

## THE STUDY OF THE SUFI PHILOSOPHICAL TEACHINGS OF IMAM AL-GHAZALI AND IBN AL-ARABI IN LATER PERIODS AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE TODAY

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### Abstract:

The article describes the creation of religious-scientific theory of Sufism by Imam al-Ghazali and Ibn al-Arabi and the division of these theories into moderate and philosophical ones, Ghazali's place in Islamic rationalism, Ibn al-Arabi's ideas of religious tolerance and pluralism and their importance today.

**Keywords:** Sufism theory, moderate, philosophical, rationalism, monotheism, pluralism, Allah, universe, reason, knowledge, tolerance.

The (academic) scientific-religious theory of Sufism is divided into two types. The first is Sufism expressed by moderate mysticism of al-Ghazali, al-Qushayri, al-Iskandari and others. The second is Ibn al-Arabi's teaching about "wahdat ul-wujud" and its supporters – al-Kunawi, al-Jindi, al-Koshani, al-Qaysari and others are representatives of philosophical Sufism.

It follows that Imam al-Ghazali developed the theory of moderate Sufism, while Ibn al-Arabi is a theorist of philosophical Sufism. Both directions of the theory of Sufism (moderate and philosophical) served to rationalize the practice of Sufism, that is, to harmonize it with reason. Imam al-Ghazali's role in the harmonization of Sufi teachings with official (orthodox) Islam is, of course, incomparable. Sufi theoreticians such as Ibn al-Arabi and Imam al-Ghazali rationalized the Sufi worldview and gave it the status of a "theoretical science" characterized by a unique knowledge of Sufi experience - "contact with the truth". [1:98].

In this regard, Sufism theorists such as Imam al-Ghazali and Ibn al-Arabi provided many proofs from the Qur'an and hadiths that Sufism is the science of enlightenment and argued that Sufism has the same characteristics as all Islamic religious sciences.

The efforts of representatives of theoretical (academic) Sufism (moderate and philosophical) turned out to be incompatible with each other. The goal of the spiritual practice of Imam al-Ghazali, a representative of moderate Sufism, is to reach the "divine truth" based on the "path" (tariq) defined in Sufism through the method of Sufi knowledge, such as the state of "perishment".

Ibn al-Arabi's philosophical mysticism, on the other hand, offered a completely different understanding, questioning the knowledge of the transcendental (Being or God) through the conscious efforts of the Sufis. Ibn al-Arabi's teaching is radical - it sees God's knowledge as

God's self-knowledge, and man is the locus of self-knowledge of the ever-renewing divine manifestation through God's things in the plural world. To understand the difference between moderate and philosophical Sufism, it is necessary to consider the basic rules of each.

Moderate Sufism is analyzed based on the views of Imam al-Ghazali. In his writings, Ghazali argues that a mindset that relies on definitions is powerless to know God, who is beyond all definition. Ghazali believed that there was an alternative way of knowing God through intuition, divine gift. There are two ways to access the divine essence, and both of them are not according to reason: 1) through "chosenness", "valiyik", zikr-samo, "fano", 2) firm belief in the words of the prophets.

Imam al-Ghazali thus understands the ultimate goal of the path of mystical spiritual practice as "absorption into God." Absorption in God is the inner state of mind, the highest perfection of knowledge and morality. Contrary to religious belief, absorption is an integral part of reality. It cannot be resolved from a logical point of view and corresponds only to the Sufi science of "khol", "wajd" [1:100].

There are two ways of knowing the Absolute Being, the first is mystical "rapture" and the second is prophetic prophecy. For Ghazali, the second path is preferable because the first path is only the forty-sixth part of prophethood. Imam al-Ghazali acknowledges the priority of prophethood because Muhammad a. s. Loyalty to the Muslim community, based on the revelations received from, should be higher than adherence to individual sectarian ways of the followers of Sufi "absorption".

It should be noted that practitioners of Sufism ultimately preferred to apply the theoretical teachings of moderate Sufism, such as Imam al-Ghazali. The works of the theorists of moderate Sufism have become a kind of theoretical manual for representatives of practical or "folk" Sufism belonging to one or another Sufi order. Representatives of such traditional Sufism, being Muslims, tried to adapt their spiritual teachings to the framework of the Islamic "creed".

