

NOTES

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2. Al-Bāqillāni: *EI*², art. (al-)Bāqillāni, (R. J. McCarthy); Allard, *Attributs* (n.10/1), 290-312; Rudi Paret, 'Der Standpunkt al-Bāqillānis in der Lehre vom Koran', in Paret (ed.), *Der Koran* (Wege der Forschung), Darmstadt 1975, 417-25 (from *Studi Orientalistici* in onore di Giorgio Levi della Vida, Rome 1956, ii.294-303).
3. Works of al-Bāqillāni: *GAS*, i.608-10; *K. at-Tamhid*, ed. M. al-Khuḍayrī, M. Abū-Rīda, Cairo 1947 (from incomplete ms.); also ed. R. J. McCarthy, Beirut 1957 (from complete mss. but does not repeat pp.160-239 of Cairo edition, on imamate); *F'jāz al-Qur'ān*, various editions, and partly translated by G. von Grunebaum as *A Tenth-Century Document of Arab Literary Theory and Criticism*, Chicago 1950; *K. al-Bayān 'an al-farq bayn al-mu'jizāt wa-l-karāmāt* . . . , ed. R. J. McCarthy, Beirut 1958 ('Miracle and Magic . . .').
4. Ibn-Fūrak: *GAS*, i.610f.; *GAL*, i.175f.; Allard, *Attributs*, 314f., 326-9; *EI*², art. Ibn Fūrak (Watt).
5. Al-Baghdādī: *GALS*, i.666; Allard, *Attributs*, 316f., 329-42; *EI*², art. (al-)Baghdādī (A. S. Tritton).
6. Al-Isfarāyīnī: *GALS*, i.667; *EI*², art. (al-)Isfarāyīnī (W. Madelung).
7. Al-Bayhaqī; *GAL*, i.446f.; *EI*², art. (al-)Bayhaqī (J. Robson); Allard, *Attributs*, 342-72.
8. Al-Qushayrī: *GAL*, i.556f. and *GALS*, i.770-2; *EI*², art. (al-)Qushayrī, Abū l-Ḳāsim (H. Halm); R. Hartmann, *Al-Kuschairis Darstellung des Šūfitums*, Berlin 1914; Massignon, *Passion*², ii.110f. (E.T., ii.104f.); Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions* (n.9/10), 88.
9. Al-Juwaynī: *GAL*, i.486-8 and *GALS*, i.671-3; *EI*², art. (al-)Djuwaynī (C. Brockelmann/L. Gardet); Allard, *Attributs*, 372-404; *Al-Irshād*, ed. J. D. Luciani with French translation, Paris 1938 (cf. review by G. Vajda, *Journal Asiatique*, 230 (1938), 149-53), and ed. M. Y. Musa and A. M. 'Abdalhamid, Cairo 1950; *al-'Aqīda an-Nizāmiyya*, ed. M. Z. al-Kawthari, Cairo 1948, and translated into German as *Das Dogma des Imām al-Ḥaramain al-Djuwainī u. sein Werk al-'Aqīdat an-Nizāmiya*, Cairo and Wiesbaden 1958.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

AL-GHAZĀLĪ AND LATER ASH'ARITES

Al-Ghazālī has been acclaimed by both Western and Muslim scholars as the greatest Islamic theologian and indeed as the greatest Muslim after Muḥammad. It is now realized that this is not so, and that there were other theologians of comparable importance though in different ways. Something has already been said about the difficulty of arriving at a due appreciation of the achievements of al-Ghazālī owing to the fact that Western scholars found him congenial and approachable, and studied his works to the exclusion of those of most other theologians. Another difficulty consists in the great volume of his writings. Thus his greatest work, *Ihyā' 'ulūm ad-dīn*, 'The Revival of the Religious Sciences', consists of forty books or chapters, of which each, when translated into a European language, forms a sizable book.

