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AL-GHAZZALI: A CRITICAL SYNTHESIS OF HIS PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION COMPILED FROM HIS WRITINGS AND AS REPRESENTED IN WORKS BY SHAFIQUE ALI KHAN AND ABDU AL-GHANEY ABUD

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Mohammed Said Abdu Ali

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1995

Dissertation Committee: Approved by
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Advisor
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To my parents, my wife, and my children
for their love and patience and
the joy they bring to my life
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Introduction

The Middle Eastern educator and writer, Al-Ghazzali, has been described as one of the most influential scholars in Islamic history. Writes MacDonald of the eleventh-century thinker:

[Al-Ghazzali] was the greatest, certainly the most sympathetic figure in the history of Islam, and the only teacher after generations ever put by a Muslim on a level with the four great Imams. The equal of Augustine in philosophical and theological importance....His knowledge and grasp of the problems and objectives of philosophy were true and more vital than in any other Muslim up to his time--perhaps after it, too. Islam has not fully understood him any more than Christendom fully understood Augustine, but until long after him the horizon of Muslims was wider and the air clearer for his work (Anderson, 1990, pp. 78-79).

Al-Ghazzali embodied the ideals of the Prophet Muhammad in the same way St. Francis did those of Jesus (Zepp, 1992, p. 166). According to a saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him), God will send someone to revive the faith of the Islamic community every hundred years. In
the history of Islam, Al-Ghazzali is considered the reformer
(mujaddid) of the eleventh century (or the fifth century A.H.
on the Muslim timetable). The majority of Muslims agree that
he is the eminent Muslim scholar of his period. And because
he is recognized as the religious authority of his era, he is
known as the Proof of Islam (hujjat al-Islam) (Sherif, 1975,
p.1). (A Glossary of Terms in the APPENDIX contains
additional explanations for Muslim terminology)

Al-Ghazzali's influence on the
development of Islam is both significant
and multi-faceted. He helped to
reintroduce the element of fear into the
service of God. He also created a
framework within which Sufism, an Islamic
sect that emphasizes the religion's
mystical element, attained an assured
position within orthodox Islam (Stern,
1990, p.9).

M'Bow (1986) reported that Al-Ghazzali's importance is
not confined to the Muslim world for Al-Ghazzali was the
first Arab author to be translated into Latin in Medieval
Europe. Also, he was introduced to the West through his book
Magsid al-Falasifah (The Aims of the Philosophers) (p. 4).

Those who study Islamic history and concentrate
particularly on the religio-intellectual life of the eleventh
century will find that era parallels today's religio-
intellectual life in the Muslim world -- both eras have seen
Islam splintered into a number of competing sects. In the
eleventh century of Al-Ghazzali, the major religio-
intellectual trends were those of theologians, philosophers,
Bateniates, and mystics. Each of these groups claimed to follow the path of the Prophet.

The theologians were Muslim scholars who attempted to defend the Islamic faith and revelation by using formal philosophical arguments that were typically borrowed from the Greeks. (Revelation refers to the Word of God as it was given to the Prophet Muhammad.) The philosophers were scholars who relied on reason as the final authority for truth; they did not accept the revelation. The Bateniates, also called Ismailiyah, were authoritative instructors who found their truths in the doctrine of the so-called infallible Imams. These Imams were considered to be divinely appointed leaders in a direct line of succession from Muhammad. The mystics claimed that they put into actual practice the commands of God; they followed the path of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions (Muslehuiddin, 1974, p. 93).

Al-Ghazzali once had believed that the truth must exist in one of his era’s four schools of thought -- or there could be no truth. Thus, he started to study and practice each of them with the purpose of sorting out the falsity from the goodness of their thoughts and practices (Al-Ghazzali, 1982c, p. 27). He ultimately concluded that the mystics were the only sect that followed the path of the Quran (Koran) and the Tradition. (The Tradition, also known in its entirety as Sunna, refers to a collection of sayings from the Prophet Muhammad.) (Al-Ghazzali, 1982c, pp. 60).
In today's critical era of Islamic history, there are fundamentalists, liberals, mystics, and communists. This division of Islam into sometimes feuding sects threatens the stability of the Muslim world. Without cohesiveness, Islam may lose its spiritual meaning.

According to author Shafique Ali Khan, the Muslim's salvation in the contemporary world can be restored by implanting the educational thoughts of Al-Ghazzali, not only in Khan's Pakistan, but throughout the Muslim world (1976, p.5). Through such education, the Muslim will be properly returned to the path of the Prophet Muhammad and the Holy Quran. Khan (1976) writes:

(Al-Ghazali's) philosophy of education is not merely an academic thesis but it is charged with urgent problems of ultimate practical significance. A man educated on the lines given by Ghazali is a man who does not only enjoy unity of outlook and emotion with the community of the Believers but also acquires a uniqueness of vision and intensity of feelings as a result of an harmonious development of his personality. He is a man of emancipated, objective and disciplined mind, his soul is pure, pious and transparent. He is God-inspired, God-intoxicated and co-worker with God and as such his presence is a blessing for all (p. 4).

A return to the ideas of Al-Ghazzali means a return to Sufism. Al-Ghazzali called Sufism the best of all possible paths. Even non-Sufis, like theologian Fakhr al-Din al-Razi,
have praise for Sufism. He states that the followers of Sufism, who are occupied with cathartic meditation and purification of the soul, are the best exemplars of Islam (Nasr, 1967, p. 126).

The Sufi orders have preserved a spiritual hierarchy in which the rank of a person is dependent not upon social standing but on spiritual qualifications. Sufi masters have become the most venerated of men, respected by kings as well as paupers (Nasr, 1967, p. 109).

Sufism also provides a link between law and spirituality. The importance of Sufism as the inner dimension of the Shariah (the sources of Islam — namely, the Quran and the Sunna) and its role in purifying Muslim ethics has been noted by legal authorities. As Imam Malik said, "He who learns jurisprudence and neglects Sufism becomes a reprobate; he who learns Sufism and ignores jurisprudence becomes an apostate; and he who combines both attains the realization of the Truth" (Nasr, 1967, p. 125). Anderson (199) expressed the relation between Sufism and Islamic orthodoxy in the following quote:

The supreme significance of Al-Ghazzali is that he not only combined Sufism and Islam orthodoxy in his own life and teaching, but that he thereby succeeded — as can be seen in retrospect — in bringing Sufism firmly within the bounds of orthodox Islam. He had himself experienced the ecstasy, as well as the asceticism, on which Sufis laid such store.

He insisted, however, that the rapture and the revelation (Mukashafat) should not be described by the term hulul
(fusion of being) that those of the wahdat al-shuhad mystic persuasion used nor by the terms ittihad (identification) or wusul (union) that those of the dominant mystic persuasion, wahdat al-wujud, employed. All of these terms, Al-Ghazzali insisted, went beyond the proper confines of orthodox Islamic theology in describing the experience of nearness to God as unity with God (p. 80).

For Al-Ghazzali, humans are the creation of God but are not actually a part of God -- and to say otherwise would be considered a sacrilege by Al-Ghazzali. This belief makes Al-Ghazzali different from the other mystics of his era who believed that since the entire universe is a part of God, humans also are a part of God. Mysticism for Al-Ghazzali is the method of returning believers to the path of the Prophet Mohammad. Therefore, Nasr (1981) presented the following quote to express the significance of Sufism in Al-Ghazzali's works and his attempts to install its spirit in Muslim education:

Al-Ghazzali was both a Sufi and a theologian; and he criticized rationalistic philosophy in both capacities. On the one hand, he sought to curtail the power of reason and make it subservient to revelation. On the other hand, he tried to revive the ethics of Islamic society by breathing into it the spirit of Sufism and by making Sufism official in the religious schools and universities. He was eminently successful in doing both (Nasr, 1981, p. 71).
Statement of Purpose

The religio-intellectual trends of contemporary Islam resemble those of Al-Ghazzali's era, and suggest that the philosophy of Al-Ghazzali may remain timely and relevant. In our time, as was the case in Al-Ghazzali's, many diverse groups claim to follow the path of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him). Al-Ghazzali’s study and search for truth may guide contemporary Muslims in their search for truth.

The need that this study fills is that it pulls together those portions of Al-Ghazzali's work which comprise his philosophy of education and presents them in such a manner as to be accessible and relevant to the Muslim world today. This study can provide a basis for incorporating Al-Ghazzali's work into the educational curricula of the modern Islamic world.

Shafique Ali Khan's 1976 work Ghazali's Philosophy of Education and Abdu Al-Ghaney Abud’s 1982 work Al-Ghazzali's Educational Thought As It Appears From His Letter 'O My Son' provide a starting point for examining the portions of Al-Ghazzali's work which comprise his philosophy of education. A major aim of this study is to critically analyze how adequately these two texts provide a comprehensive and reliable account of Al-Ghazzali’s philosophy of education.

This study is significant in that it uniquely builds upon two texts which have attempted to pull together
representations of Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education. In doing so, this work has extracted from Al-Ghazzali's collected work those portions that make up his philosophy of education and combined these with the Khan and Abud texts in order to generate a faithful and balanced account of Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education. Furthermore, this work presents Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education in such a light as to be applicable in today's Islamic world and relevant to the educational curricula as well as the education of educators in modern Muslim society.

Methodology

This dissertation is an analytical study of Khan's _Ghazali's Philosophy of Education_ (1976) and Abud's _Al-Ghazzali's Educational Thought As It Appears from His Letter 'O My Son'_ (1982) with the purpose of determining the fidelity of these two interpretations of Al-Ghazzali's works. This study also will determine whether significant aspects of Al-Ghazzali's works which are relevant for his philosophy of education were omitted or misrepresented by Khan and Abud.

This study employs five major steps. They are: (1) summarization of Khan's and Abud's works; (2) identification of the philosophical ideas which are the foundation for Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education; (3) selection of the categories of concepts to be used in analyzing Khan's and Abud's philosophy of education; (4) analysis of Khan's and
Abud's works; and (5) synthesis of Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education. (It is coincidental that this dissertation has five chapters. The five major steps are not to be confused with the five chapters.) A brief description of each step follows:

(1) **Summarization of Khan's and Abud's works**

In this step, this researcher summarizes the two works which have attempted to provide useful commentaries and representative texts on Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education. These two works are Khan's *Ghazali's Philosophy of Education* (1976) and Abud's *Al-Ghazzali's Educational Thought As It Appears From His Letter 'O My Son'* (1982). This material will be presented in Chapter III.

(2) **Identification of the philosophical ideas which are the foundation for Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education:**

To identify the foundation of Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education, this researcher read the writings of the scholar in their original Arabic as well as in English translations.

The idea that dominates Al-Ghazzali's educational thought is spirituality. For Al-Ghazzali, the purpose of education was to worship and be close to God. But humans are not to ignore earthly affairs. And for Al-Ghazzali, education also was to teach humans to build the Earth. Thus, Al-
Ghazzali divided education into the spiritual (the study of the Quran and the Tradition) and the mundane (the study of subjects like medicine and mathematics).

These two types of education or knowledge reflect another foundation of Al-Ghazzali's philosophy. Like many of the early Greek philosophers, Al-Ghazzali believed in the duality of human nature. In other words, humans are composed of temporal bodies and eternal souls.

For Al-Ghazzali, education can bring to the seeker of truth eternal happiness (spiritual knowledge) or temporary happiness (mundane knowledge). Al-Ghazzali believed eternal happiness was the only true happiness because the origin of humans is divine. Through education, humans can strive to know this divine nature of their being.

Another important idea in Al-Ghazzali's philosophy is the concept of light. As he divides human nature into the spiritual and physical, Al-Ghazzali divides light into the same categories. Physical light is that which comes to the eye. The eye receives its illumination from the sun. Spiritual light is that which comes to the intellect. The intellect receives its illumination from the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet. This material is covered in Chapter II.
(3) Selection of the categories of concepts to be used in analyzing Khan's and Abud's philosophy of education

From a thorough reading of Al-Ghazzali’s works relating to his philosophy of education, three categories emerge which are employed to facilitate this critical analysis of Khan's and Abud's texts. These three categories are: (a) education; (b) nature of students and teachers; and (c) knowledge.

(a) Education. As mentioned earlier, Al-Ghazzali divided education into the spiritual and the mundane. Spiritual education leads Muslims closer to God, while mundane education allows Muslims to practice the sciences for social purposes. Mundane education is a means to achieving the spiritual and is not an end in itself.

(b) Nature of students and teachers. In Al-Ghazzali's works, education is a life-long process. For each step in this process, Al-Ghazzali has developed an instructional plan. Thus, the teacher is able to provide the student with suitable knowledge that corresponds with the student's ability.

(c) Knowledge. For Al-Ghazzali, there is knowledge of the self, knowledge of the mundane, knowledge of the divine, knowledge of the hereafter, and knowledge of the mystical. He considered knowledge of the hereafter to be the most important of the types of knowledge, and knowledge of the mundane to generally be the least important. These
categories are employed and discussed in detail in Chapter IV.

(4) **Analysis of Khan's and Abud's works**

This researcher has, in Chapter IV, evaluated critically the works of Khan and Abud by testing the concepts which these authors claim to be extracted from Al-Ghazzali's original works. The works of Khan and Abud were tested for: (a) reliability; (b) relevancy; (c) sufficiency; and (d) interpretation.

The following passage is from the book, *Social Foundations of Education* by Stanley, Smith, Benne, and Anderson (1956). It is quoted here because, in the view of this researcher (or student, in the terminology of Stanley et alai), the passage provides an excellent perspective on methodology in the above four areas:

*Are the Facts Reliable?*

How reliable is the source of information? ...Let (the students) ask themselves these questions:

A. Are the statements of facts, which are offered as evidence, reports (a) of observations, (b) of inferences from what has been observed, or (c) "hearsay"?

B. Are the statements of facts reliable?
   a. Who made them?
   b. Is he a competent witness?
   c. What was his purpose in reporting the facts? To make news? To eulogize? To discredit? To convey accurate information?
   d. Under what conditions were the observations made? Casual observations? Carefully controlled experiments? Emotional stress?
   e. To what extent did the reporter depend upon memory?
Are the Facts Relevant?

Mathematics teaches us to discard all irrelevant data, ... but the students must learn that this skill is equally applicable to all life's problems... Let the students learn to ask themselves these questions:

1. Are all the facts presented as evidence relevant to the question?

2. How might irrelevant facts be used to serve a writer's or speaker's purpose? To divert interest or attention from other facts? To stir feeling? To shape attitudes and dispositions toward the issue? To change perspective?

Are the Facts Sufficient?

... It has been said that the artist is known by what he omits. Likewise one's position upon a controversial issue is often known by what one omits... (T)he students must learn to be cautious about forming a judgment without knowing the whole truth.

Are the Facts Properly Interpreted?

Noting interpretation placed upon facts is very important... This should lead (students) to see the importance of asking themselves these questions:

Do the facts necessarily mean what the author has interpreted them to mean? Can they be given any other interpretation? (pp. 555 - 557)

Responding to the above passage, this researcher employed the following philosophical methods of criticism (that were discussed by Lucas in What is Philosophy of Education) in analyzing Khan's and Abud's works:

(a) The descriptive-analytical task of this researcher was to articulate the criteria which, in fact, guided Khan and Abud in their choices of philosophical methods. This task included relating the criteria to philosophic positions and examining them in terms of consistency, meaning,
expectation, and method.

This task was concerned with the fidelity of Khan and Abud in their interpretations of the work of Al-Ghazzali. It posed the following questions: Is the work of Al-Ghazzali adequately interpreted by Khan and Abud? Is it correctly interpreted? Are there major misinterpretations which need to be pointed out in detail?

(b) The critical-evaluative task of this researcher was in the framing of alternative criteria. These alternative criteria were derived from the field of philosophy of education. This task included locating criteria for assessing these alternatives for purposes of determining the more adequate and/or reasonable criteria.

For this task, this researcher determined whether the significant aspects of Al-Ghazzali’s work which are relevant to the philosophy of education were omitted by Khan and/or Abud.

(c) The speculative task of this researcher included the forging or framing of new alternatives for use in philosophy of education and/or the discipline of the philosophy of education.

This task was concerned with determining what remained to be done -- that is, what was needed, given the works of Khan and Abud, to provide a synthesis of Al-Ghazzali’s thoughts with respect to philosophy of education (Lucas 1969,
(5) Synthesis of Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education

Once the criticism of Khan's and Abud's works was complete, this researcher began the process of synthesizing a reliable representation of Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education. This process involved rectifying what was not adequate in the works of Khan and Abud and combining this with any necessary additions from Al-Ghazzali's original work in order to generate a more coherent and more definitive accounting of Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education. The synthesis of Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education is presented in Chapter V.

Structure of the Inquiry

This study was structured in the following manner:

**Chapter I** begins with an introduction to the study. Then the major purpose of the study is stated, followed by the methodology employed to carry out the study and the structure of the study. The chapter concludes with definitions of key terms used in the study.

**Chapter II** looks at Al-Ghazzali's life and works. It includes a summary of the philosophical work of Al-Ghazzali with specific attention being paid to those portions of his work relevant to his philosophy of education.

**Chapter III** introduces Khan and Abud. It then
summarizes their writings that have attempted to provide a useful commentary and a representative text on Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education. These writings are Khan's *Ghazali's Philosophy of Education* and Abud's *Al-Ghazzali's Educational Thought as It Appears From His Letter 'O My Son'.

Chapter IV provides a critical evaluation of the adequacy of Khan and Abud's work as it pertains to Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education. Misrepresentations, misinterpretations, and omissions in Khan's and Abud's writings are addressed. The chapter concludes with a presentation of what is needed in order to synthesize an authoritative summary of Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education.

Chapter V is devoted to summarizing the study, presenting conclusions and commentary, and making suggestions for future studies. It also includes additions and corrections to Al-Ghazzali's work in philosophy of education needed for the modern Islamic world.

Chapter One has introduced Al-Ghazzali and the need for a clearer understanding of his philosophy of education. In order to accomplish the purpose of this study then, the researcher has begun, in Chapter Two, with an examination of Al-Ghazzali's life and times and how they formed the philosophical foundation from which his philosophy of education emerged.
CHAPTER II

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF AL-GHAZZALI'S

EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT

This chapter begins with a brief recounting of Al-Ghazzali's life and includes background into events and conditions of his era. Following this, summaries of Al-Ghazzali's major philosophical works are presented. The remainder of this chapter focuses on the philosophical foundation for Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education, including his theory of knowledge, his concept of human beings and ethics, and the metaphysical aspects of his doctrine of light.

Life and Times of Al-Ghazzali

Born in 1058 A.D. (450 A.H.) at Faberan, a small town of Tus in the Persian province of Khorasan, Al-Ghazzali's full name was Muhammad Ben Muhammad Ben Ahmad al-Tusi (Smith, 1944, p. 9). He adopted the name Al-Ghazzali after a village near Tus called Ghazala (Al-Ghazzali, 1963, p. 181).

Al-Ghazzali's family was poor. His father was a spinner and seller of wool. The father was a religious man though he lacked the basic tools of learning. Before his death, the
father committed his sons to a Sufi friend and provided all his accumulated wealth for the children's education. He wanted his sons to be educated — a dream he was unable to fulfill for himself (Smith, 1944, p. 10).

Al-Ghazzali began his journey of learning with elementary education in Tus where he memorized the Quran and studied Islamic sciences, reading, writing, the basics of Arabic grammar, and mathematics. At the age of fifteen, he left Tus for Jurjan where, for two years, he studied the jurisprudence of noted scholar Shafi under the Imam Abu Nasr Al-Ismaili (Smith, 1944, p. 13). He then returned to Tus and spent the next three years studying and contemplating the notes he had taken under the tutelage of Al-Ismaili. He then departed Tus again — this time accompanied by a group of fellow students — in order to study under the great theologian Abu Al-Maali Al-Juwani. Known as Imam al-Haramayn (the Imam of the Two Holy Places of Makkah and Medina), Al-Juwani was a professor at Nizamyya College in Nishapur. Al-Juwani taught Al-Ghazzali theology, logic, dialectic, and the natural sciences (Smith, 1944, p. 15). Al-Ghazzali stayed at Nishapur for eight years — until Al-Juwani's death (Watt, 1963, p. 23).

From Nishapur, Al-Ghazzali traveled to the court of Nizam Al-Mulk who was the vizier of sultan Malikshah. The vizier's efforts were devoted to the establishment of Nizamiyah University in Baghdad (Mohmad, 1988, p. 146). At
age thirty-two, Al-Ghazzali was appointed to a professorial position there, and he taught religious sciences and law. While at the university, he wrote canon law (Fiqh) and a book against the Bateniates and other sects he deemed heretical (Ali, 1944, pp. vi-vii). During this period, Al-Ghazzali defended the main tenets of the Islamic religious school of Asharism against the falasifa (Islamic philosophers). Author Oliver Leaman notes that Al-Ghazzali's arguments were philosophical in nature and displayed great respect for logic and clear analytical thought (Leaman, 1985, p. 15).

Al-Ghazzali was unwilling to ignore or criticize the rationalistic part of Greek philosophy out of hand (Al-Ghazzali, 1978, p. 125). Instead, the professor immersed himself in philosophy so that he could criticize the philosophers through their own method of argumentation. Writes Al-Ghazzali:

I therefore, set out in all earnestness to acquire a knowledge of philosophy from books, by private study without the help of an instructor. I made progress towards this aim during my hours of free time after teaching in the religious sciences and writing....By my solitary reading during the hours thus snatched, God brought me in less than two years to a complete understanding of the sciences of philosophers. Thereafter, I continued to reflect assiduously for nearly a year on what I had assimilated (Al-Ghazzali, 1978, pp. 124-125).

The fruit of Al-Ghazzali's study of philosophy was the authorship of three books: The Aim of Philosophy in 1094;
Contradiction of the Philosophers (Tahatut Al-Falasifa) in 1095; and Standard of Knowledge (Mivar Al-Ilm) in 1095. (Al-Ghazzali, 1978, p. 125).

After four years of teaching, Al-Ghazzali came down with a mysterious disease. Doctors were unable to find a physical cause for the professor's hampered speech and digestive problems. Al-Ghazzali determined that a spiritual crisis was at the root of his malady, and he adopted the lifestyle of a wandering ascetic. He moved from city to city in a continuous search for truth. Al-Ghazzali describes the need for his quest as follows:

To thirst after a comprehension of things as they really are was my habit and custom from a very early age. It was instinctive with me, a part of my God-given nature, a matter of temperament and not of my choice or contriving (Al-Ghazzali, 1982c, p. 21).

For ten years, Al-Ghazzali led a contemplative life as a Sufi. According to Leaman (1985):

(Al-Ghazzali) clearly felt in this period that the life he had previously led was lacking in spiritual depth, and he was therefore obliged to seek a closer mystical relationship with God than can be achieved in a social setting (p. 15).

Having regained his health, Al-Ghazzali returned to teaching. He also set himself to the task of examining the scholars of his era in order to determine where certainty could be found. Explains Al-Ghazzali:
The diversity in beliefs and religions and the variety of doctrines in the sects which divide men are like a vast ocean strewn with shipwrecks... Each sect believes itself to be exclusively in possession of truth and salvation (Sharif, 1962, pp. 85-86).

Al-Ghazzali remained an adherent of Sufism until his death in Tus at the age of fifty-five. His brother Ahmad gave this account of Al-Ghazzali's last hours on Earth:

On Monday at dawn my brother performed the ablution and prayed. Then he said, 'Bring me my grave clothes' and he took them and kissed them and laid them on his eyes and said, 'I hear and obey to go in to the King.' And he stretched out his feet and went to meet Him, and was taken to the good will of God Most High (Macdonald, 1899, p. 107).

Al-Ghazzali was buried at Tabran, the citadel of Tus.

**Al-Ghazzali's Place in the History of Islam**

Islam arose in Arabia in the seventh century A.D., growing more rapidly than all other religions. A monotheistic religion, Islam is historically related to Judaism and Christianity. In Arabic, Islam means surrender, pointing to the religion's fundamental belief that a Muslim (a believer in Islam) surrenders to the will of Allah who is the Creator, Sustainer and Restorer of the world. The will of Allah, or God, is known to humans through the Quran as it was revealed to Muhammad, the Prophet and Messenger.

Throughout the years, the beliefs and practices of Islam
have been supplemented and modified in response to changes in time and place. From inception, Islam has developed its own educational process and arts and sciences (fields of academic study). The ninth century gave rise to the golden age of Islamic intellectualism. By the end of this century, Islamic thought had been influenced by Greek philosophy, as well as intellectual writings from other Mediterranean countries, India, Persia (Nasr, 1981, p. 55).

Islam as a religion has accepted people from all other religions, allowing them to survive under Islam's flexible law. At the same time, Islam integrated into its own arts and sciences ideas from other heritages — provided those ideas were in agreement with the basic tenets of Islam that are found in the Quran and the Tradition (a collection of the sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad).

In Islam, truth emerges from the Quran and the Tradition. Islam accepts external ideas which agree with these two sources and rejects ideas which contradict them. It is the Muslim's duty to investigate the outside ideas to determine their accord with the Quran and the Tradition.

Foreign ideas — such as those of Plato and Aristotle and theologians who had expressed various views about God, man, and the nature of things — entered into the Islamic states. Open-minded Islamic authorities and caliphs allowed scholars and theologians from other religions to debate Muslim theologians. The ninth-century debates between Muslims
and non-Muslims were held in Muslim cities such as Basra, Damascus, Kufa, and Baghdad.

These conferences revealed that Muslims were unable to defend their creed against the non-Muslims who used the weapons of logic and philosophy to support their arguments. Thus, Muslim scholars and theologians saw an urgent need to apply logic and philosophy in order to strengthen their arguments. But philosophy and logic were not available for study in the Arabic language. So, Muslim scholars and theologians started to translate foreign philosophical texts into their own native language (Nasr, 1981, p. 55).

To this end, the caliph of Al-Mamun carried the responsibility of translating Greek works and other foreign thoughts into Arabic. And he established the House of Wisdom (Bayt-Al-Hikmah) in Baghdad. The golden age of translation ran approximately from 767 to 912. During this period, most Greek philosophy and science texts were translated into Arabic (Nasr, 1981, p. 58).