Although the experience of understanding the divine reality gives a psychologically strong confidence, a sense of authenticity, but this authenticity was considered individual, personal. [1:101]. The Sufis of Islam realized at the time that the mystical path, that is, the path of approaching God, involves personal passionate actions, zikr-samo, loss of oneself in the state of jazaba (ecstasy), leaving oneself, and this opened a great path to hypocrisy and fraud. After that, they developed general rules for distinguishing the true mystical experience from the false, which comes from the individual realization of the divine truths by intuition and the incorporation of one's "I" into the divine reality (in the spiritual sense). In this regard, Imam al-Ghazali first defined the Shari'ah and then the Tariqat.

Muhyiddin Ibn al-Arabi, the founder of philosophical Sufism, differed from the moderate Sufism of Imam al-Ghazali in understanding the ultimate goal of Sufi knowledge.

First of all, it arose from the difference in their approaches to the questions of existence, which resulted in their different understanding of the essence of knowledge (enlightenment) in Sufism. Imam al-Ghazali and other supporters of moderate Sufism supported the religious-philosophical views of the medieval Arab-Muslim thought in solving the problem of God's relationship to the plural world. According to this view, God is an attribute strictly external to the plural universe that he created. Understood in this sense, first, the externality and directionality of the Creator, God is the condition of all things, but not the other way around, and second, He determines the hierarchical nature of things according to their position in relation to Himself.

It is about the first principle and that it is external to the world of plurality that Ibn al-Arabi revised as a dual unity and added to it the "Third Thing", which we discussed above in the philosophy of *wahdat ul-wujud*.

In the scientific outlook of the next period, a new approach was formed in the study of Imam al-Ghazali's attitude to philosophy and intellectual knowledge in general. In today's academic circles, he has provided evidence that refutes the claims that Ghazali's teaching is connected with the weakening and decline of rationalism in the Muslim world.

According to the representatives of such an approach, Imam al-Ghazali did not criticize reason and logic, but he criticized claims about the absolutization of reason. Studies have shown that, on the contrary, Imam al-Ghazali criticized the anti-intellectual aspects of Sufism. He emphasized that the mind should be enriched with mystical knowledge, but this knowledge should not replace the mind. Ihyou defends the value of reason in the chapter on the mind of *Ulumid-Din*. In criticizing the philosophers, he does not question the superiority and necessity of reason, but shows that it is limited in knowing the "Absolute".

Without considering Imam al-Ghazali's view of human knowledge, it is difficult to determine his approach to rationalism. According to him, the human cognitive process is infinite. Ghazali writes: "The sea of knowledge is endless" [2:67]. In his understanding, knowledge is a continuous, continuous process, which eliminates the possibility of reaching a certain absolute result, a limit. Ghazali writes: "The highest level in science is the level of the Prophets." The philosopher (judge) also seeks the truth, even if he is inferior to the prophets in truth.

Oriental scholar A. Trager suggests that intuitive knowledge in Ghazali's concept corresponds to Ibn Sina's views in many respects and provides many arguments for this. A. Treiger suggests reconsidering the time when Imam al-Ghazali's debates with philosophers were written and received - "Savior from delusions" (*al-Mungiz min az-Zolal*), "Controversies of the philosophers" (*Tahafut al-falasifa*) and "The goals of the philosophers" (*Maqasid al-falasifa*). A. According to Treiger, Imam al-Ghazali wrote *The Disagreements of the Philosophers* to hide his true attitude towards philosophy and philosophers. As Imam al-Ghazali himself wrote the treatise "Aims of Philosophers" - "I

wrote it in two or three years after studying the works of Eastern peripatetics alone" [3:9-10]. These cases, along with the arguments of other scholars who defend Ghazali against accusations of being an enemy of rationalism, call into question the prevailing view that Ghazali studied Arab-Muslim peripateticism only to criticize them. Ghazali was greatly influenced by the ideas of Ibn Sina (980-1037), it is known that after Ibn Sina al-Farabi (870-950) he worked out issues of Aristotle's teaching based on Muslim culture.

Imam al-Ghazali developed the rationalist direction of Islamic theology together with Ash'arism and Arab-Muslim philosophy fully expressed in the teachings of Ibn Sina [2:70]. After that, ash-Shakhrastani and ar-Razis continued this path and laid the foundation for the further rapprochement of the word and philosophy.