A further difficulty is that of the seventy or so works attributed to him, which are still extant, a number are agreed by scholars to be falsely so attributed; but there is only partial agreement about which works belong to this group. Since many of the works of dubious authenticity are heterodox or heretical works of Šūfistic teaching, the acceptance of these as genuine alters the general picture of al-Ghazālī. Those who accept some of the dubious writings as genuine suggest as an explanation either that, besides the exoteric teaching which he gave to all, he had esoteric teaching which he communicated only to a select few, or else that towards the end of his life he completely changed his views and abandoned Ash'arism. This second suggestion is shown to be impossible by the discovery of an early manuscript of a short work of Ash'arite-Shāfi'ite tendency, in which it is stated that this was completed by al-Ghazālī less than a fortnight before his death. It is also highly improbable that a lucid and upright thinker like al-Ghazālī could hold and teach esoterically views which contradicted those which he publicly professed. In the present state of scholarship the wisest course is to base any account of al-Ghazālī solely on the works universally accepted as genuine; and that will be done here. Naturally the other works, even if not by al-Ghazālī, are

important as illustrating trends in *ṣūfism*.¹

(1) *Life*. Abū-Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn-Muḥammad al-Ghazālī was born in 1058 in Tūs, a town near modern Meshed in north-east Iran. Almost since his own lifetime there have been arguments whether his *nisba*, 'relative name', should be Ghazālī or Ghazzālī. The latter would relate to a *ghazzāl*, 'spinner (or seller of spun yarn)', the former to a village or woman called Ghazāla; but there is no certainty about the ancestor who was a spinner, since he had a grand-uncle (or less probably uncle) also called Ghazālī, and the village or woman is otherwise unknown. The form Ghazālī is here preferred on the basis of the principle *difficilior lectio potius*.

Al-Ghazālī's early education was in Tūs itself. His father died while he and his brother Aḥmad (who became a distinguished jurist and mystic) were still boys, but left some money for their education with a *ṣūfi* friend. When the money was exhausted, the friend arranged for them to go to a *madrassa*, where they received free food and lodging as well as instruction. At some time not later than 1074 al-Ghazālī went for purposes of study to Gurgan, some 300 miles away at the south-east corner of the Caspian Sea. On the return journey his party was attacked by brigands who among other things took away his notebooks; on his pleading for their restoration this was done, but he was also taunted with claiming falsely to know what was in fact only in his notebooks. At Tūs he therefore spent three years committing the material to memory.

In 1077 he went to Nishapur (about 50 miles to the west) to study under al-Juwaynī at the recently founded Nizāmiyya college. Here he remained until the death of al-Juwaynī in August 1085. Jurisprudence was presumably central in his studies, with Ash'arite theology in second place. Al-Juwaynī may also have encouraged him to read the works of the philosophers al-Fārābī and Avicenna. In his later years at Nishapur he helped with teaching and was recognized as a rising scholar, so that on the death of al-Juwaynī the great vizier Nizām-al-mulk invited him to his court, which was also a camp and moved about. He seems to have remained at this court until July 1091 when he was appointed professor at the Nizāmiyya college in Baghdad. Thus at the age of 33 he went to one of the most prestigious positions in the Sunni Islamic world.

In his book *Al-Munqidh min aḍ-ḍalāl*, 'The Deliverer from Error', he tells us about his intellectual development and about some of the external details of his life from 1091 to 1106. This book is best described as an *apologia pro vita sua*, since in it he is concerned to justify his abandonment of his professorship at Baghdad in 1095 and his return to teaching at Nishapur in 1106; but the plan of the book is roughly autobiographical. He describes his intellectual journey as beginning with a period of complete scepticism and then consisting

of an examination of the four chief 'classes of seekers' of his time, namely, the Ash'arite theologians, the Neoplatonic philosophers, the Ismā'īlites (whom he calls the party of *ta'lim*, 'authoritative instruction') and *Ṣūfis*. He speaks of his encounter with each group as a separate stage chronologically, but the stages must have overlapped. It is virtually certain that he commenced the study of *ṣūfism* at Tūs and Nishapur before 1085, while his study of philosophy probably began under al-Juwaynī. It is unlikely, too, that the period of scepticism, though it was a real experience which lasted 'almost two months', came until after he had some familiarity with philosophy, since philosophical considerations are mentioned in his account of it. Thus the course of his intellectual quest has been somewhat schematized in the interests of the literary presentation.