As a result of these translations, a systematic theology school called Mutazilah emerged, established by Wasil Ibn Ata. This Islamic sect reached its peak during the caliphate of Al-Mamun, and its influence extended until the eleventh century. This school was attracted to Greek metaphysics; however, the Mutazilah believed that the Greek philosophy lacked the spiritual means to interpret the Divinity. Consequently, this school attempted to know Allah only
through the intellect rather than through faith. This resulted in Allah becoming a philosophical abstraction rather than a reality. In other words, the Mutazilah school wanted to interpret the revelation with the intellect; however, this can only be known by faith; therefore, the sources of faith, the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet Mohammad, enable believers come to know the true reality of God as He explains Himself. Thus, the Mutazilahs were misguided because one cannot know the true reality of God by intellect (reason) for it leads to abstractions away from the reality of the Quran and sayings of the Prophet. This school wanted to replace faith with logic (Nasr, 1981, p. 60).

Leaman writes that the Mutazilites sought to define a rational basis for Islam.

They argued for the unity and justice of God, for the responsibility of human beings for their actions and the necessity to try to justify the actions of God. Perhaps their most significant doctrine...was the importance of reason in guiding Muslims to a knowledge of God, and the belief in the agreement of reason with revelation. It is hardly surprising that the very same caliph al-Mamun who encouraged the introduction of Greek philosophy and science was enthusiastic about the Mutazilite approach (Leaman, 1985, p. 11).

A new theological school called Asharism formed as a challenge to the Mutazilites. Interpreting the concept of Divinity more closely to revelation, Asharism had supplanted Mutazilah doctrine by the end of the ninth century (Nasr,
According to Leaman, the Asharites adopted a more traditional interpretation of Islam that stressed the gap between the power and knowledge of God and that of His creatures. In addition, the Asharites did not require reason to justify revelation (Leaman, 1985, p. 11).

However, it would be a mistake to deny the Asharites' debt to philosophy. Writes Leaman (1985):

The dispute between the two theological schools (Mutazilah and Asharism) frequently employed philosophical arguments, yet in its subject matter and methods it was clearly a theological dispute, characterized by dialectical rather than demonstrative forms of reasoning.

One principle that is shared by both Asharites and Mutazilites is that reason is usefully employed in understanding religion. A principle that both would reject is that religion may be usefully analysed by the use of concepts derived from Greek, especially Aristotelian, philosophy. The use of such philosophical concepts were not regarded as helpful in an understanding of religion. But in rejecting philosophy, the theologians were not rejecting reason; on the contrary, they were enthusiastic concerning the value of reason when employed in a suitably domesticated context (p. 12).

One defender of the main tenets of Asharism -- at least for a time -- was Professor Al-Ghazzali. But the principles of this religious school apparently did not meet the spiritual needs of Al-Ghazzali. It was during his years as a defender of Asharism that the professor fell ill. Despite his success at the university, Al-Ghazzali was overcome with a
doubt that darkened all aspects of his life and made him unable to continue teaching.

Al-Ghazzali's spiritual crisis is best described in his own words from his book Deliverance from Error. First, he describes his dissatisfaction with intellectual pursuits:

I have ever bravely embarked on (the) open sea, throwing aside all craven caution; I have poked into every dark recess; I have made an assault on every problem; I have plunged into every abyss; I have scrutinized the creed of every sect; I have tried to lay bare the inmost doctrines of every community. All this have I done that I might distinguish between true and false, between sound tradition and heretical innovation.

I read the books of sound theologians and myself wrote some books on the subject. But it was a science, I found, which though attaining its own aim, did not attain mine. Its aim was merely to preserve the creed of orthodoxy and to defend it against the deviations of heretics.

After I had done with theology, I started on philosophy. I was convinced that a man cannot grasp what is defective in any of the sciences unless he has so complete a grasp of the science in question that he equals its most learned exponents in the appreciation of its fundamental principles, and even goes beyond and surpasses them, probing into some of the tangles and profundities which the very professors of science have neglected.

I continued to reflect assiduously for nearly a year on what I had assimilated, going over it in my mind again and again and probing its tangled depths, until I comprehended surely and certainly how far it was deceitful and confusing (Kritzeck, 1966, pp. 160-165).

Unhappy with theology and philosophy, Al-Ghazzali then
studied religion, namely Sufism. He writes:

When I had finished with these sciences, I next turned with set purpose to the method of mysticism (or Sufism). I knew that the complete mystic 'way' includes both intellectual belief and practical activity; the latter consists in getting rid of the obstacles in the self and in stripping off its base characteristics and vicious morals, so that the heart may attain to freedom from what is not God and to constant recollection of Him (Kritzeck, 1966, p. 165).

But Al-Ghazzali realized he had not stripped off his own "base characteristics":

I examined my motives in my work of teaching and realized that it was not a pure desire for the things of God, but that the impulse moving me was the desire for an influential position and public recognition. I saw for certain that I was on the brink of a crumbling bank of sand and in imminent danger of hell-fire unless I set about to mend my ways.

One day I would form the resolution to quit Baghdad and get rid of these adverse circumstances; the next day I would abandon my resolution...

For nearly six months..., I was continuously tossed about between the attractions of worldly desires and the impulses towards eternal life...(Then) the matter ceased to be one of choice and became one of compulsion. God caused my tongue to dry up so that I was prevented from lecturing. One particular day I would make an effort to lecture in order to gratify the heart of my followers, but my tongue would not utter a single word nor could I accomplish anything at all (Kritzeck, 1966, pp. 166-167).

Leaving sustenance for his children and then
distributing the remainder of his wealth, Al-Ghazzali left his professorship and Baghdad. For ten years, he lived in solitude and contemplation:

I learnt with certainty that it is, above all, the mystics who walk on the road of God; their life is the best life; their method is the soundest method; their character the purest character; indeed, were the intellect of the intellectuals, and the learning of the learned, and the scholarship of the scholars who are versed in the profundities of revealed truth, brought together in an attempt to improve the life and character of the mystics, they would find no way of doing so; for to the mystics all movement and all rest, whether external or internal, bring illumination from the light of the lamp of prophetic revelation; and behind the light of prophetic revelation there is no other light on the face of the earth from which illumination may be received (Kritzeck, 1966, p. 167).

In 1106, Al-Ghazzali quit his solitary existence and went to the city of Nishapur, determined to disseminate not the knowledge "by which worldly success is attained" but the knowledge "whereby worldly success is given up and its low position in the scale of real worth is recognized." He writes:

It is my earnest longing that I make myself and others better... I ask (God) first of all to reform me and then to reform through me, to guide me and then to guide through me (Kritzeck, 1966, pp. 168-169).

According to Lazarus (1975), in his resolve to reform and guide, Al-Ghazzali wrote Deliverance from Error. In the
book, he not only described his own spiritual crisis but also evaluated the various Islamic "seekers of truth." Al-Ghazzali divided the seekers into four groups: the Scholastic Theologians, the Bateniates, the Philosophers, and the Mystics. Al-Ghazzali had studied the tenets of each of these schools both theoretically and practically. He believed such study was a prerequisite to analysis, writing that to fight a system which one has not yet understood and grasped to its very limits is like shooting in the dark (p. 204).

(1) **Scholastic Theologians**

Among these Theologians (*Mutakalmin*) were two subgroups, the Mutazilites and the Asharites. Al-Ghazzali had once been a leading apologist for the latter group.

The following, based on information from *The Muslim Creed* by Wensinck (1965), provides a brief summary of the two subgroups:

(a) **Mutazilites**
**Founder:** Wasil Ibn Ata (d.749)
**Characteristics:**
-- emphasizes reason as the final arbiter in issues of faith.
-- stresses human freedom and responsibility.
-- criticizes predestination as inconsistent with human freedom.
-- employs an allegorical method in interpreting the Quran.
-- views the Quran as eternal, but believes the words conveying the message were created for seventh-century Islam.
-- dominated Persia during Abbasid Empire (mid-ninth century).
(b) Asharites  
Founder: Ali Ibn Ismail al-Ashari (d. 935)  
Characteristics:  
--- emphasizes revelation as a final authority.  
--- retains orthodox Islam theology.  
--- defends predestination as a central belief in Islam.  
--- views the Quran as eternal, provided by God from the beginning.  
--- dominates today in the Islamic West (pp. 148-149).

Al-Ghazzali wrote that the Theologians achieved their goal -- which was to defend Islamic doctrine against the deviations of heretics. However, for Al-Ghazzali, the theologians did not help individuals become closer to God (Hymn & Walsh, 1967, p. 266). Al-Ghazzali attributed this failure to the intellectual methods used by the Theologians to explain the revelation. For Al-Ghazzali, revelation was spiritual in nature and could be known only through faith.

Theologians adhered to the truths of Islamic doctrine but used philosophical methods to probe Islamic issues. Their arguments could not give Al-Ghazzali the certainty which he was seeking (Quasem, 1975, p. 18).

Al-Ghazzali defined true theologians as those who defend orthodoxy by explaining spiritual knowledge from its own perspective. But the Scholastic Theologians explained spiritual knowledge intellectually. Using the intellect to defend the spiritual is, for Al-Ghazzali, a contradiction in terms. Therefore, according to Al-Ghazzali, the Scholastic Theologians have a system built on false knowledge (Hymn &
Al-Ghazzali justified his belief in spiritual knowledge via the following foundation: the souls of humans are spiritual by nature and do not belong to the material world, while the intellectual aspect of human beings by nature is limited to the senses. The senses lack the ability to grasp spiritual knowledge. For this reason, God sent Prophets and with them His Holy Books. In the Holy Books are explanations of the spiritual part of human nature which people cannot know merely through sense perception.

For Al-Ghazzali, knowledge of the reality of God comes through His Holy Books. Al-Ghazzali concluded that the spiritual part of human nature cannot be learned by pursuing theology (Kalam). Instead, the spiritual part of human nature which is embodied in the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet (Muhammad) should be introduced to the child at an early age. The child can first memorize the verses and sayings by heart. After memorization, the child comes to understand them. Finally, the child comes to believe in them. Instructionally, the child's belief will be mixed with popular beliefs. Therefore, he will need to rectify his belief. The way to sort out Islamic doctrine from popular beliefs does not come through disputation and theology or Kalam but by "the recitation of the Quran, by reading of the commentaries and the traditions, as well as by performing of the ceremonial duties and by intercourse with the pious" (Wensinck, 1965, p.
Once the words of God are implanted in the child's soul, the spiritual part of his nature becomes pure. The purity of the child's soul leads him to Divine Guidance, and Islamic doctrine will reveal itself to him by the divine light which is a gift of God given to those He sees as worthy. A person who gains the divine light has attained the highest faith -- a faith that is similar to the faith of the angels who are admitted to the divine presence (Wensinck, 1965, p. 97).

To the contrary, the faith of the Theologians is mixed with an artificial disputation which makes the faith unstable for inherent in disputation is at least a degree of doubt (Wensinck, 1965, p. 96).

Al-Ghazzali also thought that the faith of the Theologians was the faith of the *Taqlid* -- those who blindly imitate others -- but with the slight addition of defensive proofs. However, imitation does not enable the follower to examine matters of concern or to know their reliability (Lazarus, 1975, p. 382).

Al-Ghazzali, through his penetration of theology (*Kalam*) and through his understanding of Islamic doctrine, came to the conclusion that theology should be forbidden except in the following cases:

-- When a Muslim has doubt in his belief, and neither preaching nor the traditional sayings help him to remove his doubt. There, then, is some possibility that the science of
theology (Kalam) could provide a solution for his doubt.

--- If there is a wise scholar who has a firm faith in his belief and intends to study the science of theology (Kalam) as a means to remove doubts from the skeptics or to defend the Islamic faith from dangerous innovations. (Lazarus, 1975, p. 383).

In spite of the blame-worthiness of this science of theology, Al-Ghazzali believed that the need for it was urgent in order to refute the arguments of the innovators. Thus, he recommended Muslims to study and teach it. Furthermore, he considered its study (Fard Kifayah) a collective duty, particularly when non-Islamic ideas meld with the faith.

Al-Ghazzali concluded that there should be a faithful scholar in every town who specialized in theology and who took on the responsibility of healing the skeptics from the disease of religious doubt (Al-Ghazzali, 1963, p. 33).

(2) Philosophers

Influenced by Aristotle and the Neo-Platonists, the Philosophers were those who believed themselves to be the holders of reason and logic. Unlike the Theologians who used philosophical arguments to defend, for the most part, fairly acceptable religious positions, the Philosophers often were condemned as outright non-believers or heretics. In The Concept of Belief in Islamic Theology, Izutsu (1965) writes
that the Philosophers:

assert that the Prophet Muhammad did not
dare to disclose the real Truth -- which
coincides exactly with the teachings of
Aristotle -- and intentionally concealed
it for fear that the common people with
their poor intelligence might
misunderstand and distort it (p. 29).

Izutsu (1965) explains other tenets of the Philosophers
that he believes make them heretical. They refuse to admit
the resurrection of the body, the chasetisement of the sinful
in Hell, and the blissful reward of the faithful in Paradise.
They believe that God does not and cannot know the
Particulars and the concrete details on what happens on Earth
because He knows only the Universals. They believe that the
world is eternal and that God's precedence is not in time but
in rank and order (p. 29).

Al-Ghazzali also found fault with the tenets of the
Philosophers. One of his main scholarly endeavors was to
prove philosophically the insufficiency of the philosophical
method as a guide to the truth (Lazarus-Yafeh, 1961, p. 175).
Al-Ghazzali was the first Muslim scholar to truly master
logical, philosophical argumentation. He used this mastery
to direct a general attack against the entire Islamic
philosophical system which had been established on a Greek
foundation (de Boer, 1967, p. 154). In other words, Al-
Ghazzali employed logic and reason to beat the Philosophers
at their own game.

Al-Ghazzali believed that the intellectual part of human
nature functions only through the senses whose concern is with the material world and whose natural ability cannot transcend to unseen entities. It is only the spiritual part of human nature which can know the unseen. In addition, the eternal value of man exists in his spiritual part. This value can be gained only through the practice of the study of Islam and not through the practice of the study of philosophy. For Al-Ghazzali, philosophy relies on the intellect and material world and, thus, cannot know the spiritual.

To argue the intellectual and the spiritual part of the human soul, Al-Ghazzali borrowed the Stoic idea that knowledge must be "disclosed in such a fashion that no doubt remains along with it, and that no possibility of error or illusion accompanies it" (Groarke, 1984, p. 289).

The Stoics had used the skeptical argument to arrive at the conclusion that two kinds of knowledge existed -- intellectual knowledge which comes from sense data and knowledge not based on the senses. The former includes impressions transmitted by one or more senses organs. The latter comes to the mind as spiritual knowledge which is received by reason (Groarke, 1984, p. 289).

The Stoics doubted the reliability of intellectual knowledge by starting to doubt sense perception. They found that the data of the senses cannot lead to true knowledge because the senses can be deceiving. The Stoics then doubted common notions including such mathematical principles as two
and two make four and a straight line is the shortest distance between two points. They reached the conclusion that no reliable truth can be gained by intellectual knowledge (Groarke, 1984, p. 287).

The Stoics had held that the deity may disturb natural events and may send humans a pure knowledge which is not the outcome of the senses — for He is able to send such knowledge in dreams, revelation, and the like (Groarke, 287).

Al-Ghazzali was attracted by the Stoics skeptical argument, and he followed their methods by applying their argument step by step. First, he began to investigate the reliability of the sense perception, then he investigated the necessary truths of "general experience."

In the Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazzali (1982c), Al-Ghazzali reported that in his search for truth, he found that all people can trust what they sense and experience. He stressed the necessity of both of these as the sources of knowledge — for there is no one who can tackle a problem except in what is self-evident. Al-Ghazzali probed the certainty of each type of knowledge by submitting them to investigation (p. 22).

Before pursuing the investigation, it is appropriate to unveil the ambiguity about the meaning of "the infallible knowledge." Al-Ghazzali believed that there are two kinds of knowledge — one kind is received, and the other is acquired. Received knowledge is infallible knowledge and includes the
Quran and the sayings of the Prophet (Muhammad). Acquired knowledge comes from the senses.

In *The Duties of Brotherhood in Islam*, Al-Ghazzali recorded that truths cannot be gained through the intellectual methods, that they are received rather than acquired "(Received knowledge) came as 'a flash (of) light' sent by God into the spirit of man." (Al-Ghazzali, 1980, p. 17).

Al-Ghazzali had used the skeptical argument as a means to doubt intellectual knowledge for he believed that if the believer had doubt he is obliged to remove that doubt, moreover doubt leads one to investigate things for knowing its reality. Since the reliable knowledge is the received knowledge which manifested in his belief in God, the Prophecy, and the day of judgment. Therefore, he never doubted its truthfulness.

Al-Ghazzali did doubt the veracity of sense perception, using the following justifications: No eye can perceive the movement of the shadow on a sundial, but still the shadow moves. To the human eye on Earth, a faraway star looks so small that it seems a gold coin could cover the star -- yet a coin can cover the moon no more than it can cover Earth (Sheikh, 1982, p. 86).

Al-Ghazzali used the example of "the eye" to illustrate the problem of sense perception. He believed that the sense of sight was the most reliable sense, yet it still did not
give him the truth of what was seen and deceived him. He concluded that if the sense of sight deceived him, then:

> How can I be sure then that reason will not deceive me too. For I have believed in the sense of sight until the reason pursued me about its falsity. Would it be possible that there is something above reason that may show me the falsity of reason (Sheikh, 1982, p. 87).

Al-Ghazzali turned to investigate the truth of general experience, which he considered the only source of certainty. He introduced as a necessary truth of general experience the assertion that ten is more than three or that one thing is not "both existent and non-existent" (Al-Ghazzali, 1982c, p. 23). But he doubted the certainty of these assertions when he asked: "How can I be sure that they do not fool me as the sense-perception did?"

Al-Ghazzali's former optimism concerning the certainty of sense perception and general experience changed into frustration. Yet, it was not a total surprise for him because the dream also deceived him for in dreams a person sees things which seem real to him, but when he wakes it means nothing—merely a dream. According to Al-Ghazzali:

> While asleep you assume your dreams to be indisputably true, once awake, you recognize them for what they are, i.e., baseless chimeras. Who can assure you then of the reliability of the notions which when awake derive from the senses and the reason? In relation to your present state they may appear real but is it not possible that you should enter upon another state which will bear the same relation to your present state as
the latter does to your condition when asleep? With awakening into that new state you might recognize that the conclusions of reason are themselves no more than mere chimeras of their own brand (Sheikh, 1982, p. 87).

(3) Bateniates

Al-Ghazzali neither accepted the ideas of those who relied on reason, nor of those who completely excluded reason. He writes, "...(A)nd who advocates a blind adherence to tradition alone, to complete exclusion of reason, is a fool, and he who is content with reason itself without the light of Quran and Sunna, has been deluded" (Lazarus, 1975, p. 196).

Among those who excluded reason were, according to Al-Ghazzali, the Bateniates whom he called Ismailiya or the party of authoritative instruction. The Bateniates strictly followed the instructions of the imam whom they believed to be the infallible holders of absolute truth. Although human, imams were considered by the tenets of their sect to be without sin. Moreover, the Bateniates denied reason as a source of the truth. (Al-Ghazzali, 1982c, p. 13)

After Al-Ghazzali concluded that philosophy did not lead to absolute truth, he had turned to the Bateniates, hoping to find his answers in their instruction. Instead, he found they depended entirely on the imam as the authority of the truth and had abandoned reason. Al-Ghazzali's skill in logic
enabled him to expose many of what he deemed to be grave mistakes by the Bateniates in the realm of Islamic doctrine. Also, he found it is impossible, from a logical point of view, to consult the so-called infallible imam (if he existed) in all matters of daily life. (Quasem, 1975, p. 19).

Al-Ghazzali concluded that Muslims were not in need of the instruction of the infallible imam, since they already had the sayings of the Prophet (Muhammad) for guidance or instruction. Al-Ghazzali writes:

The correct procedure is in fact to acknowledge the need for an instructor and the necessity of his being infallible. But our infallible instructor is Mohammad (peace be upon him). They may say, 'He is dead'; but we reply, 'your instructor is hidden (ghaib).' They may say, 'Our instructor instructed the preachers and spread them widely through the land, and if they differ or are puzzled by a difficulty, he expects them to return to him'; but we reply, 'Our instructor instructed the preachers and spread them widely through the land and perfected the instruction, according to the word of God, Most High, (which states: Today I Have perfected your religion for you); when the instruction has been made perfect, the death of the instructor does no harm, any more than does his being hidden.' (Muslehuddin, 1974, pp. 101-102).

The Bateniates appeared to deny the obvious meaning of the Quran, while Al-Ghazzali believed that the Quran is the Word of God, introduced to human beings by the Prophet (Mohammad) in the form of simple stories with language that suits human abilities. This enables each Muslim to form an
understanding of the content of the Quran according to his intellectual ability -- and not according to an imam.

Muslims can explain the Quran each from his own perspective according to his intellectual ability -- although, for Al-Ghazzali, there is only one real explanation for the Quran (Ta‘will). For Al-Ghazzali, the Quran is made up of the outward (the Quran's actual language) and the inward (the interpretation of the Quran). He criticized the Bateniates for ignoring the outward meaning of the Quran (Zahir) and trying to apprehend only an inward meaning (Batini). He found that the outward and the inward complement each other, and in explaining the meaning of the Quran, one has to take into account the necessity of both of these aspects (Lazarus, 1975, p. 508).

Al-Ghazzali called the Bateniates heretics because they denied the obvious and literal meaning of the Quran. They interpreted the Quran esoterically. According to Al-Ghazzali, their interpretation was worthless and unlawful for it caused great harm to Islamic doctrine. Al-Ghazzali believed that the meaning of the Quran should not go beyond the literal without the authority of the Prophet (Mohammad). Otherwise, the Word of God would lose its faith (Lazarus, 1975, p. 508).

Al-Ghazzali believed that the only being Muslims should imitate in words and actions is the Prophet (Mohammad). He writes:
Know that the key of happiness is following Sunna and imitating God's apostle in all his goings out and comings in, in his movements and times of quiescence, even in the matter of his eating, his deportment, his sleep and his speech. I do not say that what concerning his manners in matters of religious observation alone, because there is no reason to neglect the traditions (Sunna) which have come down concerning them; nay, that has to do with all the matters of used and wont (al-adat), for in that way unrestricted following arises. God says: 'What the apostle has brought you receive, and what has forbidden you refrain from.' So you must sit while putting on trousers and stand while putting on a turban; you must begin with the right foot when putting on your sandals, and eat with your right hand; when cutting your nails you must begin with the forefinger of the right hand and finish with the thumb; in the foot you must begin with the little toe of the right foot and finish with the little toe of the left. It is the same in all your movements and times of quiescence (Robson, 1955, pp. 326-327).

(4) Mystics (Sufis)

Al-Ghazzali studied the writings of the Mystics and concluded that the truth of their doctrine did not come through an intellectual awareness of their works but through a real engagement in their spiritual activities. Therefore, he practiced their spiritual activities and lived their lifestyle. He believed that the Mystics were among the seekers of the truth whose doctrine can be understood only by immediate experience (dhawi); by ecstasy (a direct, emotional contemplation of God wherein the mystic loses consciousness
of the self and remains conscious only of the Divine -- "when God pours out the cup of His love, for His saints, and so admits them to the Garden of Fellowship with Himself; or by moral change" (Smith, 1944, p. 204).

Al-Ghazzali's study of Sufism led him to the conclusion that the Sufis were men, not of words (ashab al-aqual), but of real experience (arbab al-ahwl). He found the way to understand the Sufis came not by reading their works but by living as they lived and by performing their spiritual activities (Quasem, 1978, p. 20).

Al-Ghazzali concluded that the Sufis were the only sect among the seekers of the truth who held the absolute truth. He justified his claim with the following reasons:
(a) Sufis shifted Islamic doctrine into spiritual activities. They did not hold any belief unless they could apply its elements in worshipping or spiritual acts.
(b) Their intellectual and spiritual knowledge purified the soul, illuminated the self, and raised a believer near to God.
(c) Their knowledge reformed the soul of the follower, morally, spiritually, and intellectually.
(d) Their hearts continuously remembered God and asked Him forgiveness.

Finally, Al-Ghazzali meant by Sufism an exact following of the directives of the Quran and the path of the Prophet (Muhammad) and his Companions -- not in words but in actions.
Sufism was for him the method of returning Muslims to the period of the Prophet. However, his definition of Sufism included neither infusion (hulul) nor identification (ittehad) with God -- such associations would have made Sufism heretical as man and God cannot be seen as one entity. (When discussing mystic ecstasy, for example, Al-Ghazzali tried to guard against the notion that man and God become one.) And Al-Ghazzali condemned those Sufis who extolled the Doctrine of Unity of Being in which believers declare themselves to be as God. According to Al-Ghazzali, Sufism should make believers more conscious of their duties to God as humble slaves and lowly creatures (Muslhuddin, 1974, p. 112).

Al-Ghazzali on Cause and Effect

Al-Ghazzali presented the relationship between cause and effect to prove that the truth exists, but its existence depends on God's will not in connecting things with each other. Thus, Al-Ghazzali did not deny in any sense that a relationship existed between cause and effect. Our experiences of this fact provide us with an awareness of what is going on in the world. However, Al-Ghazzali denied the necessary connection between cause and effect. For him, the natural relation between cause and effect exists only because God organizes the events of the world. This organization depends on His will, not on the necessity of the causal
To support his argument, Al-Ghazzali used the example of a piece of cotton brought into a contact with a fire. For Al-Ghazzali, logic does not necessitate that the fire will cause the cotton to burn for in a logical sense there are possibilities and not absolute truths. He writes, "We regard it as possible that the contact occurs without the burning taking place, and also that the cotton might be changed into ashes without any contract with fire" (Leaman, 1985, p. 76).

The Philosophers disagreed with Al-Ghazzali's possibilities. They believed that the relation between the cotton and the fire was a causal nexus and not a voluntary relation — the fire is the agent of burning, and the cotton possesses the natural ability to be burned. Al-Ghazzali replied that the Philosophers' reasoning comes from experience and observation. However, such experiences do not demonstrate that there is a cause-effect sequence — but merely that there is a sequence of events in time. For Al-Ghazzali, there are no natural causes in themselves; God is the only cause, and He could, at any time, change the sequence of events that humans falsely regard as causal necessity (Leaman, 1985, p. 77).

It is clear that Al-Ghazzali's aim was to leave an option for miracles, for the possibility that God's will can cause the dead to be survived, the moon to spilt, Ibrahim to emerge from the fire, and the staff to become a serpent
Hundreds of years later, the British philosopher David Hume proposed a theory on cause and effect remarkably similar to the theory of Al-Ghazzali. In the eighteenth century, Hume wrote of a moving billiard ball striking another ball which then begins to move. According to Hume, one ball does not cause the other to move. Rather, what is thought of as cause and effect is nothing but inward anticipation based on past experiences. Like Al-Ghazzali, Hume was interested in the religious issues of his day. But unlike Al-Ghazzali, Hume did not find an answer to skepticism in God. Unable to prove the existence of God, Hume could only conclude that there are successive perceptions that constitute the mind (McGreal, 1992, pp. 266-270).

