentioned Persian treatise, which was recently edited by Nasrollah Pourjavady on the basis of an apparently unique *majmūᶜa* dated 839 A.H., under the title *Risāla-yi Ta'wīlāt-i Mushkilāt al-Aḥādīth al-Mushkila* (*sic*).[200]

Although this very short text (three pages in print) does not explicitely refer to either Rāzī or the *Mishkāt*, there are a number of indications which leave no reasonable doubt that we have to do with another Rāzian discussion of the same Ghazālian text-book, perhaps lecture notes taken by a student. It is composed of three sections (called *aṣl*) which follow the same unusual order (1:3:2) as the three *faṣl* in the *Tafsīr*-discussion. Starting from the Tradition according to which "God created the creatures in darkness, then sprinkled (some) of His Light upon them" (which is quoted in Section One of the *Mishkāt*),[201] the first *aṣl* summarizes and justifies "the doctrine of the Proof of Islam" in essentially the same way as the *Tafsīr* does, by explaining how God can be said to be "Light" and why the intellect is more deserving of that attribute than the powers of sense-perception. Only seven proofs for the superiority of the intellect are offered this time, and they are substantially those given by Ghazālī himself in Section One.[202] The exception is proof nr. 7 of the Persian text, which is not among Ghazālī's seven, but *is* proof nr. 5 in the *Tafsīr*-discussion (i.e. the originally Avicennan argument that sense is weak-

200 Nasrollah Pourjavady, "Fakhr-i Rāzī va Mishkāt ul-Anvār-i Ghazzālī" in *Maᶜārif* vol. II, 2, 1364h.s., 213-229 (text 226-229). Pourjavady surprisingly does not refer to the *Tafsīr* at all, but argues on the basis of a comparison with other Rāzian works for the authenticity of the *Risāla*.

201 *Mishkāt* 51, 1-2. The Persian text (ed. Pourjavady 226) has *rashsha* instead of *afāḍa*, which is conform to the "canonical" version of this Tradition (cf. A.J. Wensinck et al., *Concordances* IV, 84 and VII, 19).

202 *Mishkāt* 44-47. The following table may clarify this point (N.B.: G: = standard text of the *Mishkāt*; PP = Persian text ed. Pourjavady; RT = *Tafsīr*):

GM 1 = PP 1 = RT 1	GM 5 = PP 6 = RT 4
GM 2 = PP 2 = RT 7	GM 6 = PP X = RT 12
GM 3 = PP 3 = RT 18	GM 7 = PP 5 = RT 20
GM 4 = PP 4 = RT 8	GM X = PP 7 = RT 5

ened through strong perceptions, contrary to the intellect)[203]; and proof nr. 5 of the Persian text, while conveying the same idea as Ghazālī's seventh, is given in the form in which it is found only in Rāzī's *Tafsīr*, where it is proof nr. 20 (i.e. that sense makes mistakes because it may perceive as being in movement what is at rest, and vice versa, as in the case of the man in a boat who perceived the shore as moving, or when the shadow is perceived as being at rest).[204] The second *aṣl* is on the "Veils-Tradition" (see below), and the third *aṣl* attributes to Ghazālī a philosophical interpretation of the Tradition according to which "God created Adam after His Image," which interpretation probably reflects in Rāzī's view what Ghazālī has to say about it in Sections One and Two of the *Mishkāt*, although it is not quite the same thing.[205] Since this theme is not discussed by Rāzī in Section Three of the *Tafsīr*-version, this shows in addition that our Persian text does not derive from it, but goes independently back to Rāzī or his school.

For our purpose, the most interesting *aṣl* is of course the second, i.e. the discussion of the "Veils-Tradition." As in the *Tafsīr*, there is no explicit reference to Ghazālī in this instance. After the quotation of the Tradition itself (with "seventy veils of light and darkness" but without the variants) and a brief reference to Sūra 42:50, the discussion begins with an explanation of the "difficulty" (*ishkāl*), namely, that "veiledness" applies only to man, not to God (as in the *Tafsīr* and the *Mishkāt* itself, but without the division of the "veiled" into three classes). This is followed by a brief "ascertainment" (*taḥqīq*) to the effect that any mystical "station" (*maqām*) turns into a "veil" if the mystic fails to move on before having reached "attainment" (*vuṣūl*);[206] that there is, however, no end to stages, "stations" and "veils"; and that only the "light of prophethood" (*nūr-i nubuwwat*) can comprehend them as being seventy in number. This would seem to take up the "infiniteness" of the "veils" emphasized at the end of the Section in the *Tafsīr*, but the "veils" are interpreted here as mystical "stations," not as theological Attributes, and there is no reference to the "light of prophethood" in the *Tafsīr*-version, whereas a similar reference to the "prophetic power" (*al-quwwa al-nabawiyya*) is found on the first page of the standard "Veils-section." Furthermore, there is no question of "attainment" in the *Tafsīr*-version, whereas this notion, embodied in the archetypal