Some books about jurisprudence seem to have been written before he went to Baghdad, and presumably his lectures there were mainly about jurisprudence. His main work of Ash'arite theology presupposes the study of philosophy and so cannot be dated much before the end of the Baghdad period, but the so-called 'Jerusalem Epistle' (*ar-Risāla al-Qudsiyya*), a brief statement of Ash'arite doctrine later incorporated in Book 2 of the *Ihyā'*, may have been composed before 1091. He himself tells us that much of his time in Baghdad between 1091 and 1095, after lecturing to three hundred students and doing some writing, was devoted to the study of philosophy. He read the books himself without an instructor, presumably because it was difficult for a person in his position to have contact with heretical philosophers. Though he places the period of scepticism much earlier, it is possible that it was connected with this intense study of philosophy. The scepticism consisted in doubting whether it was possible for man to have any certain knowledge at all, and it came to an end, not through any argument, but when 'God cast a light into his heart'; this 'light' was the realization that there are basic truths which cannot be proved but must simply be accepted.

The first encounter in his quest for truth, according to the scheme of the *Munqidh*, was with the rational theologians (*mutakallimūn*). These are in fact the Ash'arites, among whom he had been numbered both at Nishapur and at the court of Nizām-al-mulk. From his new standpoint he regards these theologians as operating on the basis of certain assumptions or presuppositions, which they do not discuss but take for granted, whereas it is precisely for these that he now wants a rational justification. Since these theologians cannot give him this justification, he passes to philosophy. This second encounter will be described more fully in what follows.

The third encounter was of a somewhat different character. It was with those whom he calls *Ta'limites*, the party of *ta'lim*, who got their 'teaching' or 'instruction' in an authoritative form from their

imam. These were in fact the adherents of Ismā'īlism, which was at this time the official religion of Egypt under the Fāṭimid dynasty and also the inspiration of a secret revolutionary movement in the provinces acknowledging the 'Abbāsid caliph. As a scholar al-Ghazālī was concerned with Ismā'īlism, which was occasioning some talk among his contemporaries as a result of Fāṭimid propaganda; and when the caliph commanded him to write a refutation he readily obeyed. There is nothing, however, to suggest that he was as deeply involved personally in this encounter as in the second and fourth, despite his writing at least five books on the topic. The main point which he criticized was the Ismā'īlite claim that, if one wants infallible knowledge on any point, one must consult the infallible imam.

The fourth encounter was with ṣūfism. In the end al-Ghazālī had been disappointed with philosophy, for he had come to realize that there is a limit to the knowledge that can be obtained by rational methods. He therefore decided to make a more thorough study of ṣūfism than he had hitherto done. As he himself puts it in the *Munqidh*: 'I realized . . . that I had already advanced as far as was possible by way of knowledge. What remained for me was not to be attained by instruction and study but only by immediate experience and by living as a ṣūfi.' At the same time he became dissatisfied with the manner of his life in Baghdad. He felt that he was motivated by personal ambition rather than the desire to serve God, and he thought he might be in danger of going to Hell. Eventually in July 1095 his internal struggles and perplexities resulted in what would now be regarded as a psychosomatic illness. His tongue dried up, and he was unable to lecture or even to eat. The doctors could do nothing. Relief came only when he decided to give up academic work completely and to lead the life of a ṣūfi. He made arrangements for his family and their education, then gave away the rest of his wealth. He left Baghdad in November 1095, ostensibly to make the pilgrimage to Mecca; but this was to prevent obstacles being placed in the way of his carrying out his real intention of becoming a ṣūfi. Actually he went only as far as Damascus, and settled there for some months.

The statements in the *Munqidh* about the next ten years are not altogether clear, and have led to varying accounts of what he did; but when they are supplemented from other sources the following picture emerges. From Damascus he made the pilgrimage in November and December 1096, passing through Jerusalem and Hebron. It is sometimes said that he visited Egypt at that time, but this is improbable. From Damascus he returned to Baghdad not later than June 1097, though he probably did not remain long there but proceeded to his native town of Ṭūs by way of Hamadhān. In Ṭūs he established a *khānqāh* (hostel or convent) where young men came and joined him in leading the ṣūfi life as a community. The genuineness of his con-

version to ṣūfism has sometimes been questioned by Muslim scholars, and it has been suggested, for example, that after the coming to power in early 1095 of the Seljūq prince Barkiyāruq his life was in some danger, since he had been involved in supporting the rival prince Tutush, now dead. A political factor may indeed have been present, but al-Ghazālī himself seems to have thought of his position mainly in religious terms.