**Al-Ghazzali on the Nature of Man**

Both humans and animals possess external and internal senses. The qualities of knowledge and will, however, distinguish humans from animals. Children lack these qualities of knowledge and will, having instead passion and anger. The quality of will develops gradually and appears at puberty. The development of the quality of knowledge differs among people according to their potential latent power (Ali, 1944, pp. 3-4).

Al-Ghazzali believed that God made creatures for a purpose. Each creature has to strive to perform its purpose
on Earth. The horse was created to be fast in battle, to be beautiful and strong. Under any condition, if the horse does not achieve these purposes, it will sink to the level of the donkey. The same applies to man. The purpose of his creation is to worship God. Therefore, God bestows on him the ability to know the reality of things. If he knows how to use this ability, he will know that the only truth is God. Consequently, he will worship Him. In return, God will raise him to the rank of the angels (Ali, 1944, p.36).

According to Al-Ghazzali, not every worshiper will be raised to the higher rank. Some worshippers lack the heart. Some are blinded by disbelief in their inner eye. The common man (Ammiy), for example, lacks either the ability or the will power necessary to raise himself to the rank of angels. Al-Ghazzali meant by common man either one who is lacking in formal education or the scholar who is attracted to the luxury of this life and who neglects the hereafter by not doing his spiritual duty (Lazarus, 1975, p. 355-356).

Al-Ghazzali on Happiness

Happiness in Al-Ghazzali's works is not the possession of wealth, health, and knowledge, nor indulgence in the luxuries of this temporary life. Happiness is the eternal happiness which can be attained through true knowledge (ilm) which requires standard (miyar) as distinguished from mundane knowledge (craft). Also required for happiness is the ability
to acquire, through self-examination and spiritual activity, true faith — and not to be but a passive imitator of others.

Al-Ghazzali based the concept of eternal happiness on the following ideas: Man consists of body and soul. The former is made from earth and will go back to it. That means the body is created as a means to enable a human to survive in this temporary life. So, when a human's primary concerns are with the body, he is seeking the temporary happiness which ends by his death. On the other hand, when the soul is the main concern, then a person is looking for eternal happiness. This person reaches a state of near perfection on Earth — and this qualifies him for the ultimate state of perfection in Heaven. Al-Ghazzali had this to say this about real happiness: "(It) is not worldly happiness...happiness can be realized only in Heaven, where man will find himself in the presence of God, seen seated on His Throne" (Khadduri, 1984, p. 121).

Al-Ghazzali on Intellect

Al-Ghazzali reported that from birth until seven years of age, children have no developed intellect. The child has only sensation and emotion. After the age of seven, the signs of intellect start to appear, allowing the child to distinguish between right and wrong. This ability gradually evolves, and around the age of maturity (puberty or bulugh), a person becomes morally responsible for his behavior. Around
the age of forty, the person reaches his intellectual prime.

Al-Ghazzali called the intellect the sixth sense. Its main functions are to know reality outside the senses and to predict the consequence of one's actions (Quasem, 1975, p. 50). Al-Ghazzali found that there are four uses of the intellect or reason (āqīl). First is the feature which enables humans to abstract one thing from another. This is the quality that distinguishes humans from animals. Second is the feature that enables children to store in the memory necessary truths, such as mathematical principles. Third, the intellect distinguishes between knowledge which comes from experience and knowledge which is spiritual by nature. Finally, the intellect recognizes the efficiency of logical sequences in carrying out one's practical ends. From Al-Ghazzali's definition of intellect, it would seem apparent that at least some ethical rules would fall into the realm of intellectual or rational knowledge (Leaman, 1985, p. 129).

**Al-Ghazzali and the Concept of Light**

When Al-Ghazzali was pursuing his quest to discover absolute truth, he investigated all schools which existed during his period. He concluded that the mystics were the only school of thought whose knowledge was reliable. The mystics were devoting their efforts to purifying their souls and to seeing things not by the physical eye, but by the light which God casts on the soul. When the soul is purified,
the light of God comes to the heart and enlarges that heart, bringing peace to the believer. According to the Quran, "Whenever God wills to guide a man, He enlarges his breast for Islam (i.e., surrender to God). When asked about this enlarging (sharh), the Prophet Muhammad said, "It is a light which God most high casts into the heart." When asked how a believer can gain the light, the Prophet said, "Withdrawal from the mansion of deception and return to the mansion of eternity" (Al-Ghazzali, 1982c, pp. 25-26).

Al-Ghazzali in his book, The Niche for Lights believed that people have used the word "light" in the context of language to denote three different meanings. The first meaning is of light as a physical phenomenon such as what is seen by the eye. Hence, the phenomenon or appearance is something which necessarily emerges from something other than itself. This physical light is the light which borrows its illumination from other sources such as the sun, the moon, or the flame of a fire. This light known to most people as physical light.

However, most people have attributed the word "light" to the senses, namely, the sense of sight. Al-Ghazzali divided physical eyesight into three categories: the eye sees the invisibility of darkness; the eye sees objects that are, in and of themselves, visible but that do not aid in illuminating other objects -- for example, the stars; and the eye sees those objects that are not only visible in and of
themselves but that also illuminate other objects — for example, the sun, the moon, and the fire when it blazes up. The last category is what most people think of as "light" for it is a physical phenomenon that appears to their eyes. Its appearance depends on the existence of two things — light and the seeing eye. Conventionally, most people have applied the word of light to this so-called "the eye." Thus, human beings shifted the word of light to the light of the eye, and they say of the poor-sighted one that "the light of his eye is weak" and of the blurry-eye one that "the light of his vision is impaired." They say of the blind one that "his eye is quenched." They voluntarily have given the name of light to the eye.

However, the so-called physical light of "the eye" is marked by seven defects — the eye cannot see itself, nor the very near or the very far away; it cannot penetrate the veil; it sees only the exterior not the interior; it is unable to perceive what is beyond its vision; it cannot hear sound nor smell or taste things; it can see finite not infinite things; and, finally, it sees a large object as a small one such as seeing the distant moon as the size of a coin.

Regardless of all these defects with the eye, most people have given the word of light to the eye. Suppose, however, that there is in existence another eye — one which is free from all of the defects of the physical eye. Is not it more properly deserving the word of light than the
According to Al-Ghazzali, this eye, which can transcend the defects of the physical eye, is an eye known by few people. This eye is the mind and is called "Intelligence, Spirit, Human Soul." This eye deserves the word of light. The characteristics of the spiritual eye are: it perceives itself as well as others; the near and the far are indifferent to it; it is able to penetrate the veil; it can see both the interior and exterior of things; it knows the part and the whole; it apprehends its own knowledge; and its knowledge comes from a knowledge of infinity.

The intelligence eye is the light which comes from the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet to a believer's mind and is more perfect than the physical eye because it goes beyond the defects which blind the physical eye. Al-Ghazzali noted that two faculties -- fantasy and imagination -- judge things according to the relationship among their elements and this judgment is not reliable; because it is the product of the senses through which cognitive processes come to particular judgments from the combining of certain elements. Thus, when intelligence judges things according to the light of the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet Mohammad a person sees things as they really are.

The faculties of fantasy and imagination are related to the physical side of existence, to the importance one places on the physical side of his nature. But when the luxuries of
earthly life cease to attract, the individual begins to see and judge through intelligence. It is, however, very difficult to separate completely these faculties from intelligence in this life. The perfect separation will come after death. Al-Ghazzali, reciting from the Holy Quran says:

'O my Lord! How I marvel at what I see!' A Divine voice will cry: 'Thou wast in heedlessness of this. Now we have removed from thee thy covering; and piercing is thy sight this day (Al-Ghazzali, 1976, p. 32).

The actual process of seeing depends on the existence of two necessary things, the seeing eye and the light. Hence, in the physical eye there is the eye as well as the physical light such as the sun, the moon, the fire when it flames or the lamp. Just as the physical eye needs physical light in order to see, so the spiritual or intelligence eye must have spiritual light in order to see. Al-Ghazzali believed that the Quran is the light of the intelligence eye, supporting his claim by the following verse of the Quran: "There hath come a sure proof from your Lord, and we have caused a clear Light to descend" (Al-Ghazzali, 1991a, pp. 45-53).

It is the Quran that is the light, that is the distinguisher (furgan) between truth and falsehood. When the soul of the intelligent is enlightened by the Quran, noted Al-Ghazzali, that person will know that the luxury of earthly life does not lead to eternal happiness. He will throw away the love of this life and will live according to the Prophet
(Mohammad), thereby finding eternal happiness. According to the Quran, "Those who do good works would enter Paradise and the evil-doers would be cast into Hell" (Al-Ghazzali, 1976, p. 117).

Summary

In many ways, Al-Ghazzali was a man of his times. Like other Islamic thinkers of the eleventh century, he was deeply influenced by the Greek philosophers, including the Neo-Platonists. Smith (1944) writes that Al-Ghazzali was particularly influenced by the Neo-Platonist Plotinus. This influence, Smith states, can be seen throughout the writings of Al-Ghazzali and in his idea of God as the One Reality, the Source of all being, the All-Perfect, transcending all known attributes and existences (p. 105).

Smith quotes the following lines from Al-Ghazzali:

He is the One, the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward, but He is neither body nor substance nor accident, nor like anything that exists...He does not exist in anything nor does anything exist in Him, for He is too exalted to be contained in any place and too holy to be limited by time, for He was before time and place were created. He alone is self-existent in His Essence...He cannot be apprehended by the understanding, none can apprehend the One but the One (1944, p. 105).

Al-Ghazzali was influenced by many other writers as well -- including Plato. Because of certain references in his writings, it is believed that Al-Ghazzali had at least read
Plato’s *Republic*, *Phaedo*, and *Timaeus* in Arabic translations (Smith, 1944, p. 112).

But Al-Ghazzali also was a man of Islam who transcended his times. He called for a return to the sources of Islam that can be found, not in philosophy, but in the Holy Quran and the Hadith. He called for a return to the purity of the religion -- and its inherent ethics -- that could be found during the era of the Prophet and his Companions. For Al-Ghazzali, education was one way to return Islam to the path of the Prophet -- and to better society.

That Al-Ghazzali was an influential scholar is evident by the fact that his writings are still widely read and discussed. In the twentieth century, two Islamic scholars, one from Pakistan and one from Egypt, have authored books on Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education. Those two books are discussed in the following chapter.
CHAPTER III
SUMMARIES OF KHAN'S AND ABUD'S WORKS

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the only two works to date that have attempted to present comprehensive studies of the educational philosophy of Al-Ghazzali. These two works provide a starting point for this researcher's synthesis of the portions of Al-Ghazzali's writings which comprise his philosophy of education. Before addressing the major problem of this study, namely a critical analysis of the adequacy of these two texts in providing a comprehensive and authoritative account of Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education, a summary of Khan's and Abud's works is necessary. To put the works in their proper context, a brief account of the authors and their purposes for undertaking their works is provided.

Khan

A scholar and professor, Shafique Ali Khan is a citizen of Pakistan. In addition to his book on Al-Ghazzali, Khan is the author of Two Nation Theory -- As a Concept, Strategy and Ideology; Mr. Jinnah as a Political Thinker; and The Age of
Rage (An Academic Study of the Universal Youth Unrest with Particular Reference to Pakistan. Because he is from Pakistan and writes in Urdu, Khan has a limited reputation in the Middle East.

Khan attempted to extract Al-Ghazzali’s educational ideas from Al-Ghazzali's various works in the 1976 text Ghazali's Philosophy of Education (which has been translated into English). Khan states that his sole purpose for doing so was to make the broad features of Al-Ghazzali intelligible to the youth of Pakistan (Khan, 1976, p.5). He continues by saying:

I am sure Ghazali’s educational ideas will appeal to every sensible Believer. If our individuals aim at perfection, if our society desires development and if our destinies are meant for redemption, then Ghazali’s educational ideas can play a great role (Khan, 1976, p. 5).

Abud

Abdu Al-Ghaney Abud is an Egyptian professor of comparative education and educational administration in the College of Education at Eyn Shams University. He is the author of more than ten scholarly works, most of them on the subject of philosophy of education. Abud is well known and well respected in intellectual circles of the Middle East. It would not be unusual for university students in the Arabic
In the introduction to *Al-Ghazzali's Philosophy of Education as It Appears from His Letter 'O My Son'* , Abud explains the purpose, the difficulty, and the methodology of his book. [Note: This text is available only in the original Arabic, thus the researcher has translated it into English].

The purpose of Abud's work was to present the educational thought contained in Al-Ghazzali's *O My Son* in such a form as to allow the Egyptian education system to benefit from its richness. In order to research Al-Ghazzali's educational thought, Abud spent three years reading more than 400 of Al-Ghazzali's books. Abud then came to the conclusion that the philosophy of Al-Ghazzali is inextricably tied to the philosophy of Islam -- both are based on the Quran and the Tradition. Abud then went on to surmise that because other Muslim writers on education also based their ideas on the Quran and the Tradition, that their writings and the writings of Al-Ghazzali must be similar. Thus, Abud often interprets Al-Ghazzali via other Islamic scholars (who were not interpreting Al-Ghazzali but were promulgating their own theories).

Abud's method might be summarized in the following way. He read numerous books by Al-Ghazzali to get a basic understanding of the scholar and his writings. Abud then directed his attention to explaining the educational ideas of Al-Ghazzali as evidenced in the 60-page *O My Son*. Abud's
work divided *O My Son* into a number of concepts. To elucidate these concepts, Abud did not go directly to Al-Ghazzali but turned to other Islamic scholars writing about the same concepts. Since all these writers based their thoughts on the Quran and the Tradition, Abud assumed their interpretations would be the same.

### A Summary of Khan's

*Ghazali's Philosophy of Education*

Khan presents an exposition of Al-Ghazzali's ideas, concepts, theories, and philosophy of education. Khan asserts that in Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of life and intellectual world-view, education was given a place of primary importance. Khan writes:

> In (Al-Ghazzali's) philosophy, education, ethics, and consciousness are but one and the same thing. To acquire education means to become an ethical being, which ultimately, enables one to develop creative consciousness of the self and the surrounding environment (Khan, 1976, p. 3).

Khan ranks Al-Ghazzali with two non-Muslim educators: Confucius and Plato. Khan states, however, that Al-Ghazzali offered a practical system of education — while Plato and Confucius espoused an absolutely ideal system of education that could never actually be put into place. Khan notes that Al-Ghazzali's educational philosophy was a replica of Islamic
ideology and had been tried successfully in the early days of Islam. In other words, Al-Ghazzali looked to the beginnings of Islam, to the era of the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions, for his educational theory. Al-Ghazzali did not view his educational theory as a new theory but as a long-needed return to the teachings of the Prophet and the Quran.

Khan discusses the relationship between Al-Ghazzali's educational philosophy and Islamic ideology in the following:

...Islam is a reality to which all other realities of life have to be adjusted; it is a standard and a criterion to which one has to raise oneself, the standard will not step down to accommodate the people. [Al-Ghazzali's] educational philosophy is not only a preparation of life but also for the life-hereafter.... (I)t requires physical labors as well as contemplation, meditation and creative imagination....(These) enable the learner to not only re-shape the material environment but also inspire him to build up a much vaster world in the depths of his own inner being wherein he discovers infinite joys, eternal glories and everlasting inspiration to do the good and be virtuous with all (p. 4).

Khan believes that Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education is not important merely as a thesis of academic interest, but he suggests it could be useful in meeting urgent problems of practical significance in his native Pakistan. Khan writes that if Pakistan is to be established and organized as an Islamic state, it must reject alien, secular educational systems. Khan blames the imposition of such educational systems for the contemporary morality crisis in his country.
Khan states that Pakistanis must reject the Western democratic educational system, as well as the Socialist doctrinal ideological system. Pakistan should adopt, in Khan's view, the education ideas of Al-Ghazzali. It is as an aid in accomplishing such an end that Khan wrote his thesis on Al-Ghazzali. Khan is of the opinion that Al-Ghazzali's educational philosophy will appeal to every sensible believer of Islam (pp. 4-5).

In the following, this researcher offers a chapter-by-chapter summary of Khan's Ghazali's Philosophy of Education. It should be noted that the titles used to denote the chapters were devised by Khan and not by this researcher.

Background of His Philosophical Thought

Khan begins this chapter by introducing Al-Ghazzali, calling him a "teacher, philosopher, debater, speaker, reformer and a mystic par excellence" (p. 7). Khan refers to Al-Ghazzali as an intellectual giant who has left, for all time, his thoughts to the thinking people of the world. As background to Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education, Khan traces the political, cultural, and educational forces that shaped Al-Ghazzali's thought. Khan writes that the era into which Al-Ghazzali was born was an era of turmoil. Material prosperity dazzled the eyes of the citizens and left them unable to look within. Many heretical sects had cropped up, Khan continues, the main one being that of the so-called
rationalists. Others were the atheists, a radical group of mystics, and the idealists (p. 10).

**Ghazali's Ideology of Life**

Khan begins this chapter by saying that for Al-Ghazzali all knowledge and learning was meant to illuminate, enlarge, and enrich the concept of life in a practical way (p. 22). Khan states that for Al-Ghazzali the purpose of life is to realize first the self and then God. Knowledge is a means, an effort, and an instrument for the realization of these sublime ends. Self-realization means to ferret out the real man from within who is a perfectly moral and spiritual being (p. 22). Khan uses this chapter to describe what Al-Ghazzali's concept of life was, how he projected it in his works, and how it was reflected in his philosophy of education. Khan says that Al-Ghazzali’s ideology of life was truly an Islamic one: “Ghazali re-oriented the ideology putting it in its proper context of soul awakening and soul refining anchor to attain the ultimate meaning of life” (p. 24).

It should be noted that Khan appears to be writing as an apologist for Al-Ghazzali not a critical analysis of his work. The purpose of Khan’s work seems to be to explain Al-Ghazzali, not criticize him. From the tone used by Khan in *Ghazali’s Philosophy of Education*, it is easy for the reader to assume that the thoughts of Khan and Al-Ghazzali are in
total harmony.

The Methodology of Ghazali

Khan opens this chapter by stating that Al-Ghazzali did not impose his faith on others by force but relied upon the force of his faith. Khan notes that Al-Ghazzali deliberated and argued very frankly. Al-Ghazzali borrowed his arguments first from the Quran, then from the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad and the maxims and practices of saints, mystics, and scholars. Khan says that, to Al-Ghazzali, the religious decrees, decisions, and deliberations were a source not only of inspiration and wisdom but also of logic and dialectic.

However, Khan states that Al-Ghazzali's greatest repository of reason came from studying the minds of his religious or intellectual opponents -- for example, the Philosophers, the Scholastic Theologians, and the Bateniates. Khan notes that Al-Ghazzali was known for his ability to concentrate on a single point. The major aims of Al-Ghazzali's methodology were inclusiveness and comprehensiveness. Khan calls Al-Ghazzali "the only saint-philosopher whose unceasing faith and reason always run parallel with each other" (p. 30). Khan ends the chapter by discussing Al-Ghazzali's spiritual crisis at the age of thirty-two and his subsequent eleven-year retirement to prayer, preaching, and piety until he, once again, became spiritually whole.
The Importance of Knowledge

Khan asserts that, for Al-Ghazzali, the acquisition of morality and learning is one and the same thing. For Al-Ghazzali, knowledge and learning began with an understanding of the Quran and Tradition. Khan notes that Al-Ghazzali saw the scholar as a righteous man -- one who was spiritually enlightened and intellectually refined. Khan explains Al-Ghazzali's thoughts on scholars as follows:

Scholars are the trustees rather than the deputies of God on the earth, they receive the divine learning from their forefathers and illustrious teachers, enrich it with their own spiritual and intellectual experiences, turning them into treasures, and then transmit them to posterity. The performance of such a noble task and the discharge of such a pious duty elevates them just next to the prophets (pp. 33-34).

Knowledge and Worship

In this chapter, Khan writes that Al-Ghazzali used many sayings from the Prophet Muhammad when discussing learning. Al-Ghazzali believed that learning, as prescribed by the Holy Quran and the Sunna, was the best kind of worship on the scale of virtues. For Al-Ghazzali, the realization of the Almighty was to be preferred to His adoration; acquisition of knowledge for the sake of knowledge was the highest and the purest kind of worship (p. 35).
Khan attributes the following quote on the value of knowledge to Al-Ghazzali: "Of the triumvirate virtues...worship, martyrdom and knowledge...it is the last which reigns supreme over all. On the Day of Judgment, the intercession of scholars would ensure salvation for many sinners" (p.35).

Another idea that Khan discusses in this chapter is Al-Ghazzali's definition of knowledge. Khan attributes to Al-Ghazzali this quote on knowledge:

Knowledge is a sacred trust and it is bestowed only upon the pious ones, the low and lewd are deprived of it, while worship is a must for all the morally low and high persons. When a person ignores knowledge or adopts an indifferent attitude towards it, he perpetrates cruelty upon himself and to...God... (p. 36).

The Spiritual Reality of the Heart

In this chapter, Khan discusses, mystically and philosophically, the heart as a spiritual phenomenon. He says that the heart has two attendants -- the physical eyes and the eyes of wisdom. And all that is known with the physical eyes and the eyes of wisdom comprise the knowledge of man (p. 38). However, because the physical eyes are dependent upon the senses, and the senses can be deceived, the physical eyes cannot always be trusted.

Khan divides the knowledge that the heart has the capacity to acquire into the mundane and the spiritual.
Under mundane knowledge comes knowledge that is instinctive and knowledge that is acquired by the process of teaching.

It is not clear in this chapter whether Khan is recounting Al-Ghazzali's thoughts or propounding his own.

The Sources of Knowledge

Khan states that Al-Ghazzali discussed two major sources of knowledge: the subjective and the objective. The subjective involves revelation and intuition (the eyes of wisdom). Without any objective help or means, subjective knowledge of an object or idea comes suddenly to the heart. Objective knowledge is gained with the help of the senses (the physical eyes).

Khan propounds that Al-Ghazzali was of the opinion that seekers of truth and knowledge could be classified as: Rationalists who claim to see the inmost depths of a thing with the succor of the rational mind; Bateniates who brag of being learned and get blissful knowledge from the Imam of their time; Philosophers who consider themselves the masters of reason and logic; and Mystics who claim to get knowledge through intuition and revelation from God (p. 39). Al-Ghazzali, continues Khan, discounted the first three classifications because "those who rely upon objective means to get knowledge actually follow the illusions which in fact cripple them" (p. 40). According to Khan, Al-Ghazzali believed only the Mystics acquired true, everlasting
knowledge. For Al-Ghazzali, mysticism was both knowledge and practice, and it elevated the practitioner morally, spiritually, and intellectually.

According to Khan, Al-Ghazzali was of the opinion that because Mystics rely upon intuition, their source of knowledge is authentic and beyond contradiction. Writes Khan:

By constantly getting knowledge and permanently worshipping God, in a way as prescribed in the Quran and Sunnah, a stage comes in the life of the seeker of truth when intuition becomes latent logic and latent logic assumes the dimensions of intuition (p. 41).

How to Pursue Knowledge

Khan attributes to Al-Ghazzali the statement that knowledge, in all its varieties, kinds and characteristics, is manly, and the virtues it creates in a person are also manly to the deepest core, (p. 42). It would appear that Al-Ghazzali (and Khan) equate "moral vigor, intellectual verve and spiritual vitality" with masculinity.

Khan writes that Al-Ghazzali's emphasis on the masculine qualities of knowledge is, by itself, something new in the realm of literature and learning. For Al-Ghazzali, delicate, effeminate temperaments are unable to undertake the strenuous odyssey of learning because it entails suffering, hard discipline, and a "resignation to the pleasures of the carnal flesh and material world, which a weathercock, a scatter-brained and a man of mean habits cannot suffer (p. 42)."
Al-Ghazzali, continues Khan, viewed the teacher and the taught as being of equal import. The ignorance of the questioner and the store of knowledge of the scholar both contribute in meaningful ways to society. A person who puts a question to a scholar benefits four types of men: (1) the questioner himself; (2) the teacher; (3) those who listen to both the student and the teacher; and, (4) those who love and admire the questioner and the replier and diffuse the discussion among others (pp. 43-45).

The Definition of the Teacher and the Taught

Khan says that Al-Ghazzali never employed the terms teacher and the taught in a strict professional or academic sense. For Al-Ghazzali, a person is a teacher if he tells anything to anybody — although by reading Al-Ghazzali, one learns that by teacher or scholar he means one who imparts something good, positive, creative, or constructive to any man, at any stage in life, in any method, without the expectation of money in return. The student, then, is a person of any age who acquires such knowledge.

The common bond between the teacher and the taught is that both believe knowledge should be imparted and received in order to illuminate the self and to realize God by living in strict accordance with the dictates of the Quran and Sunna. A teacher is a person who places the highest and the noblest ideals before his student and guides him to attain
them. The student's mission is to pursue those ideals for the sake of enriching his inner life and in order to impart those ideals to others (pp. 46-47).

The Sanctity of the Learner and the Learning

Khan attributes to Al-Ghazzali the sentiment that when a people give up a sincere and serious pursuit of knowledge, they are bound to be ruined by the forces of tyranny, ignorance, and darkness (p. 48). Al-Ghazzali glorified scholars and the teachers as the agents of hope. But a scholar who is engrossed only in material profits from his scholarship is a curse. Such a scholar burdens society with his impious presence. For Al-Ghazzali, the entire course of learning is an ethical course that should be characterized by reverence for that which is known; curiosity for the unknown; wonder for the unknowable; and a keen desire to impart all of those feelings and attitudes to the rest of mankind. Acquisition of the right type of knowledge is an indication of the fear of God; curiosity and the search for knowledge is a form of worship; and the imparting of knowledge to others is like a holy crusade.

Professional and Practical Wisdom

Khan writes that in Al-Ghazzali's hierarchy of values, the importance of reason and wisdom are surpassed only by the importance of God. Reason and wisdom allow man to distinguish
right from wrong, the beautiful from the ugly. Of all the graces God bestowed on man, wisdom is the highest and the noblest. For Al-Ghazzali, the righteous scholars and teachers, those highly talented individuals who carry on the mission of the prophets in their limited sphere with the utmost efforts, stand next to the prophets in importance.