203 *Tafsīr* vol. XXIII, 225 *ult.* - 226, 2. Cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt* ed. Forget, 177/A.-M. Goichon, *Directives* 438f.

204 *Tafsīr* vol. XXIII, 228, 5-10.

205 Persian text ed. Pourjavady, 228, *ult.* - 229, 5. According to this version, the argument of the *Ḥujjat ul-Islām* was that the identity of the human individual remains the same from birth, whereas his bodily existence is subject to change. Therefore, the "essence of man" (*ḥaqīqat-i ādamī*) is not identical with his body. Cf. above, n. 25.

206 Persian text 228, 2: I would read *ān* instead of *az*, and place the comma after *vuṣūl*.

figures of Abraham and Muhammad, is the crucial one at the very end of the standard text.

After this "ascertainment," the second *aṣl* ends with a statement of the "truth" (*ḥaqīqat*), which is a brief presentation of the main theme, the classification of the various categories of mankind in terms of degrees of "veiledness." In order to be fully intelligible, the Persian text is however badly in need of some corrections, notably the restitution of a missing sentence (which I have taken the liberty to conjecture and to add here in brackets):

> "The truth (*ḥaqīqat*) is that humans are of two kinds (*dū qism*): One, those whose aim is none other than to satisfy their appetitive and irascible (souls). They worship only their cupidity and passion. The second kind (*qism-i duvum*) concerns those who aim after something else. [They are also of two kinds: One, those who do not eliminate qualities belonging to the corporeal domain from their object of worship,][207] such as the idol-worshippers (*but-parastān*), the star-worshippers (*sitāra-parastān*) as well as the 'anthropomorphists' (*va mushabbiha nīz dar īn bāb dākhil and*). Two (*duvum*), those who eliminate qualities belonging to the corporeal domain from their object of worship. They are also of two kinds (*dū qism*): One, those who regard plurality and alteration in that object (of worship) as acceptable, such as the believers in the heavenly Spheres (*aflākiyān*) and the *wathaniyya* (*sic*, probably to be read as *thanawiyya*,) i.e. the 'Dualists'. Two, those who do not accept this. They (i.e. the latter) consider all lights and all ontologically possible entities (*mumkināt*) to be traces of His mercy and results of His wisdom. Then, (there are) the 'Attainers' (*pas vāṣilān*). (They are) those people who do not know their object of worship through (rational) proof (*burhān*). They, then, (*pas*) are so overwhelmed by the love of His perfection that they are annihilated from everything but Him. Whoever does not have this state of mind, is veiled from the highest elevation possible to mankind; and the stages of those veiled are in accordance with their respective distance from that rank."[208]

The above classification is obviously quite different in form from the tripartite division of "the veiled" as given in both the standard version of the *Mishkāt* and Rāzī's *Tafsīr*-version. It proceeds from the general to the particular, following the logic of subsequent elimination of alternatives, and may therefore be represented schematically in the following way:

Man's worship is:

I.	A. either self-centered (worshipping one's own "passions")	or B. not-self-centered.

207 The Persian to be substituted would probably run as follows: *va īshān ham bar dū qism and: qismī ānki tanzīh-i maᶜbūd-i khvud nakunad az ᶜalāyiq-i jismānī* (text 228, 7 between *bāshad* and *chunānki*).

208 Persian text 228, 5-13.

If B., then the object of worship is:

II.	A. either belonging to the physical world (including man-made bodies, celestial bodies and the "anthropomorphist" god of ordinary monotheism, i.e. *tashbīh*)	or B.	not belonging to the physical world (i.e. *tanzīh*).