In 1105 or early in 1106 Fakhr-al-mulk, son of Nizām-al-mulk and now vizier of the Seljūq prince governing Khurasan, prevailed on al-Ghazālī to accept the professorship at the Nizāmiyya college in Nishapur. One of the factors which led him to reverse his earlier decision to give up teaching was a Ḥadīth to the effect that at the beginning of each century God would send a *mujaddid*, 'renewer', of his religion. The Islamic year 500 began on 2 September 1106, and many of those he consulted assured him that he was undoubtedly the *mujaddid* for the sixth century. He may have felt too that he would be able to combine teaching at Nishapur with most of the ṣūfi practices he had been engaging in at Ṭūs, which were presumably those which he describes in his book *Bidāyat al-hidāya*, 'The Beginning of Guidance'. He took up his duties at Nishapur in July or August 1106, and continued teaching until at least August 1109. At some point after that date he retired to Ṭūs, possibly because of ill-health, and died there on 18 December 1111. His brother Aḥmad tells how on the day of his death, after making his ablutions and performing the dawn prayer, he asked for his shroud, kissed it, laid it on his eyes and said, 'Obediently I enter into the presence of the King'; then facing Mecca he stretched out his feet and was dead before sunrise.

(2) *His study of philosophy.* Although al-Ghazālī's decision to study the 'sciences' of the philosophers arose out of his own intellectual problems, he was also aware that theology was in a weak position because of its inability to answer philosophical criticisms. For over two centuries the religious scholars had kept all Greek learning at arm's length as something foreign and dangerous, or had tried to attack it without an adequate understanding of the problems and had thereby incurred the ridicule of the philosophers. Al-Ghazālī set about his task with an open mind, ready to follow the argument wherever it led him, but he was also trying to discover how far the results of the Greek sciences are compatible with the beliefs of Muslims. He soon realized that there was nothing in mathematics, logic and physics contrary to Islamic dogma, but he noted as a drawback that the clarity and certainty of mathematical arguments led some people to suppose that all the arguments of the philosophers had the same clarity and certainty, and so to accept without question their metaphysical assertions. After spending 'less than two years' on these studies al-Ghazālī devoted another year to reflecting on what he

had read. In this way he obtained such a grasp of the philosophy of al-Fārābī and Avicenna that his account of it—chiefly following Avicenna—in his *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*, 'The Aims of the Philosophers', is usually reckoned to be a clearer and more concise account than any written by the philosophers themselves.

For al-Ghazālī, however, this was only a preparation for another work entitled *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, 'The Inconsistency of the Philosophers', in which he criticized the weaknesses of their metaphysical views. With great subtlety he discussed twenty points of doctrine in which he regarded the philosophers as mistaken and as involved in contradictions. Three of these points he regarded as more serious than the others and amounting to 'unbelief', with the corollary that those who held them were outside the community of Muslims. The three doctrines are: that for bodies there is no resurrection, only for bare spirits; that God knows universals but not particulars; and that the world has existed from all eternity (and so was not created).

Al-Ghazālī's study of philosophy undoubtedly had far-reaching results. What may be called the positive results are easiest to describe. By showing that the disciplines associated with philosophy are largely neutral with regard to Islamic doctrine he made it possible for at least the more rationally-minded theologians to accept much of their content. This included metaphysical conceptions other than the twenty points; and, more importantly, it included Aristotelian logic. He himself was greatly impressed by the logical works of Aristotle, especially those on the syllogism. Previous Muslim theologians and jurists had used various forms of argument other than the syllogism, and their arguments were valid for those who shared their assumptions but were employed in a somewhat haphazard fashion. What attracted al-Ghazālī to this logic was possibly not the single syllogism but the ordering of a series of arguments in such a way that the conclusion of one syllogism became the premiss of the next. He devoted some seventy pages to logic in his *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*, and wrote two short works on Aristotelian logic intended for those with a traditional Islamic education, and using examples from materials with which they were familiar. He himself made use of syllogistic reasoning in his exposition of Islamic doctrine, *Al-Iqtisād fī-l-i'tiqād*, 'The Just Mean in Belief'.

As a result of all this one finds later rational theologians in Islam tending to give their theology more and more of a philosophical basis, as will be seen in what follows. Parallel with this was the growth of logic as a distinct discipline, but one whose exponents were no longer philosophers but persons trained in Islamic theology or jurisprudence. The neutrality of philosophical ethics is not so clear, but al-Ghazālī felt able to take over some of its ideas. Indeed it has recently been established that much of his ethical work *Mizān al-*

'amal, 'The Criterion of Action', closely follows an obscure early-eleventh-century philosopher ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī. When the implications of this fact have been further studied, interesting results may be obtained; but it seems unlikely that al-Ghazālī's influence on ethics will prove as important as that on logic. So much for the positive results of al-Ghazālī's study of philosophy. It is these above all which constitute 'the second wave of Hellenism'.