After the prophets and scholars come the heads of state who rule and regulate the objective realm of people. Then come the preachers who appeal to the subjective aspect of the common people (pp. 53-54).

Khan writes that Al-Ghazzali categorized the activities of a rational being as: employing principles; employing tools; and then acting in ways that help consummate the principles and improve upon the tools for a better and fuller life on this planet. “Elaborating these ideas, Ghazali says that agriculture, weaving, architecture and statecraft are the four fundamentals to run the show of a community,” (p. 52). Of the four, Al-Ghazzali believed statecraft or politics was superior because politics allows for organization, accommodation, and cooperation among the segments of the community.

The Compulsory Knowledge and Learning

According to Khan, Al-Ghazzali viewed the acquisition of Islamic knowledge as a must for every believer. Called compulsory knowledge, this included the teachings of the
Quran and the Sunna. Al-Ghazzali further classified knowledge into the mundane and the spiritual, Khan adds.

The student should learn: (1) the right beliefs as enunciated in the Quran and the Sunna; (2) how to do the good and avoid the evil as prescribed in the Quran and the Sunna; and, (3) to have a positive attitude towards the self, towards others, and towards God (pp. 54-55).

Gradations of Knowledge

Khan states that Al-Ghazzali further categorized knowledge into the realms of the secular and the divine. Religious or divine knowledge is a legacy of the prophets which can be verified because it betters a person in this world and the hereafter.

Some areas of learning are good, some areas are bad and to be shunned, and some areas are important from a worldly point of view. Mathematics and medicine, for example, fall into the last category because they are essential to society. However, studies involving this last category are optional under most circumstances.

Al-Ghazzali, writes Khan, said that the positive types of learning can be divided into the original, the secondary, the prefatory, and the appendix. The original is history and includes an understanding of the Quran, the Sunna, and the practices of the Prophet and his Holy Companions. Jurisprudence is an example of the secondary branch of
learning. The prefatory type is knowledge that is essential for a deep, thorough understanding of the Holy Book and the Sunna. The appendix includes the recitation of the Holy Quran and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. Al-Ghazzali found that incessant learning and continuous worship of God are the path to illuminating the self and reaching nearer to God (pp. 56-59).

Reservations in Getting and Imparting Knowledge

Khan says that Al-Ghazzali was of the opinion that the quality and utility of a branch of knowledge is determined by the result it yields in the betterment of the individual or of the social group (p. 60). Al-Ghazzali believed that a teacher is nothing if he is not conversant with the taught (the students). Any knowledge that might be abused or misused by the student at any stage in his life should be withheld from him by the teacher. Or, the taught should be reformed or improved in a moral way, both from within and without, so that they are able to use what they learn in a positive way.

The rest of this chapter deals with the prohibition of certain branches of knowledge -- namely astrology and magic -- and under what conditions and to what degree these kinds of knowledge may be learned. As for the fine arts, Al-Ghazzali disallowed sculpture and painting because he believed these arts excited the concupiscent feelings and did not substantially help, either morally or spiritually, in the
realization of self and God. He did allow music and singing but with reservations — and only with certain qualifications and conditions were they to be practiced.

[Researcher’s Note: Many arts, particularly painting and sculpture, have traditionally been excluded from orthodox Islam. In particular, artistic renderings of creatures with souls — human beings and animals — often are forbidden because such beings are the creation of God and their likenesses should not be created by humans as that would be attempting to imitate God. For this reason, decoration in the Islamic world often employs abstract, geometric design. In the contemporary Islamic world, it is next to impossible to find photographs, paintings or sculptures of humans or animals in the homes of the orthodox or in mosques. In a strict sense, having one’s photograph taken is permissible only for legal necessities like passports].

Al-Ghazzali was, however, a music lover — as was Plato. In Al-Ghazali The Mystic (1944, p. 85), Smith quotes Al-Ghazzali as writing, “The deaf man misses the joy of sweet sounds and musical notes; he is like one who is absent, though present, and dead, though he be alive.” Smith writes that Al-Ghazzali, with his usual sanity and breadth of outlook, went against the teachings of many orthodox Muslims by allowing music — providing it did not lead to sin.

Khan concludes this chapter by stating that Al-Ghazzali endorsed only those branches of learning that contribute
positively and creatively to the realization of self and God. Khan adds that the secrets of higher knowledge and spiritual elation are not to be revealed to each and every person but are to be taught along the following lines:

*Shariat* is meant for the common man. This knowledge includes the laws of God and is taught in simple ways so as to be easily understood.

*Tariquat* is meant for the uncommon man, who by means of higher reason, intuition, or revelation, approaches the inner reality of the things around him, of the universe, and of himself. This knowledge requires more sophisticated reasoning than that required by *shariat*.

*Haquiquat* is for the most uncommon man — the elite who, by the grace of God, are lifted up into the world of glories where, with their spiritual eye or with their whole spiritual being, they realize the innermost reality of the universe and of themselves (Khan, 1976, pp. 67-68).

**Reason, Intelligence and Wisdom**

Khan attributes to Al-Ghazzali the statement that reason, intelligence, and wisdom are similar in nature. Reason, in the sense of impersonal and universal standards and criteria of truth, is a source of immortal welfare and eternal bliss. Intelligence is a divine spark and can be further enhanced by means of conscious effort on the part of
man for the purpose of sharpening the sensibilities. Wisdom is prudence which enables a man to comprehend the possible consequences in advance of embarking upon a certain venture. Khan writes, "Wisdom is the cumulative treasure of knowledge and information which a man gets and gathers with the help of his senses, intelligence and common sense plus intuitive blessings" (p. 70). But for Al-Ghazzali, there are truths that even reason, intelligence, or wisdom cannot discern. (Al-Ghazzali, however, might be forced to update his example of such unknowable truths -- the magnet which attracts every piece of iron "but the how and why of this queer phenomena is still a wonder for all" (p. 70).

Despite their flaws, reason, intelligence, and wisdom remain sublime and noble instruments in the accumulation of learning. According to Al-Ghazzali, writes Khan, the wisdom of the true believer is intuitive and revelational. It is the weapon of the believer whose aim is to become so wise as to realize the self and serve God (p. 72).

**Kinds of Wisdom**

According to Khan, Al-Ghazzali had four categories of wisdom. The highest kind of wisdom is consciousness -- that which singularly distinguishes a person from the rest of the lower creatures of the universe. The next category is common sense by virtue of which a person naturally and instinctively knows which is good and bad -- and what should he do in
certain situations. The experiences of life bring to man another kind of wisdom; experience makes a man logical, practical, and more conscious. Finally, there is the wisdom of farsightedness and providence; this wisdom gives man a sense of the possible end to an undertaking (Khan, 1976, pp. 73-74).

**Verbicide**

In this chapter, Khan interprets what Al-Ghazzali called verbicide — the killing of language. Through verbicide, the true content and connotation of various types of learning have been spoiled, have degenerated into something unworthy which distorts the very contours of the particular branch of learning. Verbicide can occur in two different ways. First, words, phrases, idioms, even entire branches of knowledge by changing their meanings from positive to negative, are unable to withstand the inroads of time and both the form and the content unconsciously degenerate. Second, vicious scholars deliberately spoil branches of learning in order to earn their material livelihood (p. 75).

A simple example of verbicide would be saying that stealing is good because stealing can make one rich. In verbicide, something bad can be presented as something good.

Khan (1976, p. 77) gives as an example the word scholar. At one time, a scholar was a person who explored truths in order to train himself, and others as well, to guard the
moral order of society. But, writes Khan, this definition came to a tragic end. When Islam began to spread, the word scholar took on the connotation of a debater, a reasoner with a propensity for polemics.

Debates, Confrontations and Polemics

Khan writes that Al-Ghazzali participated in religious debates, although he did so with limited enthusiasm. According to Khan, "Ghazali's attitude towards debates is not hortative but reluctant, because usually the consequences of such debates are not good" (Khan, 1976, p. 81).

According to Khan, Al-Ghazzali believed debates fanned jealousies, grudges, pride, snobbery, anger, the love of material benefits, flippancy, and arguments for the sake of pleasure (Khan, 1976, p. 81). Debates, confrontations and polemics unnaturally tax the emotions of the people to the point of starting a riot. Investigation and research should lead to the realization of truth and not put other people in awkward positions for the sake of gratifying vanity. Time, money, and energy should not be wasted on imaginary issues that may generate unwarranted innovations in religion, Khan continues. And religious confrontations can unnecessarily tax the emotions of the people to the point of starting a riot. Investigation and research should lead to the realization of truth and not put other people in awkward positions for the sake of gratifying vanity.

Moral Responsibilities of the Teacher

According to Khan, Al-Ghazzali propounded the most fundamental ethical and psychological principles for the...
teachers. These principles were to be followed very honestly and faithfully by all while imparting education to the deserving ones. Al-Ghazzali's eight principles were:

1. The teacher should cultivate an imaginative empathy with the student.
2. The teacher should teach and bring up his disciple just as his own son.
3. No stone should be left unturned and no effort should be spared in the reformation, education, and correction of the student.
4. By love and sympathy, the attention of the student should be directed towards the studies -- not by force.
5. When teaching a certain branch of learning, the teacher should not belittle the import of other branches of knowledge. For example, while teaching philosophy, the teacher should not belittle the importance of history or medicine.
6. When speaking, the teacher should keep in mind the intellectual level of the taught, so that the student is able to grasp what the teacher is saying.
7. The dull student should be treated in such a way that he does not feel awkward in the company of his intelligent fellows.
8. The teacher should be just and fair with all (Khan,

**Moral Responsibilities of the Taught**

According to Khan's interpretation, Al-Ghazzali prescribed some very difficult demands not only on the teacher but also on the seeker of knowledge, the student (p. 89). To acquire knowledge, the student must be sincere and spare no effort. The eight responsibilities of the student are:

1. The self should be purified as much as possible because the rest of the mind and heart will be cleansed in the company and influence of the teachers and noble colleagues.

2. The student should always keep his mind, ears, and eyes open in order to get lessons from every good and bad phenomenon of the world.

3. The new learner should obey his instructor in the same way as a patient carries out the orders of a doctor.

4. After learning the basics, the student should specialize in a certain branch of creative and positive knowledge — not be a Jack of all trades.

5. The taught should not indulge in any ilk of academic controversy in the very beginning of his career as a student.

6. The student should acquire special knowledge in grades
and ranks and not in haphazard ways. In other words, the student should not jump to higher stages without grasping the basic ingredients.

7. The student should know the causes which ennable a certain faculty of knowledge over other branches of learning.

8. The purpose of knowledge should be one and only one -- to realize the self and to get the benediction of God in the life-hereafter (Khan, 1976, pp. 85-87).

**Distinction between the Righteous and the Vicious Scholars**

Khan propounds that Al-Ghazzali emphasized the differences between the righteous and the vicious scholars:

A vicious scholar is one whose knowledge does not prove beneficial for his taught; who does not practice what he teaches or professes or preachers; who is proud of his learning -- such a scholar is a hypocrite... A righteous scholar on the other hand is wise enough to keep himself materially simple and (in) poverty for which he is recompensed in the world hereafter (p. 88).

A righteous scholar is he who removes the doubts of the skeptics and leads them from doubt to the faith, from hypocrisy to sincerity, from worldly pomp to moral humility, and from petty grudges to broad-mindedness. He leads the people from darkness to light. What makes a man a scholar is not voracious reading and writing but a little authentic knowledge with equal practices which is enough to illuminate
his inner self.

**Critical Appreciation**

In Al-Ghazzali's opinion, Khan notes, a person should be self-reliant and have a sense of responsibility. The person should avoid the lure of the material world and be a follower of the Quran and the Sunna.

Individuality does not mean to be separated from the rest of humanity. It simply means, according to Al-Ghazzali, "a judicious imitation and the art of saying things in an uncommon way" (p. 92-93). People unconsciously are being led by others when, in fact, they should be different from them. Individuality should come from a person seeking reality as he has found it and not from imitating others or from taking the words of others without investigation. To be an individual is to have independent opinions and the power to judge things objectively.

Personality as a philosophical concept is an awareness of oneself as distinct from other objects of observation. Personality in a psychological perspective is when a person perceives the totality of all human behavior which gives meaning to the individual in society -- realizing that some aspects of behavior differentiate one from other members of the community. Personality as a physiological concept is the uniqueness of the human organism which differentiates one from others.
Al-Ghazzali understood man as one who inherited good and evil and whose ultimate destiny was to work for his salvation. This is done by increasing one's faith in God. This faith also brings knowledge of the self. Self-realization is possible by enhancing the inner richness of oneself from within, by being deeply inspired by the life around oneself, and by being self-sufficient (pp. 92-99).

**Philosophy and Education**

Khan begins this section by expressing his high regard for Al-Ghazzali as a great and original philosopher and educationalist. Khan specifically addresses his purpose in authoring a work on Al-Ghazzali. Khan writes:

> By applying philosophy to education and inducing education into philosophy, he made both the disciplines ineluctable for teachers and the taught alike... (A)n introduction of Ghazali's philosophy in the scheme of our national education will certainly restore philosophy to its true pedestal in our ideological life and intellectual environment... (p. 100).

Khan overtly prescribes Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education as the philosophy to be adopted in his home of Pakistan if the country hopes to revitalize and re-orient its energies, views, ideas, and the tendencies of the people living under Islam.

Khan continues his remedy for the society which he labels as "spiritually bankrupt, intellectually empty, and emotionally upset," (p. 102). He proposes that education in
Pakistan encompass a national ideology which should be popularized so that the personality of the individual is integrated and adjusted with society. He suggests that the individual seek salvation because only a person who does so truly grasps his existence and thus is truly valuable to the society.

Khan moves to discussions of philosophy and education, government-supported education, values of society, and salvation. What is striking about this chapter is that no clear, direct reference from Al-Ghazzali is presented as support or evidence for Khan's point of view. What Khan seems to have done is to create a synthesis of Al-Ghazzali's writings from his personal interpretation, fitting this to his prescriptive thesis for reforming Pakistani education and society. Khan's positions in this chapter would have been considerably more forceful if he had supported his opinions with direct reference to Al-Ghazzali.

In light of what has been said, the following is a brief summary of Khan's work in this regard.

Philosophy: Khan defines philosophy as "basically a love of wisdom and pursuit of truth. It teaches (us) to lead a life of simplicity, independence and magnanimity, with the purpose of knowing one's self" (p. 103). Philosophy serves inquiries into values and ideals to their total final significance. Philosophy allows understanding and interpretation so that a correct action may be devised for
the betterment of the world. The end of philosophy is to die well. And the task of the philosopher is to change the world for the better.

Fundamentally, then, education allows one to acquire knowledge and wisdom, enabling the individual to become one with the Divine and the Divine consciousness and will. This Divine consciousness and will then become the individual's consciousness and will. Philosophy's role, claims Khan, has always been to come to the rescue of peoples and their societies whenever they were faced with the most serious moral, social or spiritual crises. Khan believes such a crisis is facing Pakistan today.

Khan decides that the first and foremost task in the course of national education is to enable the individual to be restored to his original spiritual nature and then to be integrated into society. This said, he then rejects the West and its influence as morally, spiritually, and intellectually decayed. And Khan condemns his country's imitation of the West. He asks what the ultimate values, ideals, and ends for his people are. His answer is that the people:

want to progress as a simple and peaceful, but independent, nation, keeping pace with the accelerated scientific and technological developments of the world with (their own) ideology in the forefront (p. 105).

Khan believes that philosophy coupled with education can help make Pakistani life a real spiritual co-operation to
establish a firm contact with God, the universe, and the rest of humanity in order to realize the purpose of existence. He states that philosophy should be popularized among all intelligent students at the university level for only the love of wisdom and pursuit of truth can lift the people above petty differences, prejudices and the greed of material gains. Khan rejects a government by philosophers, but he wants the leaders to have philosophical insight and psychological acumen so that they can guide the nation along the proper course. He believes that a religious education imbibing the spirit of the age will help the people achieve the ultimate values -- God; free will; immortality of the soul; life after death; and the ability to distinguish between good and bad, beauty and ugliness, matter and spirit, love and hate.

Khan states that salvation is a must for everyone and can be achieved by practicing the true spirit of religion; but salvation must be joined with all the faculties of the soul -- for example, understanding, reason and imagination. Thus, salvation being a state of spiritual freedom is accomplished by wisdom which comes from the purification of the heart.

Khan concludes by discussing the integration of the self which may be accomplished by creative work, sincere devotion, and knowledge. Wisdom is necessary not only in theoretical learning and correct belief, but also in extinguishing the
fire of passions and suppressing the tumult of desire (pp. 103-117).

Beauty, Art and Literature in Relation to Life

Regarding beauty, art and literature, Khan has this to say about Al-Ghazzali's position: "In the entire education world-view of Ghazali, one does not come across the notions of beauty, fine arts and literature in the sense as we understand them today... Anything which was amorous, sensual, licentious, and immoral was unconvincing to him" (pp. 117-118).

Khan then offers his own personal analysis of the notions of art, beauty, and literature in relation to life -- presenting his own personal propositions which can be summed as follows: "The task of the artist is to stimulate the people to do something happy and exciting due to which life goes on happily, and it is the dynamism of art due to which the artist succeeds in his task," (p. 134).

Conclusion

Khan concludes his work by calling Al-Ghazzali a "giant genius" -- for seldom has a philosopher been so clear in the issues he raised, the questions he posed, and the ideals he projected as was Al-Ghazzali.
Khan says that Al-Ghazzali's philosophy and system of education aim at producing real and sincere believers with strong intellectual powers and moral prowess -- believers devoted to the cause of learning and knowledge; deep of contemplation; and adept at moral reasoning. Khan writes that for this purpose Al-Ghazzali censured the senses, civilized the feelings, matured the thoughts, and edified the soul.

Khan believes Al-Ghazzali was great because of his personal expression and creative imagination. Al-Ghazzali's aims in life for the believer are to accept this world as transient and to obey the commands of God in order to prepare for the eternal life of the next world.

Knowledge and learning as prescribed by the Quran and the Sunna are the only ways to realize reality. And Khan asserts that Al-Ghazzali's theory of education aims at founding a culture of believers able to realize spirituality and intellectual freedom. Al-Ghazzali, so claims Khan, was the first philosopher to determine in philosophical and psychological ways the contents and contours of the human will, asserting that every kind of knowledge was neither beneficial nor necessary for every person. However, all people should share the same ultimate goal -- the realization of self and God (p. 136).
A Summary of Abud's Educational Thought of Al-Ghazzali
as It Appears from His Letter 'O My Son'

For the Egyptian professor Abdu Al-Ghaney Abud, Al-Ghazzali was the philosopher of mysticism whose fame is greater than can be talked about. Abud believes Al-Ghazzali's writings were so influenced by the Quran and the Tradition that the philosophy of Al-Ghazzali and the philosophy of other writers who were true to Islam are basically the same. For this reason, when writing about the educational theories of Al-Ghazzali, Abud often quotes the Quran or other authors rather than Al-Ghazzali himself. The following presents a section-by-section summary of Abud's text on Al-Ghazzali.

The Period of Al-Ghazzali

Abud discusses the life and times of Al-Ghazzali, noting that the Islamic religion as practiced in Al-Ghazzali's era had undergone much development since the period of the Prophet Muhammad. Abud believes these developments were not so much the result of foreign influence but were normal 'growing pains' for what he considers the last religion with universal and timeless applications for all people (Abud, 1982, p. 18).

Abud writes that Islam is based neither on idealism or
realism. By this, he means that Islam combines the spiritual world and the physical world. Human beings have both a soul and a body. This melding allows the Muslim to live in the everyday world of the actual. At the same time, however, he is able to raise himself up from the actual or real world to the ideal world of God (p. 19). The Muslim is not required to pray 24 hours a day, nor should the Muslim find it necessary to excessively indulge the senses and forget to honor God. Instead, the Muslim should strive for a balance and take care of both the body and the spirit.

Abud finds that the struggle in early Islamic history was the consequence of the conflict between idealism and realism. The people who held to idealism refused any changes, while those who held to realism saw the necessity to change. According to Abud, each group had some right to insist upon its doctrine (Abud, 1983, pp. 19-20).

By the time Al-Ghazzali was born in 1058 A.D., continues Abud, political corruption had been rampant for a hundred years as a result of the weak caliphate. In the tenth century, the Islamic Empire had given birth to a great new civilization. The Arabic language and the religion of Islam had taken root throughout the Middle East, North Africa, Spain, and Central Asia, writes Gordon (1991, p. 36). “In law, religion, education, art, science and commerce, the Islamic community was living through a golden age. It was one of the brilliant periods of human history,” Gordon
But the ruling caliphs were unable to solve the empire’s political problems and preserve unity. Thirty years before Al-Ghazzali’s birth, the Turks already had begun to overrun the north and east of Persia. In 1099 A.D., Islamic Jerusalem was taken by hostile forces. And Baghdad later was overtaken by Mongol troops.

During this period, Abud writes, the scales of Islam were tipped in favor of realism. The people lived mundane lives. There was a corrupt distribution of wealth, and citizens were divided into the very wealthy and the very poor. The rich were lavished in luxury and often devoted themselves to lives of physical pleasure and excess.

It seemed normal, writes Abud, that Muslims of Al-Ghazzali’s era would turn away from this extreme and seek a return to idealism, adopting mysticism as the way to move from realism to idealism (pp. 20-21). The Mystics used the Holy Quran, the Tradition, and their related sciences as the sources of knowledge which represented the idealism of Islam. The philosophy of wisdom represented the realism of Islam. The Mystics saw the stability of Islamic knowledge as being threatened by the rapid development of this philosophical movement, writes Abud (p. 22). In the opinion of the Mystics, the Philosophers, who thought reason could lead to faith, were attacking the basic Islamic tenet that God is known not through reason but through the spirit.
The danger of the philosophical movement led Al-Ghazzali to stand against the threat and defend the faith. Abud believes Al-Ghazzali's book, Al-Falasifa, was written to point out the risk philosophy posed to the faith of Muslims (p. 23).

Al-Ghazzali

This chapter includes biographical data on Al-Ghazzali. Though many people enjoyed a life of luxury during Al-Ghazzali's era, there still were many poor people. Fortunately, some of the wealthy established the madrasas (schools) all over the Islamic states for the poor and provided the students with the necessities of life (p. 24).

Al-Ghazzali and his brother were students at a madrasa. Al-Ghazzali studied under many professors from whose dialogues he learned the foundation of Tradition, fiqh (law), logic, and philosophy (p. 24). Al-Ghazzali went to Nishapur where he taught at the university, authored books, and became renowned as the Proof of Islam, a name given to religious leaders of great import.

In his writings, Al-Ghazzali divided the sciences into the following categories:

1. Praiseworthy sciences -- or fields of study -- (ulum mahmuda) such as religious sciences.
2. Objectionable sciences (ulum madhmuma) such as magic
and astronomy (which was associated with magic).

3. Permissible sciences (ulum mubaha). Limited study of them is allowed. But it is madhmum (objectionable) to study them deeply. According to Al-Ghazzali, the permissible sciences are what he termed the branches of philosophy -- mathematics, logic, naturalism, theology, politics, and ethics (p. 26).

Al-Ghazzali's Works

Al-Ghazzali wrote a number of books before the age of twenty. It is said the first of his works was titled Al-Manhole (p. 29). Al-Ghazzali's writing spanned 35 years from age 20 to 55. All totaled, he wrote 380 books of various sizes and themes. The most famous of his works is Ihya-Ulum-id-Din. Other well known books by Al-Ghazzali are Magasid ul-Falasafa (The Aims of the Philosophers); Tahafat ul-Falasafa (Destruction of the Philosophers); and Al-Mungid min ad Dalal (Deliverer from Error) (p. 29-30).

The progression of the themes of these works seems to indicate that Al-Ghazzali did not begin as a Mystic but started as a skeptic. The skepticism motivated him to probe knowledge and increase his studies, eventually leading from doubt to the certainty of mysticism (p. 30).

O My Son

The letter O My Son was written by Al-Ghazzali to answer
questions from one of his students. Al-Ghazzali presented his answer in book form so that more people could benefit from it (p. 31). This book was directly related to education; the remainder of his educational thought is scattered throughout many other works. Intellectual education was not Al-Ghazzali's concern, according to Abud. Instead, Al-Ghazzali's interest was in spiritual education for he believed that mysticism was the highest step in the ladder of knowledge (p. 32). Spiritual education for Al-Ghazzali emerges from an understanding of Islamic thought (p. 33).

Abud writes that Al-Ghazzali's educational thought reflected the social climate of his period -- without probing Al-Ghazzali's times, one cannot come to an understanding of his thought.

Abud attributes to Al-Ghazzali that writers on educational thought typically use one of three forms (p. 33). First are treatises specifically putting forth theories of education. An example of this type is Jean Jacques Rousseau's Emile (p. 33-34).

Second is the form in which educational thought is directly and formally related to ideas on politics, economics, or society. An example of this form is Plato's Republic (p. 35).

Third are treatises on subjects like politics, sociology, economics, or religion which include scattered
thoughts on education (p. 38).

**Al-Ghazzali's Educational Thought**

Before *O My Son*, Al-Ghazzali's educational thought was in the third form, notes Abud (p. 43). In other words, while writing on topics like religion, Al-Ghazzali included a smattering of educational thought but no formal or lengthy educational plan. With *O My Son*, his thought moved from the third to the first form, Abud adds. Abud considers *O My Son* to be a conscious effort on the part of Al-Ghazzali at presenting a theory of education.

**Islamic Ideology**

The idea of Allah is the main idea in Islamic thought, writes Abud. It is not strange that Al-Ghazzali initiated his book with the prayer of Allah. The idea of Allah is a simple one in that it is easy for each Muslim to assimilate (p. 53).

According to the Holy Quran, Allah is: "Say: He is Allah, The One. Allah, the Eternal, Absolute. He begetteth not, Nor is He begotten. And there is none like unto Him." A human being can see Allah by his mind, and feel Him by his heart. However, the limited nature of human beings does not enable the human to see Allah by his physical eye nor to hear Him by his physical ear. A human being instinctually has a spiritual sense that makes him feel there is a supreme power
which created the world and leads it to its unknown destiny (p. 54).

The idea of Allah -- the Creator, the Power the Able -- is what shaped Muslim society in the Middle Ages. Also, this idea designed and limited man's view of things and constructed behavior both inside and outside his society -- in his war and peace, in his sleep and awakeness. Because of the significance of the idea of Allah, Al-Ghazzali started his book by introducing it (p. 55).