If B., then the object of worship is:

III.	A. either susceptible of plurality and alteration (in the metaphysical realm, probably meaning philosophical doctrines of celestial Intellects, and "Dualism")	or B.	not susceptible of plurality and alteration.

If B., then the (implied) object of worship is:

IV.	A. either conceived as the source of existence of all things (which are "traces (*āthār*) of His Mercy and results of His Wisdom (*ḥikmat*)")	or B.	not conceived at all, but "attained" through Love.

Despite this systematic form, which sets the Persian version apart, it is nevertheless quite clear that its view of the various "classes" of mankind is much closer in spirit to the standard version of the "Veils-section" than it is to Rāzī's own *Tafsīr*-version. It actually has only one point in common with the latter: those worshipping their own "passions," not materialist thinkers, constitute the most "vulgar" of all "classes." But the theological attributism of the *Tafsīr* is ignored, and the "*Religionswissenschaft*" of the standard version, which is ignored in the *Tafsīr*, is unmistakeably there. Again like the standard version, the Persian version clearly puts anthropomorphist monotheism into the same general category as ordinary "idol-worship" and, moreover, places beliefs in the heavenly Spheres,. plus philosophical and mystical *tawḥīd*, above such "anthropomorphism."

Perhaps, then, we should indeed conclude that Rāzī knew the same "Veils-section" as we do, but felt it appropriate to modify its contents depending on his audience. Yet even if we grant him such flexibility, there remains the possibility that the Persian version was, in fact, written by a disciple rather than by Rāzī himself. We know that one among these, probably Abū 'l-Ḥasan Masᶜūd

b. Maḥmūd al-Shīrāzī (d. 655/1257-58), became a follower of the great Sufi Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā after a famous encounter of the two masters.[209] If this Shīrāzī was the real author of the Persian version, then its obvious Sufi overtones would surely be less surprising.

Be that as it may, it remains in any case to be explained why in both the *Tafsīr* and the Persian version the discussion of the "Veils-tradition" constitutes the second and not the last section among the three. It seems difficult to accept that Rāzī should have wished to break up the discussion of the Qur'anic "Light-verse" in the middle, especially in a *Tafsīr*-work, unless is own source already proceeded in the same way; and the Persian version confirms independently that the *Mishkāt*-text used in Rāzī's school had a "Veils-section" in the middle, not at the end. But this means that we will have to assume in any case that there existed (at least) two different textual traditions or recensions of Ghazālī's *Mishkāt* during the sixth century A.H. One is obviously the standard version, which is represented for that period of time only by the manuscript dated 509 A.H. plus Ibn Ṭufayl – if indeed Ibn Ṭufayl himself wrote the introduction to his *Ḥayy b. Yaqẓān* (cf. above). This source, at any rate, is the only external evidence to confirm that "those veiled by pure lights" and the "Attainers" are discussed by Ghazālī "at the end of the *Mishkāt*" (*fī ākhir kitāb al-mishkāt*).[210] The other recension would be the one to be supposed at the origin of the two Rāzian versions, which differ very considerably among themselves but have in common that the discussion of the "Veils-tradition" follows immediately after Section One. I can see no internal reason why this order should *not* have been the one chosen by Ghazālī himself in the original text.[211] But only a careful examination of the *whole* manuscript tradition, plus external evidence additional to the one discussed in this article, might eventually cast light on these divergences and show to what extent, if any, they do have a bearing on the authenticity question.

209 See Fritz Meier, *Die Fawā'iḥ al-ǧamāl wa-fawātiḥ al-ǧalāl des Naǧm ad-dīn al-Kubrā*, Wiesbaden, Steiner, 1957, German introd. 45f. See also N. Pourjavady, "Rābiṭa-yi Fakhr-i Rāzī ba Mashāyikh-i Ṣūfiyya" in *Maᶜārif* vol. III, 1, 1365h.s., 29-80, and my review of this article in *Abstracta Iranica* 10, 1987, 198f.

210 See above, note 140.

211 The reference in Section One (*Mishkāt* 45, 2) to an explanation of the "veil of reason" to follow in "Section Three," which Watt (*J.R.A.S.* 1949, 12) finds "distinctly mystifying," would then presumably refer to the passage on the "stage beyond reason" in what we now know as "Section Two" (i.e. *Mishkāt* 77f.).