Negative results of his study would be chiefly some weakening of the philosophical movement as a result of his attack on it in the *Tahāfut*. Since there are no pure philosophical works in the eastern provinces after his time, it is tempting to conclude that his attack on the philosophers had been so devastating that philosophy was killed off; but such a conclusion is not justified. It is true that there were no outstanding philosophers in the east after 1100 who stood within the 'pure' Aristotelian and Neoplatonic tradition; but it is also true that the last great philosopher there, Avicenna, had died in 1037, twenty years before al-Ghazālī was born; and so the decline of philosophy may have begun long before the *Tahāfut* appeared. In the western Islamic world Averroes was able to write a critique of the *Tahāfut*, but the tradition virtually came to an end with his death in 1198.

The end of a particular philosophical tradition, however, did not mean the end of all philosophizing. Though the traveller Ibn-Jubayr (d. 1217) could still find people who professed to follow al-Fārābī and Avicenna, it would appear that the main study of philosophy had been transformed so that most of the activity was along two fresh lines. One of these, as already noted, was the incorporation of philosophical conceptions and methods into rational theology or Kalām, especially by the Ash'arites; indeed certain aspects of philosophy became a kind of prolegomena to theology proper. This was mainly found among Sunnite Muslims. The second line was the fusion of philosophy with Shī'ite ideas or with non-Islamic mystical ideas. In the century after al-Ghazālī the philosophy, or perhaps rather theosophy, of the Ishrāq, 'Illuminative Wisdom', was developed by Shihāb-ad-dīn as-Suhrawardī, also known as Suhrawardī Maqtūl, 'the killed Suhrawardī' (d. 1191).² It was and still is influential, especially in the Iranian world, as will be seen later.

Al-Ghazālī's critique of philosophy, then, by no means put an end to philosophizing, but it may have contributed to the transformations. He certainly encouraged Sunnite theologians to become more philosophically minded, and his attack on Avicennian metaphysics may have led those who still followed Avicenna to combine his teaching with some form of mystical belief and practice.

(3) *His practice of ṣūfism*. In previous centuries ṣūfism had sometimes been associated with heretical beliefs and with a neglect of the common duties of Muslims such as the five daily prayers. In

consequence it had become suspect among many jurists and theologians, even though some jurists and theologians, like al-Qushayrī, had themselves been ṣūfis. The main aim of al-Ghazālī in his greatest work, the *Ihyā'* ('The Revival of the Religious Sciences'), was to show how a punctilious observance of the duties imposed by the Shari'a could be the basis of a genuine ṣūfi life. The much shorter work *Bidāyat al-hidāya* describes the basic rule of life which results from the principles explained in detail in the *Ihyā'*. This was presumably the rule which he himself followed after leaving the Baghdad professorship and which was also followed in the monastery-college which he established at Tūs.

In the *Munqidh* al-Ghazālī speaks of the defects he found in the theologians, but there is nothing to suggest that he ever abandoned Ash'arite doctrine, even if he supplemented it with philosophical considerations. An Ash'arite creed, the 'Jerusalem Epistle', is included in the *Ihyā'*, and it was after his study of philosophy that he wrote his major theological work, the *Iqtisād*. At Nishapur he must have taught Shāfi'ite jurisprudence and probably also Ash'arite Kalām. Certainly while he was there he wrote an important book on the principles of jurisprudence called *Al-Mustasfā*, 'The pure [Teaching]'. Finally, a few days before his death he completed a short work (roughly within the field of jurisprudence) in which he maintained that it was wrong to communicate the subtleties of Kalām to ordinary people. From these facts it seems certain that al-Ghazālī remained a Shāfi'ite and Ash'arite to the end of his life, though he was now using philosophical methods to defend Ash'arite doctrine. Consequently those works ascribed to him which make it appear that before his death he abandoned Sunnism and adopted some kind of monism are to be rejected as unauthentic. On becoming a ṣūfi he did not cease to be a Shāfi'ite and an Ash'arite; and thus by his conduct of his own life and by the quality of his writings he helped to allay the suspicions towards ṣūfism felt by many Sunnite scholars, and to make it easier for later Sunnites to adopt a ṣūfi way of life.