In the Islamic ideology, the idea of the universe is not separate from the idea of Allah. The universe is Allah's creation. Since Allah is the Creator, then the universe is His creation, and He is able to manifest His ability in the universe. The universe includes everything animate and inanimate -- atoms and galaxies, the spiritual and the material worlds. It is wide, infinite, boundless, and complicated, but by Divine law it demonstrates a connection between its elements through systemic organization (p. 56).

Al-Ghazzali, continues Abud, attributed deviations from normal behavior to the inclination and influence of the Devil. Al-Ghazzali reached this conclusion through the Holy Quran and the Tradition which were his main sources in the whole of his thoughts. In this respect, Al-Ghazzali was not the first Muslim to reach this end. Muslims from the beginning of Islam have known the concept of the Devil. However, Al-Ghazzali was among the first to philosophically
The Concept of Human Beings

The concept of the human being is one of the most complex issues not only from the philosopher's point of view but also from the point of view of theologians and scientists, particularly in regard to biology (p. 63). In Islam the idea of human beings is clear. It is Allah who creates us and bestows His grace (p. 64). From the Holy Quran:

Behold, thy Lord said to the angels, 'I will create a Viceregent on earth.' They said: 'Wilt thou place therein one who will make Mischief therein and shed blood? Whilst we celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy name?' He said: 'I know what ye know not' (p. 65).

In the story of creation in the Holy Quran, Allah commands angels to bow down to Adam, and all of them obey except for Satan who disobeys Allah (p. 65). From the Holy Quran: "Then did Satan make them slip from the Garden, and get them out. Of the state of felicity in which They had been. And He said: 'Get ye down, all ye people with the enmity between yourselves. On earth will by your dwelling place. And your means of livelihood for a time'" (p. 66).

Hereafter

Death by any standard is one of the blessings of this life, for with it life has renewed and continued its youth
till Allah inherits the earth and everything on it. The slipping of the soul from the body by death does not mean the end of life, but it is a transformation to another life. In the Islamic sense, the soul is eternal and only the body will face disengagement in the soil; but it will be resurrected to its body by Allah's will in the Hereafter (p. 72).

The concept of the Hereafter has been clear since the fourteenth century. Islam does not stop at the boundary of reward and punishment, but it transcends to connect life with the hereafter. Muslims never feel that there is a separation between life and the Hereafter, nor a separation of life from religion (p. 73). The idea of Hereafter becomes more clear with learned people. Thus, knowledgeable Muslims get a high position in the Hereafter. They are responsible in front of Allah in the Hereafter, as declared by Al-Ghazzali, not because they have knowledge but because they have the ability to spread the words of Allah more than the ignorant can. However, some of the knowledgeable will get a severe punishment in the Hereafter as Al-Ghazzali mentioned the Tradition: "The prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) says: "The people who will get the most severe punishment in the Hereafter are the scholars whose knowledge has been of no benefit" (p. 74).

*Intercessor of the Prophets on the Day of Judgment*

"It is known in Islam that the believer never enters
Heaven by his deeds, but by God's mercy. Heaven has no price and the good deeds of the believer only make him qualify to the mercy of God by which he can enter Heaven after a prophet who he had followed intercedes him in front of God," writes Abud in an attempt to clarify the ideas of Al-Ghazzali (p. 86). It is supposed that every believer on the Day of Judgment is resurrected on the doctrine of one of the prophets. So each prophet is an intercessor to his followers who believed in his message, and the prophets can be witness to the others who did not believe in the message.

In Islam, the source of all prophecy is God. Consequently, there should be an agreement in the principles that make up Islam. Islam is the religion by which God judges people on the Day of Judgment, even the people who existed before Islam (pp. 87-88).

**Muslim Family**

The family is a group of individuals living under one roof. A husband and wife are the foundation of the family. Each of them has a physical nature different from the other. Women are gifted with passion, for their role is to raise children who need more passion (p. 94). Men, on the other hand, by their nature are fit to be the leaders of the family. The fact is that they complement each other; the man works outside of the home to provide the family with its sustenance and protect it from any harm, while the woman
works inside of the house to provide a good atmosphere for the family (p. 96).

**Muslim Society**

Abud writes that Al-Ghazzali viewed society as a big family. The customs, beliefs, and behaviors of society are merely reflections of the actions of the families (p. 98). Muslim society is divine society. Divine in this context does not refer to the spiritual contemplation that liberates the soul from its body, but it denotes an ideal humanity in which there is balance between the physical and the spiritual. On Earth, the soul and the body cannot be separated (p. 99).

Islam encourages the idea that all jobs are decent jobs -- even the guarding of cattle for a minimal wage is considered a decent job. The prophet Muhammad had performed this job. Islam stands on the side of work and the worker and never belittles the poor because people account by faith not money (p. 101).

In Islam nothing can exempt a person from working except disabilities, in which case the government must provide the person with all of his needs. Piety is central to Muslim morality, and by this, the relation among the members of society is established. Piety is based on the idea of the Hereafter in the Muslim conscious in which one tries to live his life and to be close to God (p. 102).
Islamic Knowledge

Knowledge in Islam cannot be understood without understanding the position of the human being in the universe. His position is next to God because he is a vicegerent (deputy) of Him on earth (p. 105). God bestows in him abilities and powers. The angels lack these abilities because they do not need them; however, humans need them to build the earth and be a vicegerent of God on the earth (p. 106).

From the Holy Quran: "And He taught Adam the name of all things; the He placed them Before the angels and said: 'Tell Me the names of these if ye are right. They said: 'Glory to Thee: of knowledge We have none, save that Thou who art perfect in knowledge and wisdom'" (p. 107).

Knowing the "names of all things" relates to the ability to understand the concept of things. This ability is exclusive for Adam (and human beings), and it is a gift from God. Knowledge in Islam is connected with the essence of Islamic doctrine. For this reason, revelation in Islam initiated with the command of reading. From the Holy Quran: "Proclaim! (or Read) In the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, who create. Create man out of a leech-like clot. Proclaim! And thy Lord Is Most Bountiful. He who taught (the use of) the pen-Taught man that which he knew not," (p. 107).
In the Islamic sense, some kinds of knowledge are more significant than others. Without knowing the Islamic creeds, no Muslim can know what is permissible and what is wrongdoing -- and he cannot be called a Muslim without knowing such. However, a Muslim can remain a Muslim if, for example, he knows medicine and lacks the knowledge of engineering (p. 111). Knowledge is divided into individual duty and collective duty. Religious knowledge is considered individual duty and no one can be exempt from it. On the other hand, mundane knowledge, such as commerce, economics, medicine, and engineering, are collective knowledge and they rely on a person's abilities and interests and on society's needs. Al-Ghazzali put religious knowledge in the first position; then came mundane knowledge. Also, he considered science without practice insanity, because the main function of science is to be translated into beneficial work. Otherwise, the fruit of this science is merely a waste of time and thought (p. 113).

**Working in Islam**

Working in Islam is not connected with sustenance or the earning of a living. It is an end in itself because the main function of humans is to build the Earth -- and building the Earth cannot be fulfilled without work (p. 113).

As for wealth, Abu Yusuf notes, "Islam marked three ways to distribute wealth among people; inherit; bestow; and acquisition. Acquisition cannot be gained from forbidden
ways such as stealing, raping, betraying, etc.,” (p. 114).

Money is necessary for humans to build the earth (p. 114). By working humans can get money. Working in Islam includes working by hand and by thought, by the physical and by mental labors -- all these activities end in building the earth. Work should carry out the individual’s and group’s interests. Collective participation of all members of society without bitter hostility, envy, and hate is needed for building the earth (p. 115).

**Mysticism and Mystics**

“Al-Ghazzali attacked mystics but at the same time praised mysticism,” writes Abud (p. 125). Faith in God requires a person to make an azm al-omar or “strong decision” to fight against the evil and forbidden. Faith itself requires balance among the needs of the body, mind, and soul. Also, it requires that a person have an obligation toward society, and that the person should command with kindness, should participate in public affairs, and should forbid the objectionable (p. 125).

As Al-Ghazzali was, Abud is in disagreement with the ascetics of his own (Abud’s) era who withdraw from society. Asceticism in Islam, Abud writes, does not mean that a person should separate from mundane life. Nor does it mean that one should indulge in mundane life either. It requires balance.

Al-Ghazzali attacked the Mystics because "poverty to
God" (الله) meant, to them, abandoning the mundane life (p. 128). This action is forbidden in Islam because it contradicts the purpose of creation -- to build the Earth (p. 129). Also, "subservience to God" is understood by the Mystics as the worship God only -- to the abandonment of people and things. For Al-Ghazzali, "subservience to God" cannot be established without a real connection to daily life (p. 129).

Al-Ghazzali believed conventional worship was a means to enhance and repair human society. Its results appear from the practices which are achieved by work. Thus, we see in this practice, the skillfulness and the performance of good deeds which are necessary to build the Earth (p. 130).

The difference between mysticism and the Mystics is that mysticism makes a person a part of the community of people and things and raises him to the divine horizon. The Mystics of Al-Ghazzali's day, on the other hand, claimed that abandoning mundane life for the devotion to worshipping God was an Islamic demand (p. 130).

Islamic Educational Philosophy and Its Objective

The Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) said to some of his friends, "Work for your mundane life insofar as you dwell in it, work for the hereafter insofar as you remain in it, work for God insofar as you need Him; work for hell insofar as you have patience for it," writes Abud (pp. 141-142).
This saying or tradition (Hadith) summarizes, according to Abud, the ideology behind the educational thought of Al-Ghazzali. Islamic educational philosophy derived from this Hadith considers the religious aim as the most significant one which Islamic education should fulfill. However, the Muslim educators should not abandon the intellectual part of education (p. 143).

The Aims of Islamic Education

Abud notes that, for Al-Ghazzali, Islamic education has two aims: (1) the preparation for the Hereafter, and (2) the providing of the individual with skills and knowledge which make him successful in life -- on the condition that he not concentrate too much on the mundane life which can lead to more harm than benefit (p. 143). Abud writes that one cannot talk about the religious aims without the mundane aims because ethical education which involves action is the spirit of Islamic education (p. 144). To this end, the aim of Islamic education is to prepare the good Muslim who can build the Earth (p. 144).

Islamic education takes care of the child from birth. When his physical body develops he should learn to pursue the good manners instilled in the home from childhood. This education is concerned with the teacher as exemplar because the eyes of the child are looking to the teacher (pp. 144-145).
The aims of education, writes Abud, are: (1) individual aims that relate to the learner himself and allow him to know himself through the study of subjects like psychology and religion or any course of study that leads to self-reflection; (2) social aims that relate to the life of the society and its behavior (the study of law would be of assistance in this aim); and (3) occupational aims refer to practical, job related knowledge that can be obtained through the study of subjects like medicine, architecture, or engineering (pp. 145-146).

Learning is mandatory and has no end, writes Abud. It also must be applicable in life. The teacher must know that there is no science which can be separated from action (p. 146).

The education of the child starts in his home, before he goes to school. The role of the family in the education of a child is significant in the child's life. Abud cites the scholar Sharawe who wrote that education cannot be accomplished by one individual or one institution for there are many educational realms that must be met. These realms include the material, the mind, passion, and knowledge -- and for learning in all of these areas, the student must learn from many sources.

Before the child comes to schools he spends time with his parents and that does not mean he gains nothing from them. On the contrary, the child was in an educational
position fulfilled by his mother, father, and his relatives. The knowledge which the child has gained is not planted only by the formal teacher (p. 148).

Education is concerned with discipline, a clear soul, the mind, and a strengthening the body. It takes care of a person spiritually, morally, and physically without sacrificing any one of these items. In addition, education fulfills other aims -- the religious, social, mental, beneficial, and political. The religious aim is the most significant because under its tent are the other aims (pp. 148-149).

Curriculum of Islamic Education

Abud writes that the curriculum of Islamic education is a worshipping curriculum in which Islam extends the meaning of worship to include life from all of its perspectives. It is not limited to the mosque, and it includes both obligatory worship and matters of daily life. The curriculum does not concentrate on individuals only and neglect society, nor is it concerned with doctrine to the neglect of daily activity. This comprehensive curriculum is based on the Quran (pp. 156-157).

Abud praises the work of scholar Abu Al-Hasan Al-Nadwy who divided the courses of such a curriculum into two kinds: (1) the academic courses which include the Quran and the Tradition; and, (2) the contemporary sciences such as
Methods of Instruction in Islam

Islam provides a curriculum for its followers -- as well as an instructional method to fulfill the curriculum. Abud cites the methods listed by scholar Omar Al-Shibani. Al-Shibani's list includes: the circle; the narrative; listening; reading; dictation; memorization; understanding; traveling; and example. However, according to Abud, Al-Shibani forgot such methods as the exemplar; the telling of stories; and evidence from the Quran and the Tradition (pp. 162-163).

Religious education is the central aim of Islamic education. And the methods for such a moral education, according to Abud, are:

(1) The employment of the preacher who with dictation explains the bad and the good of things, and with memorization teaches the best of poems, news, and advices.

(2) The use of the child's instinct and readiness in order to discipline the child in the following ways:

(a) Praising the child to satisfy the child's need.
(b) Making use of the child's interest in imitation.

(c) Making use of the child's tendency to socialize.

(d) Making use of the child's physical development, (pp. 162-163).

Al-Ghazzali and Education

Abud writes that the education of Al-Ghazzali is more advanced than contemporary education because the educational theories of Al-Ghazzali are based on the Quran and the Tradition (p. 171). Education should not be limited to certain stages of human development as is the case with contemporary education, but should start before birth and end only at death (p. 172). Islam takes care of a child even before birth; for Islam calls one to choose a virtuous wife to be a good mother (p. 173).

If education is to lead a person towards integration and a balance between his faculties, an exemplar is needed. According to Al-Ghazzali, that means a student needs a teacher who can discipline and guide him not by words alone but by both words and actions (p. 176).

Preparation of Teachers in Islam

Human civilization knows teaching as an occupation. This occupation was the decent occupation, writes Abud. And
members of the elite have become teachers with teaching considered a high governmental position. Abud writes that the preparation of teachers nowadays is based on providing the future teacher with knowledge and skills, such as psychology, general education, and specialization in one of the sciences (pp. 179-180).

To Al-Ghazzali, the preparation of teachers in religion had a precise meaning which contemporary civilization lacks. In Al-Ghazzali's time, teaching was not an occupation or job, but it was a message. Teaching as a message is based on internal persuasion, readiness for sacrifice, and devotion of time for the aim of teaching. When teaching is an occupation or job, the person works but for his salary. But, writes Abud, it is possible for teaching to be both message and occupation in a society which has a clear message on life, because the occupation will translate to message (pp. 180-181).

The Conditions Which Have to Be in the Teacher

According to Al-Ghazzali:

(1) He must be qualified for this position morally, mentally, and epistemically, before he can get permission to teach (p. 183).

(2) He should not prefer mundane life or be looking for respect or reputation. He should be ascetic. The best teacher, according to Al-Ghazzali, is the one
who prefers poverty to wealth (p. 187).

(3) He should take his knowledge from real scholars, not from ones who merely claim to be scholars. Also, he should master the Islamic sciences (pp. 187-188).

(4) His behavior must reflect his doctrine and his knowledge, and he should be exemplar. His behavior should be the same when he is by himself and when he is in front of others (p. 188).

(5) He should benefit his own teacher by becoming an exemplar to his students as his teacher was an exemplar to him (p. 188).

Having summarized the texts from Khan and Abud, this researcher will present a critical analysis of the texts in the following chapter. Specifically, the next chapter will evaluate Khan's and Abud's works as to their fidelity in presenting Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education.
CHAPTER IV
A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF KHAN'S AND ABUD'S WORKS

Introduction

In Chapter III, a summary of Khan's Ghazzali's Philosophy of Education (1976) and Abud's Al-Ghazzali's Educational Thought as It Appears From His Letter "O My Son" (1982) was presented.

These two authors attempted to provide meaningful examinations of Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education. Khan and Abud tackled a difficult yet rewarding task, and they have provided works that are beneficial as starting points in understanding Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education. However, as with any far-reaching study, and especially in this case because of the large volume of Al-Ghazzali's works and the nature in which his educational philosophy of education emerges throughout those works, neither Khan nor Abud deliver a definitive accounting of Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education.

It should be noted that no single work of Al-Ghazzali explicitly states his philosophy of education. Nor were his works designed to do so. Instead, his philosophy of education
emerges little by little from many texts; often Al-Ghazzali's educational theories are stated implicitly rather than explicitly.

This chapter presents a critical examination of Khan's and Abud's works. Their works are compared to the texts of Al-Ghazzali in order to determine how accurately the two authors presented Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education. Any major misinterpretations and omissions relevant to Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education in Khan's and Abud's texts are pointed out and evaluated in detail. Also, this researcher presents additional information regarding Al-Ghazzali's educational philosophy which is needed in order to provide a synthesis/text/summary of Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education.

This critical evaluation makes use of three major categories that were chosen by the researcher by which to examine Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education. These categories emerged naturally from detailed readings of Al-Ghazzali's various works. (Please see Chapter I for further details about each category.) These categories are: (1) Knowledge; (2) Education; and (3) The Nature of Teachers and Students.

Each category begins with an introduction briefly expressing Al-Ghazzali's major tenets regarding the category. Following the introduction, points of contention and discrepancies between what Khan and Abud have written and
what Al-Ghazzali wrote are presented. An evaluative interpretation of the areas of contention is presented and discussed employing direct references to Al-Ghazzali’s own texts and words. By referencing Al-Ghazzali’s texts — and adding to or correcting what has been stated by Khan and Abud — a more definitive accounting of Al-Ghazzali’s philosophy of education emerges.

Knowledge

Introduction

According to Al-Ghazzali, God creates man to exist in this world for a certain period of time. His life is temporary and for the purpose of worshipping God. God bestows on man a beastly nature which enables him to survive in this world and a spiritual nature by which he can know God. There are four kinds of knowledge to fit this dual nature. They are: (1) knowledge of oneself; (2) knowledge of God; (3) knowledge of the next world; and (4) knowledge of this world. When man acts toward his spiritual nature, the love of God will arise in his mind. When he loves God, he exists for the purpose he was created -- worshipping God. Spiritual activities are preparation for the eternal life in the next world.

On the other hand, when a man disobeys God and takes this life as an end in itself, there is no one who can save him from God’s punishment (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 153).
After examining what Khan has written in regards to knowledge, this researcher has found that six discrepancies exist between the assertion or statements of Khan and the original texts of Al-Ghazzali. These discrepancies are discussed below. The researcher first summarizes Khan's interpretation of Al-Ghazzali, and then discusses the inherent problems of the interpretation.

**Highest Knowledge and Spiritual Practice**

Khan: For Al-Ghazzali, there are secrets in the highest knowledge and spiritual practice which should not be revealed to a common person (p. 67).

Critique: Khan misinterpreted Al-Ghazzali's highest knowledge and spiritual practice. From both Islamic and Al-Ghazzali's perspectives, there is no secret knowledge which is only revealed to the elite people. However, there is advanced knowledge which is very hard for the common person to apprehend. And this lack of apprehension can misguide and bring doubt. According to Al-Ghazzali, the common people lack the methods of researching the truth, and they judge things from their own perspectives only (Al-Ghazzali, 1982c, p. 40).

Al-Ghazzali believed that common people are controlled by their opinions. They lack the ability to distinguish the false from the true which means they confuse following the dictates of the mind with following the true path of the Prophet (Lazarus-Yafeh, 1981, p. 488).
The common people simply lack the educational training necessary to comprehend advanced knowledge. But these people are not denied the 'secrets' of Islam. In fact, the Quran and the Hadith were specifically written in easy-to-understand language so that the message of Islam could be easily shared with all.

**Borrowing from the Quran**

Khan: Al-Ghazzali borrows his ideas from the Quran, from the sayings of the Prophet Mohammed, and from the maxims and the practices of saints, mystics, and scholars (p. 29).

Critique: Khan uses the word "borrow" incorrectly. The idea that Al-Ghazzali "borrows" from the Quran implies that he takes as his own ideas foreign to his own thinking. But as a Muslim, his ideas are one with the Quran and writings of the Prophet. A Muslim does not borrow Quranic ideals; a Muslim is the embodiment of Quranic ideals.

However, it can be said that Al-Ghazzali borrows some ideas from foreign scholarship, in this case from Greek philosophy and from mysticism. Al-Ghazzali was attracted by the Greek methods of logic and metaphysics. He borrowed these methods and introduced them to the Islamic doctrine in a way so as not to contradict the Quranic principles (Miller & Moore, 1970, p. 91).

Al-Ghazzali also borrowed mystic ways of life in a manner which coincides with Islamic doctrine. Al-Ghazzali
said, "It became clear to me, however, that what is most
distinctive of mysticism is something which cannot be
apprehended by study but only by immediate experience (dhawg
-- literally "tasting"), by ecstasy and a moral change"

From Al-Ghazzali's views about Greek philosophy and
mysticism, one can conclude that he borrows arguments from
those sources. Then, he incorporates them into his own
Islamic thoughts. He supports his ideas from the principles
of Islamic thought.

Knowledge as a Sacred Trust

Khan: Knowledge is a sacred trust and is to be bestowed
only upon the pious one; the low and lewd are deprived of it
(p. 36).

Critique: Khan speaks about mundane knowledge and
spiritual knowledge (p. 54). The word "knowledge" in his work
means both the science of this world (mundane knowledge) and
the science of the hereafter (spiritual knowledge).

Al-Ghazzali did say that "knowledge is bestowed upon the
fortunate and from the unfortunate is withheld" (Al-Ghazzali,
1988, p. 17). But what Al-Ghazzali meant by "knowledge" was
only the knowledge of the hereafter which raises one to be
near God and comes to a person who has a pure soul. For Al-
Ghazzali, study of the mundane does not bring actual or true
knowledge, it brings only craft. Khan does not employ this
distinction when he discusses knowledge in relation to Al-Ghazzali.

Al-Ghazzali supported his definition of knowledge with a saying from the Prophet in which the holders of knowledge are described as “the learned (who) are the trustees of Allah, so long as they have nothing to do with worldly objects,” (Al-Ghazzali, 1976, p. 15).

**Classification of Knowledge**

Khan: Al-Ghazzali’s types of knowledge can be classified into two heads: the mundane and the spiritual. And acquiring knowledge requires adherence to these three orders:

1. The seeker of knowledge must possess the right beliefs as enunciated in Quran and Sunna;
2. The seeker of knowledge must do good and avoid evil as prescribed in the Quran and Sunna;
3. The seeker of knowledge must have a positive attitude toward himself, others, and God (p. 54-55).

Critique: Khan misinterpreted Al-Ghazzali’s classification of knowledge. Al-Ghazzali classified sciences into two main categories: the science of the hereafter (knowledge) and the profane sciences (crafts). Also, Al-Ghazzali further divided the science of the hereafter (spiritual knowledge) into practical sciences and revelation. The practical sciences include beliefs, works, and prohibitions. Khan presents an insufficient description about
these practical science.

For Al-Ghazzali, the application of the practical sciences is obligatory for every Muslim. These obligations -- which Khan fails to include -- are:

(1) Beliefs: When a child reaches puberty, he must learn the true words of the confession of faith (alshahadah) and must understand their meaning. He must believe the two statements that make up the confession of faith: "There is no god but Allah" and "Mohammed is the Prophet of Allah." However, the person is not obliged to penetrate their meaning by research or analysis. Instead he must believe in them unconditionally without doubt. It becomes obligatory for those who doubt the confession's meaning to acquire the necessary knowledge which can lead to the removal of doubt.

(2) Works: Muslims are obliged to pray five times each day. They have an obligation to learn how to perform both the prayer and ablution (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 25).

A Muslim must know there is a month of Ramadan in which he is obliged to fast. Therefore, if the month of fasting comes, his obligation is to learn everything about the fast and the spiritual activities related to fasting.

Additionally, the Muslim must know that he should make an obligatory pilgrimage during his life. Therefore, if the time of pilgrimage comes and he has the financial means to perform it, then it would be obligatory for him to learn all matters necessary to perform the pilgrimage (Al-Ghazzali,
1988, p. 26).

(3) Prohibitions: If a new person converts to Islam, he must leave behind habits that contradict Islamic doctrine, such as wearing silk cloth, gaining illegal property, or looking to women other than his wife. Also, if a person is living in a town where it is a custom to drink wine and eat pork, he should know that these things are forbidden by Islamic law. Furthermore, all matters which are obligatory for Muslims are required learning (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 27).

Al-Ghazzali did not only exhort Muslims to acquire obligatory knowledge related to beliefs, works and prohibitions, but he also provided an educational program for teaching it. He believed that this knowledge should be instilled in the child from his early years in order to be committed to memory. Teachers should not explain the meaning of it to the child because the meaning will be revealed to the child little by little as he grows older. After the child commits it to memory, the child, through practice, can begin to understand it unconsciously. Then, he will believe in it, will accept it, and will become certain about its reliability -- all of which are obtained in the child without proof.

Gaining all the above knowledge without proof, according to Al-Ghazzali, is based on pure instruction (talgin) and on acceptance of the teacher’s authority without self-investigation. This kind of teaching may not be free from some doubt and falsehood. It should be strengthened by
removing the falsity and the doubt that may exist in the child or the layman until the knowledge becomes pure and there is no hesitation in accepting its reliability.

To strengthen one's knowledge, one has to read and interpret the Quran, study the sayings of the Prophet, understand their meaning, and perform the religious duties and acts of worship (Al-Ghazzali, 1963, p. 14).

Compulsory Knowledge

Khan: Al-Ghazzali was of the opinion that the acquisition of Islamic knowledge is a must for every believer and that compulsory knowledge is the teaching of the Quran and the Tradition (Sunna).

Critique: Khan misinterpreted compulsory knowledge in Al-Ghazzali's works. Al-Ghazzali divided Islamic knowledge into individual and collective duties. For Al-Ghazzali, only individual duty is compulsory knowledge, and it is, therefore, a must for every believer to learn. The words of the Prophet say that "seeking knowledge is an ordinance obligatory upon every Muslim." For Al-Ghazzali, the knowledge referred to by the Prophet is not knowledge in general but is the knowledge connected with the daily duty of Muslims toward God. This daily duty relates to three matters: beliefs, works and prohibitions (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 29).

For Al-Ghazzali, the only knowledge that is compulsory is individual knowledge which is knowledge connected to
worship. Failure to acquire this knowledge is a great sin. But, unlike Khan, Al-Ghazzali does not include the study of the Quran and the Hadith as compulsory; Al-Ghazzali included such knowledge under collective duty.