We can say that when Imam al-Ghazali's attitude to philosophy and rationalism is studied, there is no connection between his work and the weakening and crisis of rationalism in the Muslim world. He advocated rationalism in the conflict between rationalism and the dogmatic views of traditionalists. Ghazali's views on the word depend on reason, and reason is important in knowing faith, that is, rejecting blind adherence to tradition (taqlid) and rejecting any belief whose truth is in doubt. He advocated rationalism in the conflict between rationalism and the dogmatic views of traditionalists. Ghazali's views on the word depend on reason, and reason is important in knowing faith, that is, rejecting blind adherence to tradition (taqlid) and rejecting any belief whose truth is in doubt. While criticizing the word and the Arab-Muslim sectarianism, he expressed the internal contradiction of their original views and the inability to make a single, absolute judgment. With the work of Imam al-Ghazali, Arab-Muslim Aristotelianism was able to find its place in the intellectual field of the Muslim world. The backwardness of the Muslim world from the West, including the weakening of the tradition of rationalism, was due to the socio-economic and political reasons of the time.

The humanistic thesis of Ibn al-Arabi's philosophical system is unique and extremely important today. Within the framework of his doctrine of wahdat ul-wujud, he justified religious pluralism and the uniformity and universality of divine grace in relation to all things and events. According to his teaching, everything is not separate from reality (God) in terms of the eternity of its existence, that is, it is not separate. According to this view, all worship is actually worship of the One. Ibn al-Arabi states that every religion exists because of the existence of other religions. Despite the rejection of such an idea by the supporters of traditional Islam, its pluralism was positively received by Islamic reformers of the 20th century and in modern Western cultural circles. From the point of view of most Western scholars, Ibn al-Arabi's teaching has transcended the confessional boundaries and has become a theological teaching superior to the confessions.

In the Western world, Ibn al-Arabi gained fame more for his advocacy of religious tolerance, which sometimes implied religious indifference, than for his philosophy [4:105]. It should

be noted that Ibn al-Arabi's idea of monotheism that "God is everything and He is not denied in anything" [5:124] is not his religious conflict, and based on this, it is certainly wrong to consider him as a marginal figure in Islamic philosophy.

The fact is that the ideas of religious tolerance that he emphasized have their foundations in traditional Islam. Therefore, Muslims and Christians living in medieval Islamic society were free to perform their religious prayers. Even in the most tense relations with Christian countries, Muslims did not lose faith in Christians that they were representatives of Abrahamic traditions. Jews were treated the same way. For example, in the 15th century, the Jews of Spain and Portugal fled the Inquisition and found refuge in the Muslim Sultanate. Ibn al-Arabi developed the idea of equality and unity of people in the Holy Qur'an, stressing the essential unity of humanity and divine mercy for all people.

Ibn al-Arabi accepted the doctrine of Ash'arism that there is no cause and effect between things and events in the world, and taught that the world does not exist and is created and renewed at every moment. In the process of constant renewal of the universe, the Absolute (God) appears in the universe in plural forms [4:109]. It follows that the different truths of religions are actually expressions of one, universal truth.

It should also be mentioned that Ibn al-Arabi considered himself to be a true Muslim, he is embodied in his works as an akhli sunna. Nevertheless, Ibn al-Arabi states in his teaching that all religions are equal and that all people are one and that they will be saved in the next world. Ibn al-Arabi's affirmation of the equality of all religions indicates his religious tolerance and desire to eliminate differences between representatives of different religious denominations. Every created thing is good because it has the eternal aspect of the One. However, while the pagan worships different gods, he actually worships one God. The various images or objects of the Creator are but His various manifestations. When people worship stone idols, animals, people, celestial bodies, etc., they worship the one God who manifests himself in these things. Ordinary people, because of their limited consciousness, see God only in a way that they can understand. The Sufi scholar does not reject all religions in "Knowing God" and sees God in every religion, even in the idol of the idolater, and sees the differences in the diversity of God's manifestation in the world [6:113].

It can be said that Islamic religious traditions are the basis of Ibn al-Arabi's theological-religious universalism. Based on the Qur'an, he developed his doctrine about the merciful and just attitude of the Creator towards the created. Its pluralism made it possible to further clarify the universality of Islam and the ideas of tolerance.

The future of a society that is indifferent to the call of Imam al-Ghazali and Ibn al-Arabi to perfection, that is, to human spirituality, and aims only at material wealth and a prosperous life, is doomed. In today's globalization process, raising spirituality and enlightenment for our youth to follow the right path, promoting it, and making it available to the broad sections of the society is one of the first tasks facing our state and society.

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