(4) *The successors of al-Ghazālī*. The fact that the most important Ash'arites of the eleventh century were connected with Nishapur does not mean that there were no Ash'arites elsewhere. The apologist and historian of Ash'arism, Ibn-'Asākir (d. 1176), has biographical notices of thirteen men whose date of death lay between 1111 and 1148, some of whom had been born before al-Ghazālī. Several of these men lived chiefly in Nishapur, and some chiefly or partly in Baghdad; but others were mainly connected with Damascus, Jerusalem, Ispahan and Kirmān respectively. In Ispahan there was a Nizāmiyya college where Ash'arism was taught and studied. Men travelled easily from one seat of learning to another, and often received an enthusiastic welcome because of their reputation as

scholars. Despite this widespread study of Ash'arite theology, however, there are only two important names in the century and a half after al-Ghazālī.

The first of these is ash-Shahrastānī (Tāj-ad-dīn Muḥammad ibn-'Abd-al-Karīm), who was born in 1086 (or 1076) in Shahrastān, the main quarter of the city of Gurgan in eastern Persia.³ His education was completed at Nishapur, either before or just after al-Ghazālī's period of teaching there. In 1116 he made the pilgrimage to Mecca, and then spent three years lecturing and preaching at the Nizāmiyya in Baghdad. The remainder of his life until his death in 1153 was spent in Nishapur and Shahrastān.

It was presumably at Nishapur that he was introduced to philosophy, and he took up the subject with enthusiasm. Almost a third of his work on sects and religions (already mentioned) consists of an exposition of the philosophy of Avicenna in a manner comparable to the *Maqāṣid* of al-Ghazālī; and he also wrote a refutation of Avicenna, perhaps following the model of the *Tahāfut*. His chief work of Ash'arite theology, *Nihāyat al-iqdām fi 'ilm al-kalām* ('The End of Daring about the Science of Kalām'), is called by its editor and translator a *Summa Philosophiae*, but it is essentially a work of Kalām, treating the same topics and in roughly the same order as the similar works of al-Juwaynī and al-Ghazālī. The invasion of theology by philosophy, however, is marked by the fact that views of Avicenna and other philosophers join those of theological sects among the matters discussed; and the treatment throughout is characterized by new philosophical conceptions and methods.

There was a near-contemporary report that he was suspected of a leaning towards Ismā'ilism and had even been a propagandist for that doctrine. The charge may have arisen out of hostility to philosophy and to theologians who busied themselves with it; or it may be due to the fact that all his books were written for a patron, the *naqīb* or 'dean' of the descendants of 'Alī in Tirmidh. Recently some scholars have tried to show that the charge was justified, and further study is now necessary. What has been shown so far is that there are parallels between some statements made by ash-Shahrastānī and the views of Ismā'ilite authors; but these parallels appear to be not in his main arguments against Avicenna, for example, but in secondary matters. Even when the parallels have been demonstrated, however, there remains the problem of their significance. It may be that they were forms of expression commonly used in the circles in which ash-Shahrastānī mixed and that they did not imply sectarian allegiance; or they may have been introduced to please his patron without indicating a commitment to Ismā'ilism. In the debate so far no cogent reason has been given for thinking ash-Shahrastānī was other than a convinced Ash'arite and Shāfi'ite.

The second important name is that of Fakhr-ad-dīn ar-Rāzī, also known as Ibn-al-Khaṭīb, who was born at Rayy near modern Tehran in 1149 (or 1150) and who died at Herat in Afghanistan in 1210.⁴ His father, the *khaṭīb* or official orator of Rayy, was himself a learned man who had been a student at Nishapur. The young Fakhr-ad-dīn studied the whole range of subjects taught at Rayy, partly with his father and partly with other teachers. Shortly after completing his studies he went to the region of Khwarazm (to the south of the Aral Sea) and argued against the Mu'tazilite theologians who were established there; but their hostility forced him to retire to Bukhara and Samarqand. He subsequently went back to Rayy, where he was able to arrange for the marriage of two sons to the two daughters of a wealthy physician. On the death of the latter Fakhr-ad-dīn obtained control of most of his wealth, and from being a poor man became a very wealthy one, who was in a position sometimes to give financial help to local rulers. Eventually, after journeys to Central Asia and India, he settled in Herat, where he was allowed to establish a school within the royal palace of the Ghūrid dynasty. He died there in March 1210.