Forbidden Sciences

Khan: Al-Ghazzali forbid certain sciences, such as painting, astrology, astronomy, and sculpture because they excite the senses or encourage indulgence in material affairs. Al-Ghazzali did permit music and singing under certain conditions (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 62).

Critique: Khan did not explain or correctly interpret the reasons behind forbidding these sciences. Khan misinterpreted the science of astronomy which Al-Ghazzali divided into two parts. The first is mathematics, which is allowed by the Quran as a method of accounting regarding the movement of the sun and the moon. The second is astrology used to predict future events from present events. Astrology is an attempt to know the future; however, He who knows the future is God. Therefore, Islamic law prohibits astrology because it purports to give to man an attribute of God (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 69).

Al-Ghazzali did describe the nature of the forbidden sciences as sciences which are more harmful than they are useful. He states that their usage benefits neither religion nor the daily life of Muslims (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 94).
Summary

Having examined Khan's text with regards to Al-Ghazzali's original positions pertaining to knowledge, this researcher has found that a number of discrepancies between Khan's text and the works of Al-Ghazzali do exist. Similarly, there are a number of erroneous assertions made by Abud regarding Al-Ghazzali's position on knowledge. Five of Abud's contentions are discussed below.

Knowledge in Islam

Abud: Knowledge in Islam is connected with the essence of Islamic doctrine. For this reason, revelation in Islam begins with the command of God to read. From the Holy Quran: "Proclaim! (or read) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, who creates man out of a leech-like clot. Proclaim! and thy Lord is most bountiful. He who taught (the use of) the pen taught man that which he knew not" (p. 107).

Reading in Islam is not only the ability to read written things but also to read the unwritten, whether in heaven or on Earth (p. 118). An example of reading the unwritten would be the ability to see the power of God in a clash of thunder or in a tree that returns to life in the spring. In this type of reading, the believer is able to see or "read" God in natural signs.

Critique: Abud states that reading provides knowledge
which is connected to the essence of Islamic doctrine. Also, he writes that reading is the ability to understand unwritten signs. To this end, Abud provides insufficient knowledge about the concept of "read" and the nature of its connection to the essence of Islamic doctrine. To clear the air, one has to know first the meaning of the term "read" and then the particular knowledge that is necessary for Islamic doctrine.

The Quranic interpretation for the term "read" is Igra -- meaning "read" or "recite" or "rehearse" or "proclaim aloud"; the object to be understood is Allah's message. This proclaiming or reading implies not only the duty of blazing forth with Allah's message, as going with the prophetic office, but also the duty of promulgation and wide dissemination of the truth by all who read and understand the message (Holy Quran, pp. 1980-1981).

Not only does Abud fail to completely explain the term "reading," he also fails to fully explain the Islamic doctrine that is to be "read." To know Islamic doctrine, one has to know that Islam is built upon five pillars. They are testifying that there is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his messenger; performing prayers regularly; paying Zakah; fasting during the month of Ramadan; and making a pilgrimage to the sacred sanctuary of Allah, (Ibn Sulyman, date unknown, pp. 11-13).

From Al-Ghazzali's perspective, these five pillars are an individual duty (Fard'ayn); it is obligatory to each
Muslim to know how to perform them.

For example, when a Muslim owns more property than he necessarily needs, then his obligation is to learn how to pay the Zakah according to the kind of property he possesses. In the case that he owns camels, he is obliged to learn the Zakah of camels, (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 26).

A Muslim must know that God orders him to pray five times a day. He is obliged to learn the time of the prayers and everything related to them. Prayer cannot be performed without ablutions; therefore, he must learn how to perform the ablutions (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 25).

From believing in the five pillars, Muslims must know that there is a month in each year called Ramadan in which they must fast. Therefore, the obligation for Muslims is to learn that in each day of the fasting month (Ramadan), the fast will last from morning until sunset. Also, there are many spiritual activities which accompany the fasting and must be known (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 25).

Finally, a Muslim has an obligation to perform a pilgrimage to Mekkah at least once in his life if he has the financial means to do so. When he is ready for the pilgrimage, his obligation is then to learn how to perform it and to learn the spiritual activities necessary to such an obligation, (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 24).

As previously mentioned, Abud was negligent in discussing these pillars and their necessary relationship to
reading the doctrine of Islam. As is the case more than once with Abud, his interpretation is not incorrect, but it is inadequate.

**True Knowledge**

Abud: In the Islamic sense, some kinds of knowledge are more significant than others. Without knowing the Islamic creed, no Muslim can know what is permissible and what is wrongdoing. And he cannot be called a Muslim without this knowledge (p. 11).

Critique: Abud did not mention the kind of knowledge which has more significance than others, while Al-Ghazzali meant that knowledge is absolute truths which are eternal, such as the Quran and the tradition. This is the true knowledge which is derived from the Creator. The rest of human knowledge is the product of the senses; Al-Ghazzali often called this craft, not knowledge.

Al-Ghazzali believed that there is only type of true knowledge. And this knowledge is intrinsically good for its own sake, not by its connection with other qualities.

For Al-Ghazzali, all precious things fall into one of three groups:

(1) The science which is sought for its own intrinsic value.
(2) The science which is sought as a means to an end.
(3) The science which is sought for both.

The science of hereafter (knowledge) is the only
knowledge sought for its own because it is the path for happiness in this world and in the next (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 26). Abud talks about knowledge without making these important distinctions.

Theory and Practice

Abud: Science without practice is insane because the main function of science is to be translated into beneficial work. Otherwise, the fruit of science is merely a waste of time and thought (p. 113).

Critique: The benefit of practice with theory is truly beneficial even from Al-Ghazzali's perspective. But Abud misinterpreted the spirit of relating theory to practice (i.e., relating knowledge to spiritual activity). As Al-Ghazzali wrote, "The connection between them is to apply the learning set to spiritual benefit." He writes that some learned men who apply theory to practice gain worldly benefit from learning. Those men are called the teachers of falsehood because their purposes are not to spread the words of God but to gain personal benefit and to enjoy the luxuries of this life.

The Prophet (Muhammad) said: "No man will be learned unless he puts knowledge into practice." He also said: "When the learned men do not translate their learning into action, when they prefer love for one another with their tongues and nurse hatred in their heart, when they sever the tie of
relationship, God sends a curse upon them, makes their tongues mute and their eyes blind," (Al-Ghazzali, 1982, pp. 59-60).

Individual and Collective Duty

Abud: Al-Ghazzali divided knowledge into individual (obligatory) duty and collective duty. Religious knowledge is considered individual duty, and no one can be exempt from it. On the other hand, mundane knowledge, such as commerce, economics, medicine, and engineering, is collective knowledge. Mundane knowledge relates to a person's abilities and interests, as well as to society's needs.

Critique: Abud misinterpreted the concepts of individual and collective duties. Abud considered individual duty to be religious knowledge, but Al-Ghazzali divided religious knowledge into both individual and collective duties.

According to Al-Ghazzali, collective duties (fard kafayah) are the sciences which are necessary for the welfare of this world, such as medicine, arithmetic, agriculture, weaving, and politics. But if there is no one practicing them and society is being harmed by this lack, such sciences become individual duty (fard'ayn). It then is a must or obligation (individual duty) for those who qualify to study the appropriate fields (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 30). For example, if there is no physician in town (normally a collective duty), it becomes an individual duty or obligation
to study medicine even though the practice of medicine is mundane, rather than spiritual, in nature.

Not all religious knowledge is considered individual duty. According to Al-Ghazzali, the knowledge that makes up individual duty is the knowledge which relates to the practice of religion. This knowledge deals with three matters: beliefs, actions and prohibitions. The rest of religious knowledge is considered by him as collective duty (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 29).

Division of Sciences

Abud: The sciences are divided into the following: (1) praiseworthy sciences (ulum mahmuda), such as religious sciences; (2) objectionable sciences (ulum medhmuma), such as magic and astronomy; and (3) permissible sciences (ulum mubaha), the study of the permissible sciences is allowed to a small degree, but extensive study is dangerous to one’s faith. Such sciences include the divisions of philosophy -- mathematics, logic, naturalism, theology, politics, and ethics (p. 26).

Critique: Abud misrepresented the division of sciences in Al-Ghazzali’s works. Al-Ghazzali, in the Book of Knowledge (1988), divided knowledge into profane (worldly) and sacred (hereafter). He further divided the former into praiseworthy, permissible, and blameworthy, and the latter into practical science and revelation (p. 39). Abud omitted the division
between the sacred and the profane.

Education
Introduction

In Islamic education, according to Al-Ghazzali, there are spiritual and mundane aims. The spiritual aims are the highest aims and lead the individual to become close to God, prepare him for the next life, and make him an active entity to spread the word of God and act according to God's commands.

The mundane aims allow the study and practice of sciences which are useful for civil and social purposes. The study of mundane sciences become obligatory when such study is necessary for the survival of society, (Quraishi, 1956, p. 19).

Al-Ghazzali called spiritual education "the real education" by which the individual can come to know himself and his God, and by which he increases his fear of God. Also, through spiritual education, God is recognized and the mind is able to engage in the duties that save him in the next life.

Al-Ghazzali believed that mundane education is not real education. It is but technical education such as the learning of medicine, mathematics, poetry, law, and language (Al-Ghazzali, 1982b, p. 319).

After examining what Khan has written in regards to
education, this researcher has found that discrepancies exist between the assertions of Khan and the texts of Al-Ghazzali. The four problems areas are discussed below.

**Knowing Oneself Means Knowing God**

Khan: A person who gains education will become an ethical being. Ethics will lead him to know himself consciously and to know the surrounding environment.

Critique: There is insufficient information from Khan about how education leads to knowing God. Al-Ghazzali wrote that it is self-reflection that leads to knowing God. As stated by Al-Ghazzali, "Knowledge of self is the key to knowledge of God." According to the sayings of the Prophet (Muhammad), "He who knows himself, knows God." In the Quran, "We all show them our signs in the world and in themselves, that the truth may be manifested in them," (p. 5).

Man, by self-reflection, will know that there was a time when he was a non-existent being, and he does not create himself. Thus it must be a creator who creates him from nothing. God says, "Does it not occur to man that there was a time when he was nothing." Further, man knows that he was made out of a drop of water in which there was neither intellect nor hearing, nor head, nor hand. From this, it is obvious that whatever degree of perfection he may have arrived at, he did not make himself (p. 15).

A man should know that he does not create himself and
should realize that the tools for survival, such as food, power, and wisdom, are not his creation but are God's creation. God creates man and also creates the basic elements of his survival. When man reflects on his creation and the creation of the elements that are necessary for him to survive, man comes to know God's existence. Therefore, the knowledge of self and the surroundings becomes a key to the knowledge of God.

Khan does not specify that it is only education leading to self-reflection that brings a person to God.

**Aims of Al-Ghazzali's Theory of Education**

Khan: The aim of Al-Ghazzali's theory of education is to empower Muslims intellectually and spiritually.

Critique: Khan believed that the aim of Al-Ghazzali's theory of education is to provide individuals with intellectual and spiritual knowledge. But in saying this, Khan seems to have missed an important step -- which is establishing whether or not Al-Ghazzali had a formal theory of education.

Some scholars claim Al-Ghazzali did not have an explicit theory of education in a formal sense. Instead, these thinkers say that because Al-Ghazzali's thought was Islamic in nature, his theory of education naturally coincides with traditional Islamic educational theory. Therefore, one should present an Islamic education theory and then find out if Al-
Ghazzali argued its concepts. If he did, then the argument of these concepts will be his theory of education. However, it is also known that each scholar or author has independent thoughts which can distinguish him from the others.

The Islamic educational theory is fundamentally based on Quranic concepts. The Quran does not close the door on future interpretations or additions to this theory for Islam accepts intellectual ideas that are in agreement with the basic Islamic principles. The Quran has excludes ideas which cannot be reconciled with Islamic doctrine.

In addition, from an Islamic perspective, traditional philosophy which separates revelation and reason is useless. Consequently, the philosophy of education which is applicable in solving Muslim educational issues should not be based on this type of traditional philosophy. The analytical philosophy, which addresses non-Islamic concepts, has little influence in the Islamic world. And Islam has recommended the replacement of the term philosophy with the Islamic term *hikmah* which refers to the use of both mind and revelation as methods of reaching the truth (Abdullah, 1982, pp. 23-43).

Al-Ghazzali borrowed ideas, providing they agreed with Islamic principles, from the Greeks and from mysticism and spread them among his thoughts. Also, he rejected the philosophical ideas which relied only on reason to investigate the truth. His main philosophical theme was to
prove the insufficiency of reason because he thought Muslims should behave according to God's commands.

Choosing to obey God is to behave according to His commands. This means that the behavior of the believers is internalized by faith and not merely a direct response to outside stimulus. However, if the outside behavior does agree with Islamic doctrine, then no harm is done in accepting them. For this reason, Muslims -- Al-Ghazzali among them -- have borrowed certain ideas from mysticism which do not contradict their doctrine, even though they have rejected the totality of mysticism, (Boisard, 1988, p. 47), as well as from the Greeks.

The statement of Khan should be reformed in the following way: the aim of Al-Ghazzali's theory of education is to empower Islamic doctrine with intellectual ideas from non-Islamic thoughts if these ideas do agree with the Muslim's spiritual doctrine.

In this way, Al-Ghazzali introduced Aristotelian logic to the Muslim's educational system, joining Greek techniques with Muslim doctrine. He accepted the tenets of Neo-Platonism which agree with Islam but rejected the ideas that contradict Quranic understanding. Mystically, he introduced and developed the idea of light in which he insisted that the truth is a light which comes directly from God to the heart of the believer (Dodge, 1962, p. 85).

Finally, Al-Ghazzali did agree with the Islamic
educational theory and enhanced it by adding new ideas from philosophy and mysticism.

Becoming One with the Divine

Khan: Education envisions one to acquire knowledge and wisdom to enable the individual to become one with the Divine and the Divine consciousness and will, and thus, this will become his consciousness and will.

Critique: Khan writes that the expectation from education is to gain knowledge and wisdom that enables the believer "to become one with the Divine." Khan neither explains his statement nor illustrates the kind of knowledge and wisdom which lead to oneness with God.

Al-Ghazzali mentioned that the human soul has a divine nature which strives to be near God. Also, he said that when God bestows His love on a believer, He becomes his hearing (with which he hears), his sight, tongue, hand and foot. These do not mean a direct identification with God because, to Al-Ghazzali, that would be seen as heresy. For Al-Ghazzali, God created man but God and man are not in union, are not as one.

If Khan meant by "one with the Divine," the identification with God, then he misinterpreted the spiritual part of Al-Ghazzali's thoughts. If Khan used the words "one with the Divine" metaphorically to mean closeness to God, then he is on the right path. Al-Ghazzali specified the kind
of knowledge which raises one to become nearer to God which
is the obligatory knowledge and its spiritual activities.

Al-Ghazzali based his idea on the saying of the Prophet:

God, most blessed and most high, says 'nothing brings man nearer to me than the
performance of what I made obligatory for
him; and when I have bestowed My love on
him, I become his hearing with which he
hears, his sight with which he sees, his
tongue with which he speaks, his hand
with which he grasps, and his feet with
which he walks,' (Al-Ghazzali, 1982, p.
90).

Al-Ghazzali believed that a human being has a divine
soul and that God sends him to Earth to worship Him in what
is called "the fall for experience, not for punishment, as
Christians claimed." Al-Ghazzali did believe that individuals
strive to return to their original essence because by nature
they are foreign to this world.

Al-Ghazzali's belief in this idea of the divine origin
of the human soul made him assume that a man should pay
attention only to the basic bodily needs which enable him to
restore to his original place. Therefore, man belongs to the
divinity, and as a result, he must seek the way to reach his
ideal need that makes him close to God by paying most of his
attention to the spiritual matters which fulfill his purpose
in this life (which is "worshipping God") and by restoring
him to his original nature (Upper, 1952, pp. 23-32).
**Function of Education in the Muslim World**

Khan: The function of education in the Muslim world is to provide the individual with skills and knowledge which enable him to be restored to his original nature and to unify him to the Muslim society.

Critique: Khan presented insufficient information about the ability of knowledge to restore a believer to his original nature and unify him to Islamic society.

Al-Ghazzali did find that Muslims are unique individuals who have a particular duty toward God, themselves, and their society. Muslims are obliged to fulfill God's commands in Islamic society. This society possesses a well-defined creed and has the ability to instill its principles by example and persuasion; such a society, according to Al-Ghazzali, is Islam (Al-Ghazzali, 1976, p. 15).

**Summary**

Having examined Khan's text with regards to Al-Ghazzali's original positions pertaining to education, this researcher has found that a number of discrepancies between Khan's work and the works of Al-Ghazzali do indeed exist.

Similarly, there are a number of erroneous assertions made by Abud regarding education with respect to Al-Ghazzali's positions. These points of contention from Abud's text follow.
**Education as a Continuous Process**

Abud: Education is a continuing process which is not limited to age. It begins before birth and ends at death.

Critique: In Al-Ghazzali's words, knowledge and will are necessary qualities for education. Since young children lack these qualities, parents should offer the children some sort of moral guidance. But Al-Ghazzali stated that actual education cannot begin until the child develops will and the capacity for knowledge -- around the age of six. Abud does not distinguish between parental training of a child and formal education.

According to Al-Ghazzali, human beings and animals share external and internal senses, but there are two qualities which distinguish man from animal -- knowledge and will. Knowledge is the ability to reach general conclusions, to conceptualize abstract ideas, and to gain intellectual truth. By will is meant the motivation which urges one to search for an entity that has been appropriated by reason to be good. Al-Ghazzali believed that the child at an early age lacks the qualities of knowledge and will, but does have the external and internal senses of passion and anger (Ali, 1944, pp. 33-34).

**Al-Ghazzali's Type of Education**

Abud: Al-Ghazzali's type of education is one which
trains students in moral conduct, frees their souls from devil (evil) influences, and takes care of the students mentally and physically. His education also has other aims, such as religious, social, and political aims. The religious aim is the most significant because it is the basis for the other aims (p. 148-149).

Critique: Al-Ghazzali presented two kinds of education—spiritual and intellectual. He believed that true education is spiritual because it leads a student to become near God. However, this researcher was unable to know from Abud's words which part of education clears the soul and which part fulfills other aims. And is the education with "religious aims" different from the education that "frees the soul from devil influences"? Should one assume that intellectual education does not cleanse the soul? Abud needs to provide further explanation.

Direction of Al-Ghazzali's Educational Thought

Abud: "Al-Ghazzali's educational thoughts reflected the social climate of his period" (p. 33).

Critique: Abud misinterpreted the direction of Al-Ghazzali's educational thought. Al-Ghazzali attempted to restore people to original faith by returning them to the teachings of the Prophet (Muhammad). Abud, on the other hand, states that Al-Ghazzali's thought is a reflection of his period. While some scholars may attribute Al-Ghazzali's
embracing of mysticism as a reaction to his era, Al-Ghazzali's educational thought transcended his era and took its influence from Muhammad and the early days of Islam.

The educational ideas of great spiritual authorities are a reflection of their original beliefs and are not necessarily a direct reflection of the social climate of the period. Also, if Al-Ghazzali's thought reflected the spirit of his times, one would expect that Al-Ghazzali's colleagues (living in the same era) would express thoughts similar to Al-Ghazzali. But that was not the case. Al-Ghazzali stood alone (Gil'adi, 1992, p. 55).

'O My Son'

Abud: Al-Ghazzali's letter 'O My Son' was entirely related to education. The remainder of Al-Ghazzali's educational thought is scattered, piecemeal, throughout many other works.

Critique: Abud misinterpreted Al-Ghazzali's 'O My Son' which Abud claimed was directed at education. In fact, the work in which Al-Ghazzali more fully discussed education is The Book of Knowledge. This latter work discusses education both spiritually and intellectually. In 'O My Son,' attention is focused on spiritual education only.

Abud argues that Al-Ghazzali wrote about education in three ways -- works only about education; works that directly connect educational thought with other thoughts; and works
that combine scatterings of educational thought with unrelated subjects.

Abud writes (1982, p. 44) that '0 My Son' is the first type -- strictly a book on education alone. This researcher disagrees. The letter contains spiritual advice. It presents no formal theory of education for intellectual education. The letter combines religious and educational thought, and as such, would fit better in either of the two other categories.

Unfortunately, Abud did not mention The Book of Knowledge which treats both spiritual and secular education and includes more educational ideas than '0 My Son.'

**Aims of Profane Education**

Abud: The aims of education are to prepare for the hereafter and to provide the individual with skills and knowledge. Al-Ghazzali divided the second aim into individual, social, and occupational aims. Individual aims are those relating to the learner himself. Social aims are those relating to the community and its behavior. Occupational aims are those relating to education in fields like the sciences and the arts.

Critique: Al-Ghazzali did present profane and hereafter (spiritual) education and considered the profane knowledge as knowledge which guided a person to the hereafter. Abud neglects to mention that profane education also has aims.
These aims are:

(1) Individual aims. Al-Ghazzali defined individual aims as those aims which take a person away from God. Al-Ghazzali believed that if a person searches for knowledge and his aim is to profit from worldly advantage, to satisfy his desire and attract men's attention to himself, to collect wealth, then he will be on the opposite side of the faithful people. That person is in the process of selling the eternal life for present life, and his bargain is dead losses. On the other hand, if his quest for knowledge is to become close to God and his aim is to receive guidance toward God's path and not acquire worldly knowledge which leads him to the devil's ways, then he will win his trade and God will award him the happiness of this world and the next. Moreover, the angels will unfold their wings for him when he walks. And the inhabitants of the sea will ask pardon from God for him when he walks.

The Prophet (Muhammad) said, "Whoever increases in knowledge and does not increase in guidance only increases in distance from God" (Al-Ghazzali, 1982c, pp. 86-87).

(2) Social aims. A human being can be known as a living force who has rights and duties in the boundary of his social regulations. Each individual must respect the rule of the society in which is belongs. A Muslim is a unique individual who has a clear aim in life; he also belongs to a society which possesses a well-defined creed -- that society is Islam.
(Al-Ghazzali, 1976, p. 15).

(3) Occupational Aims. The purpose of acquiring worldly sciences or other activities in Muslim society is to follow the rule of Islamic creed which leads one to spiritual knowledge. The object of spiritual knowledge is to know God. The concept of knowing God is not merely the belief or the knowledge which transfers from generation to generation; it is the acquisition of the light which ascends from true faith in God. God bestows this light on His faithful people, whom by which see truth of things (Al-Ghazzali, 1976, p. 63).

Mysticism

Abud: General education (which includes both spiritual and intellectual education) was not Al-Ghazzali's concern; his interest was spiritual education alone. Abud based this statement on Al-Ghazzali's belief in mysticism as the last step in the ladder of knowledge (p. 32).

Critique: Abud misinterpreted the concept of mysticism in Al-Ghazzali's works. Mysticism in Al-Ghazzali is not intuition. It is the highest kind of knowledge which can be reached by learning, worshipping, and thinking intellectually. From the Islamic perspective, there is no true separation between mind and revelation. The separation occurs for instructional purposes only and not in actual fact. Both mind and revelation have extreme lines, Muslim beliefs exist between them, and Muslims must not deny any of
them. If a Muslim believes in the mind and denies revelation, he must not be called a Muslim.

Muslims have managed to spread the word of Allah on Earth. Islamic education applies general education to prepare individuals who can present the law of Allah for all human beings or at least lead them on the path of performing such an end. The main ideas of presenting Allah’s words are to believe in Him and obey His command blindly. According to the Quran: “I have created Jinns and men that may serve Me (ya’budun)” (Abdullah, 1982, p. 116).

Al-Ghazzali found that the philosophical thought which relies only on the mind to investigate the truth does not lead to the absolute truth. Therefore, his main philosophical thought was to prove the weakness of reason as a guide to the truth (Tomeh, 1952, p. 175).

However, Al-Ghazzali believed that reason (aql) is the way to mysticism. He believed reason and revelation complement each other:

He held their relationship in similitude to the relationship between the eye and the rays of the sun. The eye can not grasp things in a dark place, while the rays of the sun are incapable of producing sight in isolation from an observing eye (Abdullah, 1982, p. 104).

Al-Ghazzali also believed that reason is the source of knowledge. For Al-Ghazzali, reason is what makes the tree of knowledge bear fruit. He also compares reason to the light of the sun or the vision of the physical eye. Humans should give
honor to intellectual knowledge (reason) because it gives light to the darkness of this world and the next (Al-Ghazzali, 1982a, p. 109).

Islamic Thought and Spiritual Education

Abud: Spiritual education emerges from an understanding of Islamic thought.

Critique: Abud is correct, but he needs to elaborate on the way Al-Ghazzali understood Islamic thought and how this thought guided students to spiritual education. To know how Al-Ghazzali understood Islamic thought, which can lead to spiritual education, one has to know that spiritual education cannot be gained by the senses or through experience.

Al-Ghazzali believed that there are two prerequisites which lead to "necessary knowledge". The first one comes from experiment, and the other comes from the senses. A person can know through experiment that, for example, a heavier body is quicker to fall than a lighter body. Or, if there is a balance device, the heavier pan is lower than the other — that can by seen by the sense of sight. But the senses and demonstrations do not bring necessary knowledge, according to Al-Ghazzali. How does one know that the scale works properly? Or that the eyes do not deceive?

Al-Ghazzali distinguished between appearance and reality. Appearance is merely opinion (ra'y) and analogy (giyas‘aqli) (Al-Ghazzali, 1978, p. 9). Gaining knowledge
through the senses or experiment does not lead to truth but to more doubt -- and profound study is needed to probe empirical reality.

The Nature of Teachers and Students

(Teachers)

Introduction

Al-Ghazzali believed that a teacher is someone who conveys anything to others, be it positive or negative knowledge (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 142). This notion of teacher agrees with his general division of knowledge as spiritual or mundane. Teaching is the intellectual stage which started after puberty. According to Al-Ghazzali, teachers in the intellectual stage are divided into three groups. First, there are falsehood teachers who pay no attention to the knowledge of the hereafter and concentrate their instruction on the luxury of this life. Second, there are teachers who are wise and devote their instruction to the hereafter. From Al-Ghazzali’s perspective, these are the real teachers who convey the real knowledge. Third, between the first and the second types of teachers, there exist those who teach by their tongues the real knowledge, while in their hearts they deeply love this life more than the hereafter (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 142).

From an Islamic perspective, no Muslim can know right from wrong without religious knowledge. And teachers who
spend most of their lives studying Islam are the most well versed in the subject. The daily life of the students should be according to the ways of the Prophet. Students are obligated to consult teachers about their daily activities.

Teaching, particularly in the early period of Islam, was considered a religious duty. Al-Ghazzali recommended teachers not take money in return for their religious duty.

After examining Khan's writings in regards to the teacher, this researcher has found three major discrepancies exist between the assertions of Khan and the texts of Al-Ghazzali. These three areas of contentions follow.

**Concept of Teacher**

Khan: For Al-Ghazzali, the teacher is a person who tells anything to anybody. The teacher is one who imparts anything good, positive, creative or constructive to anybody, at any stage in life, in any way or method, and without expectation of money in return.

Critique: Khan misinterpreted Al-Ghazzali’s concept of teacher. According to Al-Ghazzali, a teacher is a person who has positive knowledge and conveys it to others. He based this belief on the Quranic verse: "Moreover, when God entered into a covenant with those to whom the scriptures had been given, and said, 'Ye shall surely make it known to mankind and not hide it.'"

Al-Ghazzali presented two kinds of teachers: true and
false teachers. The former is the one who conveys knowledge of the hereafter, and the latter is the one who indulges in the luxuries of this world. Al-Ghazzali wrote:

By teacher, I mean a teacher of the science of the hereafter or the science of this world, whose goal in all his work is (bliss in) the hereafter and not (success in) this world. Teaching with a view to achieving success in this world is destructive for both the teacher and the student. For such destruction, we seek refuge with God (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 142).

Moral Responsibility of the Teachers

Khan: The moral responsibilities of the teacher are:

(1) The teacher should be well prepared in his subject matter.

(2) The teacher should deal with his students as though he were dealing with his own son.

(3) The teacher should clear any ambiguity in his subject matter.

(4) The teacher, by love and sympathy, should shift the student's attention toward the subject of teaching, and not use force.

(5) The teacher should not praise himself and his knowledge or belittle other teachers or the sciences taught by them.

(6) The teacher should know the intellectual level of his students and teach them according to their capacities of
understanding.

(7) The teacher should look at students individuals -- some of them more intelligent than others. Teachers should display patience toward the slower students and should not belittle their abilities, nor should teachers praise the intelligent students in a way that would harm the dull students.

(8) The teacher should treat his students equally and not confer privileges to some of them.

Critique: Khan synthesized the moral responsibility of the teacher from various Al-Ghazzali's works, However, Al-Ghazzali, in *The Book of Knowledge* (1988), presented explicitly the moral responsibilities of the teacher. Khan did mention a number of these responsibilities, but he omitted two significant components which are the spirit of Al-Ghazzali's moral responsibility of the teacher. The first concerns the spiritual part of the teacher's duty and the second relates to his behavior. These two components are: (1) To follow the example of the Prophet (Muhammad) and consider teaching as a message in which the teacher should not seek fees for his teaching, but rather his teaching should be for spreading God's words. (2) The teacher's behavior should be a reflection of what he teaches (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, pp. 142-149), and he should not teach anything unless he is ready to do it first (p. 163).

Al-Ghazzali supported this by the Quranic verse: "Will
ye enjoin what is right upon others and forget yourself?" (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 163).

Classification of Teachers

Khan: Al-Ghazzali described two classes of teachers -- the vicious and the righteous. The vicious teacher is one whose knowledge does not prove beneficial for those he has taught; who does not practice what he teaches or professes or preaches; and who is proud of his learning. Such a teacher is a hypocrite. A righteous teacher is one who removes the scruples of the skeptics and leads students from doubt to faith, from hypocrisy to sincerity, from worldly pomp to moral humility, and from petty grudges to broad-mindedness. The righteous teacher leads students from darkness to light.

Critique: Khan neither illustrated the reason behind the classifications, nor did he present a complete classification of the teachers in Al-Ghazzali's works. Teaching from Al-Ghazzali's perspective is a message. In actual life, only a small percentage of Muslims have taught according to Islamic law. The rest of Muslim teachers have strayed from the right path because of a defect in their intelligence, as well as a strong attachment to this life and its luxury. For these reasons, Al-Ghazzali divided teachers into three groups.

Khan omitted the third classification. It is necessary for this study to present explicitly Al-Ghazzali's classification of teachers.
According to Al-Ghazzali, there are three kinds of teachers. The first includes those who publicly seek this world and devote their efforts toward the luxuries of this life. Also, they do not pay attention to the next life. Such teachers will destroy themselves and their students by becoming far away from God’s guidance. These are the teachers who Khan called the “vicious” teachers. The second are the teachers who fear God most. They use teaching to spread the word of God on Earth. They guide students to be close to God. Also, they follow their teachings. These teachers and those who follow them are saved in both this life and the hereafter. These are the teachers whom Khan called the “righteous” teachers. Third are the teachers who teach students to be close to God, but deep in their hearts, they have a love of luxury. And this love blinds their inner eye. Those teachers will save their students from hell fire, but they will destroy themselves (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 120). This group of teachers was omitted from Khan’s work.

Summary

Having examined Khan’s text with regards to Al-Ghazzali’s original positions regarding teachers, this researcher has found that a number of discrepancies between Khan’s work and the works of Al-Ghazzali do indeed exist.

Similarly, there are a number of erroneous assertions made by Abud regarding teachers with respect to Al-Ghazzali’s
positions. Three points of contention from Abud’s text follow.

Necessity of a Teacher

Abud: “If education is to lead a person toward integration and balance between his faculties, an exemplar is needed.” According to Al-Ghazzali, continues Abud, that means a student needs a teacher who can discipline and guide him not by words alone, but by both words and actions.

Critique: Abud misinterpreted the necessity of a teacher to the student. He mentioned that the teacher is needed to achieve the balance between the faculties, while in Al-Ghazzali’s words, the teacher is needed because the way of faith is obscure.

According to Al-Ghazzali, the student needs the direction of the teacher because not only is the way of faith obscure, but the devil’s ways are clear. The student who directs himself will end up in the devil’s ways. Therefore, the student must protect himself from the devil’s ways by accompanying the teacher (shaikh), and he must follow his teacher blindly and obey all his words and commands without opposing him in any matter. Should it happen that the teacher makes a mistake, it is no greater than the mistake of the student who tries to guide himself (Gibb, 1963, p. 151).

Abud needed to further elaborate Al-Ghazzali’s position on the necessity of the teacher.
Teaching as a Message

Abud: In Abud's opinion, contemporary civilization understands teaching as an occupation or job, while in Islam the meaning of teaching is more an ideal than a job. It is a message by which the teacher spreads the word of God. Thus, a teacher who considers teaching as a message will have with internal satisfaction and will devote his efforts to teaching, sacrificing his energy and time for the aim of teaching. On the other hand, those who practice teaching for salary will allow their efforts and energy to be influenced by the increase and decrease of salary; they will lack the internal motivation for teaching. Teaching can be both a message and a job only in the society that carries a clear message in life — only in that society will the occupation translate into a message.

Critiques: Abud offers insufficient information about how teaching can be translated to a message. According to Al-Ghazzali, teaching is a message because in the Quran and the Tradition there are clear orders that when a Muslim possesses positive knowledge, it is an obligation for him to convey it to others. In the Quran, “Moreover, when God entered into a covenant with those to whom the scriptures had been given and said, 'Ye shall surely make it known to mankind and not hide it,’” (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 12).

Additionally, the Prophet said. “Whoever, has any
knowledge but conceals it will on the day of resurrection be bridled with a bit of fire,” (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 132).

**Conditions in the Moral Teacher**

Abs: The conditions which have to be in a teacher, as well as his moral responsibilities, are as follows:

1. The teacher must be qualified morally, mentally, and epistemologically before he is allowed to teach.
2. The true teacher is not the one who prefers the luxury of this life because teaching is a message and not a position for reputation. He should be an ascetic because the true teacher in Al-Ghazzali’s sense is the one who prefers poverty over wealth.
3. The teacher should receive his knowledge from real scholars and not from false ones who claim to be scholars. The teachers must master Islamic knowledge because it is a requirement for teaching.
4. The teacher should behave according to his teachings because he will be a model for students to imitate. He should not possess contradictory behavior.
5. The teacher should adopt the moral behavior of his teacher and should be an exemplar to his students as his teacher was an exemplar to him.

**Critique:** Al-Ghazzali said:

1. The teacher should be kind to his students and should have the ability to understand their feelings and
treat them as his own children.

(2) The teacher must follow the ways and methods of the Prophet (Mohammed) in dealing with his students.

(3) The teacher should not hide any advice from his students.

(4) The teacher should protect his students from bad ways, not by punishment but by love and respect for their feelings because punishment will destroy the veil of awe and encourage rebellion.

(5) The teacher should not be dishonest toward the value of other sciences in the presence of his students.

(6) The teacher should teach his students according to their mental ability.

(7) The teacher should not neglect the slow-minded students and should teach them in a way which suits their limited understanding.

(8) The teacher should behave according to his teaching (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, pp. 67-69).

The difference between the two lists lies in the fact that Abud took his teacher responsibilities not directly from Al-Ghazzali but from other authors who were writing not specifically about Al-Ghazzali but about Islamic education in general. This researcher believes that even though some of the differences between the two lists may be minor, Abud should be quoting the direct source of Al-Ghazzali whenever
possible. It is Abud’s research method, not necessarily the results of that method, that should be questioned.

The Nature of Teachers and Students

(Students)

Introduction

Al-Ghazzali described students as individuals who are provided with particular talents. Those who are doing well in one of the arts or sciences will not necessarily do as well in every subject. Those who excel in medicine may not excel in law and theology. Nor is it the case that a man who lacks the ability of intellectual speculation will necessarily lack the ability of grammar. Every field draws on certain students who naturally show outstanding abilities in grasping its essence. The same students may be ignorant in other subjects (Al-Ghazzali, 1982c, p. 33).

Al-Ghazzali divided the life of the learner into developmental stages. Each stage has its own nature and capacities and should be treated instructionally according to its nature.

From birth until about six or seven years of age, noted Al-Ghazzali, the child (like the insane) lacks the faculties of will and knowledge which are necessary qualities for education. During these early years, then, a child is not ready for formal education. However, parents should train these child in good manners (Massialas, 1983, pp. 13-19).
Parents should train their children through a system of reward and punishment, wrote Al-Ghazzali.

Because young children are imitative, parents can benefit their children by narrating the stories of exemplary or faithful people like the Companions of the Prophet. Al-Ghazzali also recommended parents to read from the book Kitab al Awliya which contains stories about the faithful, their ways of obeying God, and their ways of avoiding the devil's influence. Because of their imitative ways, children will hear such stories and start to act like the faithful people. Thus, goodness will be instilled in their souls. For Al-Ghazzali, this was the basic method for training children for such stories will remain in the hearts of the children forever (Quasem, 1978, p. 90).

Al-Ghazzali also recommended the following for parents:

Preventing the child from sleeping during the day time, makes him sleep deeply at night. Hence, sleeping at night is more healthy than the day time. Therefore, parents should not let their children sleep during the day time. Also, the child should not be accustomed to luxury life. His bed should not be soft. The simplicity should surround him, in his food, clothes. Also, he should not tell his friends what is going on in his house. Moreover, he should respect other and speak politely, " (Giladi, 1992, p. 58).

The child's second developmental stage runs from age seven to puberty. Formal education begins in this stage. Al-Ghazzali called this stage the "discrimination age" in which
the child naturally can distinguish between good and bad. Also, the faculty of memory reaches its highest peak; knowledge which depends on memory should be introduced to students of this age. These students have a natural ability to imitate others, so teaching should make use of this ability.

After this discrimination stage comes the intellectual stage in which students should be divided into three groups according to their intellectual capacities. Students should specialize in the science that fits their mental ability. The first group of students includes students who, by nature, trust others and depend on them in receiving truth. These students have no desire to go beyond their senses. They cannot distinguish between reality and appearance (Al-Ghazzali, 1976, p. 96). Such students can learn only the crafts and the professions (Al-Ghazzali, 1978, p. 79). They do not possess ability for the dialectic and avoid being in debates. Instead, they choose an Imam who does engage in such controversy, then they blindly accept what he says without self-investigation. These are, according to Al-Ghazzali, the common people.

The second group consists of the dialecticians who by nature have higher intelligence than the common people. Unfortunately, there is some deficiency in their intellectual power. They have a stubborn nature which leads them to a certain hypocrisy and a blind belief in authorities (Taqlid).
These attributes are a "veil upon their hearts lest they understand," (Al-Ghazzali, 1978, p. 90).

The third group includes the elite people on whom God confers the qualities of powerful intelligence and natural curiosity. They seek the truth through self-investigation. Eventually, they do not adhere to any one school of thought. They are free from all naive acceptance and believe that faith precedes guidance.

According to Al-Ghazzali:

A child has no knowledge of attainment of an adult, and an adult is not aware of the acquisition of a learned man. Similarly, a learned man is not cognizant of the holy communion of saints and the Prophets, and of the favors bestowed on them (Ali, 1944, p. 38).

However, cautioned Al-Ghazzali, learning alone can exhaust the student's thinking. It can blunt the sharpness of the student's mind, dull his life, discourage his desire for study, and lead him to break away from education. Therefore, Al-Ghazzali recommended an hour of playing games in the school's daily schedule (Gil'adi, 1992, p. 58).

Because the nature of students is so intertwined with the nature of teachers, any major discrepancies between the thoughts of Al-Ghazzali and the interpretations of Khan and Abud already were discussed in the section on the nature of teachers.
Summary

This chapter looked at problems in Khan’s and Abud’s interpretations of Al-Ghazzali’s philosophy of education. One reason for these problems can be attributed to the fact that Al-Ghazzali did not put down a formal philosophy of education in one book. Thus, Khan and Abud went to different sources. Abud based his interpretation of Al-Ghazzali’s *O My Son*, while Khan lists numerous Al-Ghazzali sources.

Yet neither Khan nor Abud listed specific page references to specific Al-Ghazzali books, making it impossible for this researcher to determine whether Khan and Abud misinterpreted or mistranslated Al-Ghazzali or whether the Khan and Abud were presenting their own ideas and attributing them to Al-Ghazzali. This researcher believes the latter may have been the case, and this is discussed further in the following chapter. Also in the following chapter is a synthesis of what this researcher believes to be an accurate accounting of Al-Ghazzali’s educational theories.
CHAPTER V
SYNTHESIS, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

Introduction

As previously noted, Al-Ghazzali wrote many books on various subjects, and no single work set down his philosophy of education. By bringing together his ideas from many different books, however, one can formulate his educational philosophy. To date, the two scholars who have attempted to articulate Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education are Khan and Abud. In previous chapters, this researcher critically evaluated the works of Khan and Abud by comparing their interpretations with the original works of Al-Ghazzali.

Based on that evaluation, this researcher has synthesized a summary of Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education, focusing on the categories of knowledge, education, and the nature of students and teachers. The synthesis of Al-Ghazzali's educational thought underscores his acute intellect, his profound learning, his religious considerations, and his wide range of interests.
Synthesis

(1) Knowledge

Al-Ghazzali had no particular work which presented his ideas about knowledge. Although he wrote a book entitled Knowledge, it is merely a collection of ideas about learning, teaching, and the nature of intellect (aqîl). His epistemological ideas were scattered in his various works and lack systematic organization. This researcher has organized the ideas which relate to Al-Ghazzali's educational thought in an orderly arrangement.

Based on the view that man has a dual nature consisting of body and soul, Al-Ghazzali developed two basic categories of knowledge -- intellectual knowledge is obtained through sense experience and relates to the body, while religious or spiritual knowledge comes from the Creator and relates to the soul. In Al-Ghazzali's theory of education, both types of knowledge were of the utmost importance in order for man to achieve balance.

For Al-Ghazzali, religious knowledge was infallible knowledge. It is received as "a flash of light" which comes from God into the intelligence. This knowledge that is received from God consists of such absolute and eternal truths as the Quran and Sunna. This knowledge is bestowed upon the fortunate and withheld from the unfortunate.
Intellectual or acquired knowledge is the knowledge which comes from sense-perception and experience. This knowledge is gained by learning, observation, and systematic reasoning. Because the senses can be deceived, this knowledge is not necessarily reliable. The significance of intellectual knowledge in Islam depends upon the way such knowledge is used. The good Muslim will use intellectual knowledge to better his community and not for monetary or other personal gain.

Religious Knowledge

Religious knowledge includes the duty of Muslims to worship God. Worshipping God does not only mean to perform the ritual prayers and to fulfill the requirements of the pillars of faith but also to know and obey all of God's commands and to follow the path of the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, the believer accompanies his ritual prayers by reciting the Quran and reading some of the sayings of the Prophet.

Al-Ghazzali divided religious knowledge into: obligatory duty (Fard ayn) and collective duty (Fard Kefayah). For Al-Ghazzali, obligatory knowledge was individual duty. In other words, this knowledge and its spiritual activities are obligatory for every Muslim, and no one can be exempted. This knowledge is connected to worship and deals with three matters: beliefs, works, and prohibitions. Omitting these
matters is a great sin. Hence, studying and practicing this knowledge is obligatory as noted by the Prophet Muhammad: "Seeking knowledge is an ordinance obligatory upon every Muslim" (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 29).

By beliefs, Al-Ghazzali meant an acceptance of the confessions of faith (al-sha-ha-dah) which are: "There is no god but Allah" and "Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah." Knowing these two phrases is obligatory for a child when he reaches the puberty, as well as by those who have previously been filled with religious doubts (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 24).

However, the child is not obliged to probe the meaning of these recitations by research or analysis. Still, he must believe in them unconditionally. For the adult who has doubted, it is obligatory to seek the necessary knowledge that can remove his doubt.

By works, Al-Ghazzali means the pillars of Islam. For example, a Muslim is obliged to pray five times a day, and he must learn how to perform the prayer in the way that the Prophet Muhammad did. Also, a Muslim must share a portion of his wealth with the poor and the needy. Therefore, when a Muslim possesses wealth, his duty is learn the amount which he must take from his wealth to give to the poor and the needy according to the Islamic law.

In the month of Ramadan, a Muslim must fast. His obligation is to know the nature of fasting and the spiritual activities that accompany it. Finally, a Muslim must know
that, during his lifetime, there is one obligatory pilgrimage. Therefore, if the time of pilgrimage arrives, and he has the financial means necessary, his duty is to learn how to perform the pilgrimage in the way the Prophet performed it.

Islam is a religion which considers individuals from all perspectives, including physical, the psychological, the moral, and the social. Therefore, it forbids certain sciences, activities, and behaviors in order to increase the moral and social lives of its members. These are called the prohibitions. A Muslim's duty is to know these forbidden entities and abstain from them.

The reason for the prohibitions is that some sciences and activities have little or no benefit either in this life or in the next. Their potential for harm is greater than that for benefit. Prohibitions include magic, astrology, drinking wine, eating pork, the wearing silk clothes by men, and, also for men, looking at women other than the spouse.

Because Islam respects reason, Muslims are not asked to accept the prohibitions only on faith. They are encouraged to think about reasons behind the prohibitions. For example, a person might come to the conclusion that drinking is forbidden because it can contribute to health problems.
Collective Knowledge

Al-Ghazzali wrote that not all religious knowledge is considered individual duty. Only knowledge from which no one can be exempted -- the beliefs, works, and prohibitions -- is individual duty. The remainder of revelation from the Quran and the Prophet is considered collective duty. This more specialized knowledge typically is the realm of religious leaders. However, if a community is without a religious leader, it becomes an individual duty for those who are qualified to obtain this knowledge.

Intellectual Knowledge

Al-Ghazzali divided intellectual knowledge according to its relationship with Islamic creed into the praiseworthy, the objectionable, and the permissible.

Praiseworthy knowledge includes the intellectual sciences that are necessary for Islamic society. Such sciences include chemistry, architecture, medicine, and agriculture. Al-Ghazzali further divided praiseworthy knowledge into collective and individual duty. As a rule, all these sciences are collective duty. They become an individual or obligatory duty only when required for the good of the community. For example, if a community is in need of a physician, it becomes obligatory for qualified individuals to study that science for the benefit of the society.
The forbidden sciences are those which bring more harm than good. Their usage benefits neither religion nor the daily life of the believer. Astrology is a forbidden science because it is used to predict the future. This goes against the teachings of Islam as knowing the future is an attribute of God and should not be mimicked by humans.

The permissible sciences are those which are not necessarily useful, and ignorance of them is not harmful. Al-Ghazzali included in this group mathematics and logic. In Al-Ghazzali's opinion, practicing mathematics and logic does not raise someone to be able to be close to God; however, if the society in need of them then their study becomes individual duty.

Sources of Knowledge

Al-Ghazzali divided the sources of knowledge into intellectual and spiritual. Intellectual knowledge is a product of the senses, while spiritual knowledge is the absolute truths which exist in the two sources of Islam, the Quran and the Tradition. Al-Ghazzali believed the intellectual could lead to spiritual knowledge if a person had the right intentions. For example, a physician who practices medicine to help people and not to increase his financial holdings reaches the spiritual through the intellectual.
(2) Education

Al-Ghazzali’s educational theory relies on faith and is unlike other theories which involve theoretical discussion; it involves more than observation or inferences made from observation. Al-Ghazzali’s theory of education relies upon faith -- the inspiration for which comes from the two sources of the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad.

However, adherence to the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet does not require one to close the door on other scholarship. Islam accepts all intellectual ideas which have agreement with Islamic principles. Only ideas that cannot be reconciled with Islamic doctrine must be excluded. Thus, Al-Ghazzali was able to borrow ideas from Greek philosophy and mysticism and spread them among his thoughts. As discussed in previous chapters, many of Al-Ghazzali’s thoughts echo those of Plotinus. And, in his writings, Al-Ghazzali makes reference to having read Plato’s Republic. Al-Ghazzali’s concept of light certainly was influenced by both early Islamic mystics and Platonists. Also, Al-Ghazzali introduced Aristotelian logic to Muslim education.

But Al-Ghazzali rejected the philosophical ideas which relied only on reason to investigate the truth. In fact, Al-Ghazzali’s main philosophical theme was to prove the insufficiency of reason. He believed Muslims must behave
according to God's commands, not according to the authority of reason.

**Definition of Education**

Al-Ghazzali presented three kinds of education: spiritual, mundane, and general. Spiritual education is the education which cannot be gained by senses or through experience. It comes through the light of the Quran and the Sunna to those of pure soul. Al-Ghazzali called it "the real education" by which an individual can come to know himself and his God, and increase his fear of God. This education deals with the obligatory knowledge and its spiritual activities. Also, it restores Muslims to their original faith by returning them to the period and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. It leads them to the eternal happiness of the next world (Al-Ghazzali, 1982a, p. 319).

The aims of the spiritual education are the highest -- leading an individual to become close to God, preparing him for the next life, and making him an active agent for spreading the word of God.

Mundane education is called by Al-Ghazzali technical education and involves, for example, the learning of medicine, mathematics, poetry, law, and language. These sciences fulfill man's beastly nature and enable him to survive in this world. Pursuing such sciences should be a means to the next world, and not an end in itself. In other
words, these sciences should be pursued to benefit society and not the self.

Those who pursue mundane education in order to become wealthy and enjoy the luxury of this life are pursuing individual aims. According to Al-Ghazzali, the good Muslim will pursue mundane education with the intention of helping others, as a way to grow closer to God. For such a person, mundane education has eternal aims.

Al-Ghazzali neither concentrated totally on spiritual education nor on mundane education, but he gave each of them its merit. However, he did consider spiritual education the highest step on the ladder of knowledge for it led to eternal happiness.

On the other hand, gaining mundane education is a necessary because mundane knowledge enables individuals to survive, to regulate society, and to spread peace on Earth. It must be taken as a means to spiritual education and not as an end in itself.

According to Al-Ghazzali, reason and revelation -- the mundane and the spiritual -- complement each other. Their relationship is like that between the eye and the rays of the sun. The unaided eye (reason) is unable to find its way in the dark, while the rays of the sun (revelation) are incapable of producing sight if isolated from an observing eye.
Al-Ghazzali used the term general education to refer to education that includes both the spiritual and the mundane. The aims of general education are to provide the student with the sciences of the hereafter and the sciences of this world. The study of both sciences will enable Muslims to follow the laws of Allah in their daily activities. General education fulfills man's dual mission -- to worship God and to build the Earth.

(3) The Nature of Students and Teachers
Students

In Al-Ghazzali's opinion the majority of people are by nature perplexing. They accept the statements of others as true even when those statements are false. Similarly, they often reject true statements when those statements come from someone of whom they do not approve. The majority of students lack the quality of will that is necessary for motivating them to independent action. And they lack the quality of knowledge necessary for enabling them to execute the methods of research by which one can sort the real from the false knowledge. So, their knowledge is merely opinion and does not rely on true evidence. They follow the light of their own minds; while the true knowledge has its own light and evidences which are independent from the learner's opinions. For Al-Ghazzali, there are students who rely on their
opinions and students who seek the truth from its own light and evidences.

**Definition of a Student**

There is no clear-cut definition of a student in Al-Ghazzali's works, but from reading his works one can understand that he meant by a student anyone who participates in formal education after the age of six. Al-Ghazzali believed that students have various abilities. Therefore, the educational processes should direct teaching and knowledge to correspond with the natural abilities of students.

**Classification of Students**

Al-Ghazzali classified students into three groups according to their natural abilities. The first group includes the majority of students who do not possess sufficient intelligence to comprehend the truth. If they do have intelligence, they do not have the motivation to research the truth. The natural abilities of these students qualify them to pursue crafts and professions. This group also lacks the natural ability for disputation. Instead, they avoid debates. They typically follow an Imam (an Islamic authority) and accept his words blindly without self-investigation.
The second group has by nature higher intelligence than the majority of students. Also, they have a stubborn nature which leads to some hypocrisy and to believing blindly in the authorities (taglid). These attributes prevent them from grasping the truth. Al-Ghazzali called these students the dialecticians.

The third group includes the elite students on whom God confers qualities such as powerful intelligence and natural curiosity. They seek the truth through self-investigation. Eventually, they are free from all naive acceptance and do not adhere to any one school of thought. They believe that faith precedes guidance. (These three groups roughly correspond to Plato’s three groups in the Republic -- the producing or working class who are controlled by their appetites; the guards who are brave and full of passion; and the rulers who are wise.)

In addition, Al-Ghazzali divided educational lives of students into developmental stages and provided an educational program for each stage. Al-Ghazzali was able to sense the relationship between the developmental stages of the learner and their abilities to learn. For example, he wrote that the young learner should be approached with the concrete concepts that befit him.