He is commonly regarded, following Ibn-Khaldūn, as the person who, along with al-Ghazālī, did most to introduce the new philosophical approach into Kalām. He began the study of philosophy at Rayy, but was greatly influenced by another philosopher whom he apparently never met. This was Abū-l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī, also known as Ibn-Malkā, who was born a Jew near Mosul about 1077, became a Muslim late in life, and died in Baghdad, apparently after 1164.⁵ He was thoroughly versed in the philosophy of Avicenna, but stood closer to traditional Jewish and Muslim theological doctrine, putting special emphasis on the existence of angels. He thus tended to be critical of Avicenna, and his critical attitude was followed by Fakhr-ad-dīn in *Al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*, an extensive work on 'metaphysics and physics', although he also borrows freely from Avicenna.

The greatest theological work of Fakhr-ad-dīn ar-Rāzī is his vast commentary on the Qur'ān, entitled *Mafātiḥ al-ghayb*, 'The Keys of the Unseen'. Modern editions contain between 5,000 and 8,000 pages. Critics like Ibn-Taymiyya complained that this work contained everything except *tafsīr* (commentary); but admirers replied that it contained *tafsīr* and everything else as well. He certainly manages to introduce many philosophical discussions. Of his works specifically on theological doctrine the most important is the *Muḥaṣṣal*, whose full title might be rendered 'The Summary of the Ideas of the Scholars, Philosophers and Theologians, ancient and modern'. This work shows clearly the growing importance of philosophy as a basis for theology. It is divided into four roughly equal parts, of which the first

deals with logical and epistemological preliminaries, and the second with the objects of knowledge (such as the existent, the possible, the necessary). In this he goes far beyond al-Juwaynī and even beyond al-Ghazālī. In the third part he deals with the doctrine of God, and in the fourth with prophethood, eschatology and similar matters. In these last two parts he is basically an Ash'arite.

In a long article on Fakhr-ad-dīn ar-Rāzī published in 1912 Ignaz Goldziher called attention to certain points on which his views were close to those of the Mu'tazilites despite the strong criticisms he had made of those in Khwarazm and elsewhere. Among the points mentioned were: the 'metaphorical interpretation', *ta'wīl*, of anthropomorphic terms applied to God, the use and reliability of those Ḥadīths called *āḥād* (that is, with only a single line of transmission), and the impeccability or freedom from sin (*iṣma*) of the prophets. The charge is valid, but the points are minor ones, and Fakhr-ad-dīn's views may well have been due to influences other than Mu'tazilite. Goldziher realized that some previous Ash'arites had been moving towards the acceptance of *ta'wīl* (as was noted above in the case of al-Juwaynī). Much more is now known about the works of Fakhr-ad-dīn himself and the whole intellectual background (although there are still large gaps in our knowledge); and it seems likely that his intellectual position on such matters was due primarily to his study of philosophy and of the Ash'arite arguments against Mu'tazilism. It is possible, however, that at a later date he modified his positions somewhat in the course of his controversies with the Mu'tazilites.

Although Fakhr-ad-dīn made more use of philosophy than al-Ghazālī, he was more conservative in questions of dogma and less given to speculating freely. For example, there had been much discussion among theologians of whether God had a *ṣūra*, 'form' or 'image'. Muḥammad was reported to have said on one occasion that 'God created Adam in his *ṣūra*'; and there were other similar Ḥadīths. The one quoted seems to reflect *Genesis* 1.26, but some Muslim scholars resorted to various ingenious devices to avoid making the pronoun 'his' refer to God, since any similarity between God and a man was thought to be at variance with God's transcendence. Where al-Ghazālī had come near to accepting the idea that Adam was made in God's *ṣūra*, Fakhr-ad-dīn found a way of making 'his' refer to God and yet turning the whole saying into an assertion that is entirely about Adam and says nothing about a similarity to God. This combination of philosophy and conservatism was symptomatic of the direction in which Kalām was to develop.

Fakhr-ad-dīn ar-Rāzī was by no means the last of the Ash'arites, but after him for about a century there was no important figure in any theological school. The gap here is doubtless due in part to the

disturbed political conditions in the Iranian provinces and Iraq, especially after the Mongol invasions which culminated in the sack of Baghdad in 1258 and the end of the 'Abbāsid dynasty of caliphs.

NOTES

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