This researcher found that Al-Ghazzali presented developmental stages for the student which start at birth and end only at death. The first stage is from birth until seven
years of age. According to Al-Ghazzali, the child of this stage lacks the faculties of knowledge and will which are the necessary for education. During this stage, the child is controlled by passions and anger and is not morally responsible to God's law. This child naturally is not qualified for formal education. Instead he can be trained by parents in good manners. This training should be based on a system of reward and punishment. Al-Ghazzali insisted on the necessity of such training for preparing the child for formal education.

Al-Ghazzali supported the need for home training with the following verse from the Quran: "O believers, save yourselves and your families from the fire whose fuel is men and stones." Al-Ghazzali added that this training should make use of the imitative nature of the child. He recommended that parents behave morally so that their children will mimic and adopt such good behavior in their own social lives. Parents should instill in their children the seeds of faith by reading to the children stories of the faithful people such as the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad. Al-Ghazzali recommended a book called The Autobiography of the Saints (Kitab Hiyat al-Awliya). This book contains stories about the faithful people -- their ways of obeying God and avoiding evil. When children see their parents behave morally and hear such stories, they will imitate their parents and the faithful people. (In the
Republic, Plato similarly recommended children be edified with stories of Greek gods and heroes whose noble lives the children can imitate (MacGreal, 1992, p. 27).

The second stage, the discrimination stage, is from seven years of age to puberty. In the beginning of this stage formal education takes place. Al-Ghazzali called it the discrimination stage because of the child’s ability to distinguish between good and bad appears naturally in this period. Moreover, during this stage, faculty of memory is at its peak. Therefore, knowledge which depends on memory should be introduced to the child. Also, the imitative nature of the child reaches its highest level in this stage. Teachers should make use of this nature by providing the child with examples to imitate. And the teacher should behave morally to present a good example.

Al-Ghazzali did not neglect the physical needs of the students in this stage. He recommended an hour of playing games during school time. He believed that continuous learning exhausts the students' thinking, blinds their minds, and brings boredom into their lives. Boredom and exhaustion can lead students to escape from school and can reduce their motivation for studying the subject matter.

Al-Ghazzali advised teachers to praise and encourage the student who conducts himself well. On the contrary, if the student makes mistakes, the teacher should neglect the first one. In the case that student commits another mistake, the
teacher should talk with the student privately and redirect his behavior, explaining to him the outcome of such misconduct. If the student’s mistake was caused by the influence of another student, then the teacher should separate the two students.

Parents play a significant role in this stage as well. Al-Ghazzali recommended that parents prevent the child from sleeping during the day time, so he can sleep deeply at night. The child should not become accustomed to the luxury life; his bed should not be soft. Simplicity should surround him in his food and clothes. Also, the child should not tell his friends what is going on in his parent’s house. Moreover, this child should respect his elders and speak politely. On the other hand, the father and mother should respect the child. They should not shower blame upon him for a little mistake. But if he makes a big mistake, the parents should talk with him privately about it and not in public.

From a moral perspective, since the faculties of guidance (knowledge and will) are not fully developed in this stage, the child is not morally responsible to God’s commands. Instead, he is morally responsible to the rules of society. Since, in an Islamic society, these rules are Islamic in nature, the child will adopt these Islamic tenets as a way of life.

The third developmental stage during which the student moves from puberty to adulthood, is the intellectual stage.
According to Al-Ghazzali, an adult is responsible for his behavior towards God's commands and his fellow humans. Perceptually, he possesses the natural ability of discovering the actual meaning beyond abstract ideas. Adults are able to analyze critically ideas from their own experiences.

In this stage, the student is able to move beyond intellectual knowledge which is the product of sense experience to spiritual knowledge which comes from the Creator of the world. According to Al-Ghazzali, spiritual knowledge exists in the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad.

When a student comes to an inward and outward understanding of the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet, he practices spiritual activities in all aspects of his life. He refrains from the luxury of this life, faithfully following the commands of the Quran and the Prophet, not the dictates of his intellectual knowledge. Consequently, a light from God will be sent into his spirit and illuminate his vision. Through God's grace, he will know the truth of things as they are not as they appear to his senses. The faithful people, such as the saints who follow exactly the words of God and act according to the path of the Prophet, are among those who reach this stage of knowledge.
Teachers

In Islam, teaching is a message by which the teacher becomes a messenger who spreads the word of God. The teacher who considers teaching as a message will devote his effort and sacrifice his energy and time for the internal satisfaction of the aim of teaching. Those who practice teaching for the salary will lack internal motivation. Their efforts and energy rise and fall with the amount of their salary. For Al-Ghazzali, teaching can be both a message and a job in an ideal society which has a clear idea about its purpose.

In the Quran and the Tradition, there are clear orders for Muslims who have positive knowledge to convey it to others. The Quran states, "Moreover, when God enters into a covenant with those to whom the Scriptures had been given and said, 'Ye shall surely make it known to mankind and not hide it.'" The Prophet Muhammad said, "Whoever has any knowledge but conceals it will on the day of resurrection be bridled with a bit of fire" (Al-Ghazzali, 1988, p. 12).

Therefore, teaching is a message, not for particular individuals but for all of Muslim society. Through teaching, the word of God is spread. And he who spreads God's word is called a teacher. Not all Muslims devote their energy and time to conveying the words of God. Some of them have a love
of the luxury of this life that blinds their souls. Their
time is spent trying to satisfy their desires.

Al-Ghazzali defined a teacher as anyone who conveys
anything to others -- whether that information be positive
or negative knowledge. He stated that:

By teacher, I mean a teacher of hereafter
or the science of this world, whose goal
in all his works is (bliss in) the
hereafter and not (success in) this
world. Teaching with a view to achieve
success in this world is destructive for
both the teacher and the student (Al-
Ghazzali, 1988, p. 142).

In the above quote, Al-Ghazzali mentions teachers of the
hereafter as well as teachers of the science of this world,
an indication that he believed there were at least two kinds
of teachers -- teachers of the spiritual and teachers of the
mundane. (Although Al-Ghazzali would expect teachers of the
mundane to know Islam and be able to relate their subject
matter to Islam.) In the era of Al-Ghazzali, most spiritual
teachers taught at a mosque-related school (madrasa). The
mosque would provide such a teacher with living quarters and
meals. Similarly, a university professor would have
accommodations provided by the college. When Al-Ghazzali
discussed teachers and salary (or the lack thereof), he did
not expect them to live in the streets and beg for food. Nor
does this researcher believe that Al-Ghazzali would expect
contemporary teachers of intellectual knowledge to go without
pay. However, Al-Ghazzali did expect teachers to live a life
of simplicity, not of luxury. So, he probably would endorse today’s low pay scale for teachers.

**Classification of Teachers**

Teaching from Al-Ghazzali’s perspective is a message. But he believed only a small group of teachers practiced teaching according to Islamic law. The majority of them had deviated from the right path because of a defect in their intelligence and their strong attachment to this life and its luxury. This led Al-Ghazzali to classify teachers into three groups.

The true teachers, according to Al-Ghazzali, were the righteous one who feared God. He supported this idea by the following verse from the Quran: "The learned among the servants of God fear him most." Those teachers obey the commands of God and follow the path of the Prophet and his Companions. In this way, they purify their souls and are led towards the ultimate goals of life -- happiness in life and the closeness to God in the hereafter.

True teachers spend most of their life studying and practicing Islam. Their familiarity with Islamic doctrine provides them with the ability to relate any subject matter to Islamic principles. A teacher of architecture, then, would also have to be an Islamic scholar, so that he could relate the principles of architecture to Islam. (And, it should be
noted, structures like the traditional courtyard house of the Middle East do adhere to Islamic dictates.)

These teachers consider teaching as a message or a religious duty. They do not take money in return for their teaching activities. They teach the highest kind of knowledge which can be gained by learning, worshipping, and the intellect. For Al-Ghazzali, this is the Sufi's knowledge.

These teachers spread the word of God on Earth by guiding students to be close to God, preparing them for the next life, and providing them with the methods which help them to achieve such ends. Consequently, the students who follow these teachings will be saved in this life and the hereafter.

False teachers are those who seek material gain and devote their efforts to enjoying the luxury of this life. Their knowledge is in the technical sciences such as medicine, mathematics, poetry, law and language which they teach as an ends in themselves. They do not relate the subject matter to spiritual knowledge because they are ignorant in knowledge of the hereafter. And they lack the desire to research the eternal truth which can be gained by spiritual activities. Consequently, they turn away from God's guidance. God describes such teachers in these words of the Quran: "They are those who are indifferent to the
realities of eternal life. Verily they would be the losers on the Day of Judgment" (Al-Ghazzali, 1976, p. 139).

Weak teachers are those who know the truth by their tongues and deny it by the acts. In other words, they say one thing and do another. They have doubts about the spiritual activities. And they do not devote their efforts to removing the doubts by increasing their faith through the recitation of the Quran and the reading of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. Their the love of the luxury of this life blinds their souls and darkens their knowledge. They do not possess the true knowledge. They are merely imitators who mimic what they have learned without applying their knowledge spiritually. They teach the hereafter knowledge not for the fear of God but to gain some worldly benefit. Their words may save their students, but these teachers are not themselves saved from the hellfire on the next world.

**Instructional Plan for Teaching Obligatory Knowledge**

Al-Ghazzali provided an educational program for teaching the obligatory knowledge. He limited the obligatory knowledge to three matters: beliefs, works, and prohibitions. He suggested that a child commit them to memory. Over time, the meaning of the words will appear little by little as the child matures. Practicing the dictates of obligatory knowledge in daily life will lead the
student to understand the matters unconsciously and to believe in them unconditionally.

However, teaching the obligatory knowledge without self-examination does not lead to pure faith. Faith cannot be taught through formal teaching, but teaching can guide students toward that path to God, providing them with the intellectual means to increase their faith step by step. In addition to these instructional processes, students must independently strengthen their faith by reading and interpreting the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad and performing the spiritual duty and acts of worship. Consequently, he will believe and accept this knowledge and become certain about its reliability without the need for proof.

Gaining the above knowledge without proof, according to Al-Ghazzali, is based upon a pure instruction (talgin) and on acceptance of the teacher's authority without self-examination. This kind of teaching may not be free from some doubts and falsehood. It should be strengthened by removing the falsity and doubts until the knowledge becomes pure and there is no hesitation in accepting its reliability.

Moral Responsibilities of the Teachers

Al-Ghazzali presented moral responsibilities for the teacher from an Islamic perspective. In Islam, a job is an individual responsibility that must be accomplished honestly
-- for it is a means to the hereafter. Teaching is a message for spreading God's word. Therefore, he who is carrying this message must be well prepared, or he will convey false knowledge and misguide. A teacher who fears God must prepare the subject of teaching in advance, and follow the path of the Prophet by imitating his methods of teaching, treating his students equally, and speaking to each of his students according to the student's mental ability.

Al-Ghazzali expressed the moral responsibilities of the teachers as the following:

(1) The teacher's behavior should be a reflection of what he teaches, and he should not teach anything unless he is ready to do it first. The Prophet Muhammad said, "No man will be learned unless he puts knowledge into practice." He also said:

When the learned men do not translate their learning into action, when they prefer love for one another with their tongues and nurse hatred in their hearts, when they sever the tie of relationship, God sends a curse upon them, makes their tongues mute and their eyes blind (Al-Ghazzali, 1982a, pp. 59-60).

(2) Teaching is meant to provide students with skills and knowledge that enable them to build the Earth and that leads them to the next world. The teacher in this case must connect the subject matter of his teaching with Islamic doctrine. To fulfill such an end, a teacher not only must know his subject matter, but also know how to relate each of
its elements to Islamic principles. Doing that requires advance preparation for his subject matter and a comprehensive understanding of Islam in general. These measures will provide the teacher with the flexibility to shift the direction of his subject matter to be a guidance toward God. It should be noted that in many contemporary Muslim schools, this dictate of Al-Ghazzali is followed even in early education. For example, in the teaching of the alphabet, it might be pointed out that the letter 'A' is the first letter in the Allah, the name of God. Or that 'P' is the first letter in the word Prophet. In arithmetic classes, story problems might involve calculating the percentage of wealth a rich person should give to the poor. The Prophet Muhammad said, "Whoever increase in knowledge and does not increase in guidance only increases in distance from God."

(3) Students are individuals -- some of them are more intelligent than others. Teachers should display patience toward the slower students and should not belittle their abilities nor praise the intelligent students in a way that may harm the dull students.

(4) The teacher should be kind to his students and treat them equally without conferring some privileges on some of them. Also, he should have the ability to understand their feelings and should treat them as his own children.
(5) The teacher should consider teaching as a message in which he should not seek fees for his teaching, but rather teaching should be for spreading God's orders.

(6) The teacher should protect his students from bad habits, and shift their attention toward the subject of learning -- not by force but by love. The teacher should respect the students' feelings because punishment may destroy the veil of awe and encourage rebellion.

Summary and Conclusions

Born in 1058 A.D. (450 A.H.) in the Persian province of Khorasan, Muhammad Ben Muhammed Ben Ahmad al-Tus, historically known simply by his adopted name of Al-Ghazzali, is considered the reformer of the eleventh century (fifth century A.H.) and the eminent Muslim scholar of his period. Had his influence been confined only to his own period, Al-Ghazzali would merely be an interesting historical figure; however, his influence and relevance can be seen in today's Muslim world. Those who study Islamic history and concentrate on the religio-intellectual life of the eleventh century will find that era parallels today's religio-intellectual life in the Muslim world.

The same splintering of Islam into feuding sects that Al-Ghazzali fought against is present in the contemporary Muslim world. Thus, Al-Ghazzali's significance to the educational curricula and fabric of education in Muslim
societies is paramount. In essence, Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education was a bridge between the two extremes of Islamic theology in his day. On the one hand were the Philosophers who denied revelation and relied only on reason. The Philosophers denied the value of spiritual activity. On the other hand were the Mystics who denied reason and looked only to revelation. The Mystics separated themselves from society and denied the value of community. Using terminology from Al-Ghazzali, one could say the Philosophers looked only to mundane or intellectual knowledge and education, while the Mystics looked only to religious or spiritual knowledge and education.

In Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education, a balance is sought between the spiritual and the mundane. Even though Al-Ghazzali puts spiritual knowledge at the top of ladder, he stresses the importance of intellectual knowledge and goes so far as to say intellectual knowledge can lead to spiritual knowledge -- if intellectual knowledge is used to benefit society. Al-Ghazzali's emphasis on being a part of the community, a part of society, is, in all probability, a direct reaction to the Mystics who secluded themselves from the day-to-day world. Writes Smith (1944):

But al-fellowship was never unaware that the good life must mean not only fellowship with God, but, also, and as a necessary consequence, fellowship with man and service to him. It was necessary for him to find time for solitude and quiet so that he might hear the Voice of
God speaking to him, but the spiritual experience which he gained in these times of solitude must bear its fruit in the daily walk of life with other men; the mystic revelations which came to him from the opening of his heart and mind to the Divine indwelling were given to inspire him to a higher service of humanity. Hence his return to teaching work at the end of his life and his association with his fellow Sufis and with beginners on the mystic Way, in his latter days at Tus. 'To be a Sufi,' he said, 'means to abide continuously in God and to live at peace with men; whoever abides and deals rightly with men, treating them with unfailing kindness, is a Sufi.... In your dealing with others, treat them as you would wish them to treat you, for the faith of God's servant is not made perfect unless he desires for others what he desires for himself.' So al-Ghazali gave his last years on earth to the guidance of others on the road by which he had himself been led to a knowledge of — and fellowship with — God (pp. 103-104).

In addition, Al-Ghazzali sought to build a bridge between his own community — the Middle East — and the outside world. That is why he stressed acceptance of ideas from Greek philosophy — providing those ideas did not conflict with the basic tenets of Islam. However, Al-Ghazzali also emphasized the glories of Islam — not wanting to turn his back on the traditions and beliefs of his own people as some scholars of his day did. Again, the key to Al-Ghazzali's ideas is balance.

This study critically analyzed the two works which attempted to interpret the educational philosophy of Al-Ghazzali, namely, Shafique Ali Khan's (1976) work Ghazali's
Philosophy of Education and Abdu Al-Ghaney Abud's (1982) text Al-Ghazzali's Educational Thought As It Appears From His Letter 'O My Son'. Chapter IV discussed in detail the problems this researcher encountered in the works of Khan and Abud. While some of the criticisms may seem overly finicky, this researcher believes that both Khan and Abud failed at the larger task of being faithful to the spirit the Al-Ghazzali — to Al-Ghazzali's search for balance. According to Al-Ghazzali this balance is necessary because humans themselves are a balance of body and soul.

The source of Abud's problems may have been his source. Abud used Al-Ghazzali's O My Son as the basis for his interpretation of Al-Ghazzali's educational thought. Al-Ghazzali specifically focused his letter, O My Son, on spiritual education — not on general education that includes both spiritual and mundane education. Al-Ghazzali's letter was, in actuality, a list of spiritual dictates on how to treat others, for example, one's neighbor or one's teacher. The letter is moral in nature.

In other writings, Al-Ghazzali focused on general education. But because of the source used by Abud -- which is a letter of spiritual advice, Abud naturally neglects to present the full picture of Al-Ghazzali's philosophy of education that seeks a balance between the religious and the intellectual. In Abud's book, it is never clear whether he is discussing spiritual education, intellectual education, or
general education — or even if Abud is fully aware of the proper distinctions. Abud seems to be more like the Mystics — leaning to spiritual education — and then mistakenly attributing this one-sidedness to Al-Ghazzali. It should be noted, however, that there is ambiguity in Al-Ghazzali’s writings about the different types of education, so not all the blame belongs to Abud.

This researcher finds the mistakes of Khan to be more grievous than those of Abud. Khan seems to be twisting the writings of Al-Ghazzali for nationalistic ends. Khan writes that with Al-Ghazzali’s educational theories, Pakistan can develop an educational program that teaches citizens to subordinate there interests to national interests (1976, p. 100). Khan is obviously swinging the pendulum to the mundane — taking Al-Ghazzali’s theories on how to become a better person spiritually and intellectually and subverting those theories to national interests.

In his nationalistic zeal, Khan also states that all decadent Western ideas must be expunged from Pakistan’s educational system. That, too, ignores Al-Ghazzali’s plea for balance between the tradition of Islam and the influence of foreign ideas.

Suggestions for Future Study

In Islam, increasing one’s faith relies on the spiritual effort of a believer. There are steps necessary for
increasing faith such as practicing obligatory duty, reciting the Quran, reading some of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, and avoiding the luxury of this life. The faith of the believer can be increased. Educational programs with such steps and the methods and activity necessary for each step in order to increase the faith of the learner can be formulated. A penetrating reading of Al-Ghazzali's book *The Niche for Light* could be a starting point in providing an educational program for teaching faith.

Al-Ghazzali presented child developmental stages that are not without resemblance to ideas still found in educational psychology. For example, Al-Ghazzali discussed how young students learn by imitation and how the teacher should make use of this fact. Today, for example, many educators stress teaching foreign languages to young children because, at that age, they are better able to imitate the speech patterns. An interesting study would be a comparison between the developmental stages of Al-Ghazzali and the developmental stages popular in today's educational literature, for example the intellectual development theories of Jean Piaget. Do Al-Ghazzali's ideas still hold merit? Do Al-Ghazzali's spiritual stages correspond to the intellectual stages in Western educational thought? These stages also could be the basis for the development of an Islamic theory of child psychology.
APPENDIX A

Glossary of Terms
Note of Explanation

This dissertation contains Islamic and Ghazzalian terms that are not necessarily self-explanatory. Therefore, this researcher has added the following definitions in order to explain these terms from the perspective of Islam and/or Al-Ghazzali.

(It also should be noted that a word translated into English from Arabic may have a variety of spellings, for example, Quran/Koran or Al-Ghazzali/Ghazali. When directly quoting the writer Khan, the spelling Ghazali is used in order to conform with Khan’s style. Elsewhere, however, the spelling Al-Ghazzali is used.)

Allah

In the Islam faith, Allah is the One and Only God. Muslims know Allah through Himself and through His Word, which is the Quran. The Quran states: "Say: He, Allah, is one. Allah is He on whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten; and none is like Him."

Allah is eternal. He has no beginning and no end. He is the Creator of all on Earth, of all in the skies, and of all that is between, under and above the Earth and the skies. Allah knows and sees everything in both the light and the dark. The last of God's messengers on Earth was the Prophet
Muhammad.

Amiyy (Please see Common Man.)

Caliph

The term caliph can be applied to a successor of the Prophet Muhammad or to one who rules a Muslim nation.

A caliph is a faithful and pious person who leads Muslims toward eternal happiness by ruling according to the Shariah and judging according to laws of God and His Messenger, Muhammad. In the history of Islam, four caliphs have followed the path of the Prophet in administrating to the Muslim community. They are Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali.

Common Man

In Arabic, common man or amiyy refers to a person who is illiterate. For Al-Ghazzali, the term had a spiritual sense. Al-Ghazzali saw the common man as lacking the will or motivation to act independently. By denying his own will, the common man must trust others and act according to their will. Al-Ghazzali also saw the common man as lacking the knowledge needed to sort the real from the false. Thus, common man often is used to describe a person who blindly imitates others and who indulges in the luxuries of Earth -- thereby neglecting spiritual concerns.

Hadith and Sunna

The Hadith (Tradition) is a collection of the sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad with which every Muslim is compelled to comply. Hadiths were transmitted by chains of
religious authorities going all the way back to the Prophet.

The sum total of all Hadiths is called 'the sunna of the Prophet.' The sunna is the second source of Islam with the Quran being the first.

**Hajj**

Hajj is a pilgrimage to Makkah (Mecca). It is the fifth pillar of Islam, an obligatory duty for each healthy, adult Muslim who has the financial means for the trip. The pilgrimage is taken during the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar, thu al-Hijjah.

In Makkah is the Holy Mosque and at its center, the Kaba. The pilgrim goes around the Kaba seven times (the tawaf), then runs seven times between the two hills near the Kaba before drinking from the holy well of zamzam. (Zamzam is holy water.)

On the eighth day of the Hajj, the pilgrims begin traveling to Arafat for spiritual activities. After spending the night in Mina, the pilgrims go to the Hill of Arafat and to Muzdalifa. (Arafat, Mina and Muzdalifa are the Arabic names for holy places near Makkah and are visited by the pilgrims for spiritual reasons.) They then return to Mina where each family of pilgrims sacrifices an animal in celebration of the end of Hajj. The pilgrims return to Makkah for another ritualistic circling of the Kaba (Sabini 1983).
The Holy Quran

In Islam, the Holy Quran (Koran) is the book of God that was sent to the Prophet Muhammad (May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). The Almighty God says of the Quran: "No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it: it is sent down by one, full of wisdom, worthy of all praise."

The Quran is the Word of God as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad through the archangel Gabriel. The Quran contains the principles of all of God's laws and is further explained by the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. The name of the Quran is derived from the Arabic word Kara'a which means to read or recite. The Quran also is known as Nur (the light), al-Huda (the guidance), and al-fargan (that which distinguishes between truth and falsehood).

Kalam

Kalam (theology) refers to the use of a philosophical method to argue ideas. In the Islamic era, there have been two major schools of Kalam or theology. The Mutazilates adopted Greek metaphysics as a reliable method to interpret Islamic ideas. The Asharites interpreted Islamic ideas as revelation.

The science of Kalam developed as a means of defending the Islamic faith from those who attempted to add non-Islamic ideals to the religion. These people who attempted to change Islam also used Kalam in an attempt to justify their personal behavior. Kalam also is used as a remedy for the disease of
doubt.

*Koran* (Please see Holy Quran.)

**Muhammad**

The Prophet Muhammad was born in Makkah in 570 A.D. After losing his parents, he was cared for by his grandfather, then an uncle. He had no formal education. But at the age of twenty-five, he began to meditate and contemplate in a cave in Mount Hira. For fifteen years, he spent the entire month of Ramadan in this cave. At the age of forty, Muhammad was in the cave when the Holy Quran was revealed to him by the Angel Gabriel.

The Prophet spent three years secretly inviting people to Islam before the Quran ordered him to make his teachings public. Revelations continued to come to the Prophet, and he devoted his life to spreading the word of Islam. After completing the message of God, the Prophet Muhammad died on June 8, 632. (Muhammad; also spelled Mohammed or Mohammad).

*Quran* (Please see Holy Quran.)

**Ramadan**

The ninth month of the Islamic calendar is Ramadan (Fasting). During the days of this month, healthy, adult Muslims abstain from food, drink and sexual relations until sundown. Spiritually, this fast is designed to provide the rich and the poor with the same experience and, therefore, be an equalizer of all Muslims. At night, the entire Quran is recited in this month through a special prayer called
Muslims celebrate the end of Ramadan by praying to God who helps them in fulfilling their duties. They then don new clothes and visit one another. Called *Id-al-Fiter*, this celebration lasts for three days and often includes feasts.

*Sufi*

Sufi refers to a person who represents the mystical dimension of Islam -- a Muslim who seeks direct experience of God.

Islam has two sides -- the internal and the external. It is through the external (the body) that the internal (the soul) is purified. In the works of Al-Ghazzali, Sufism refers to purification of the soul from sin and to the goodness of life that comes to those who follow the path of the Prophet Muhammad.

In the Prophet can be seen the two sides of Islam. Although the life of Muhammad included contemplation and meditation, the Prophet did not neglect worldly duties. He married and had a family. He was part of his community. And he led armies to war and initiated treaties of peace. For the Sufi, one must fulfill not only the duty of worshipping God but also the duty of earthly affairs.

*Sunna* (Please see Hadith.)

*Taqlid*

In the writings of Al-Ghazzali, the term *taqlid* has both negative and positive connotations. On the negative side,
*taqlid* refers to those who blindly imitate others in spiritual matters and do not examine their own inner selves through meditation and contemplation on the Word of God and The Tradition.

On the positive side, the word refers to those who attempt to imitate exactly -- through words, actions, and contemplation -- the example set by the Prophet Muhammad. *Tradition* (Please see Hadith.)

**Zakat**

*Zakat* can be translated as the giving of alms. In Islam, everything belongs to Allah. Wealth and property, for example, belong not to the individuals who accumulate them but to Allah. And it is necessary that these worldly goods be shared. Thus, Muslims are instructed to annually give 2.5 percent of their wealth to the poor and needy. This allows the rich to purify their souls for they are obeying the Word of God. This practice also is designed to lessen the bad feelings the poor may develop for the rich. Paying *Zakat* is mandatory for Muslims and is the third pillar of Islam.
REFERENCES


