

## The Influence of al-Makkī on al-Ghazālī

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**Abstract:** *This article focuses on the influence that Abū Tālib al-Makkī had on the thoughts of al-Ghazālī, and particularly on his writings on mysticism. This is explained in terms of the traditions of Muslim scholars who have usually unhesitatingly drawn upon the ideas of other Muslim scholars, as well as from sources outside Islam to expound and explain the teachings of Islam. Al-Ghazālī who has written extensively on Islamic law, philosophy, logic, kalām, ethics and mysticism, has delved deeply into the thoughts of al-Makkī and has elaborated and built upon his ideas, to the extent that at places he seems to have reproduced al-Makkī in verbatim.*

Abū Tālib Muḥammad Ibn ʿAlī Ibn ʿAṭīyah al-Hārithī al-ʿAjāmī al-Makkī was born in the province of *al-Jibāl* but the date of his birth is unknown.<sup>1</sup> As regards the title *al-Hārithī*, it could refer to a number of tribes, and it is not known to which of them Abū Tālib belonged. The title *al-ʿAjāmī* applies to the inhabitants of the non-Arabic speaking Muslim world. After his birth in *al-Jibāl*, his family must have moved to Makkah probably when he was very young since he was always known by the *nisbah* al-Makkī.

He obtained systematic education in Makkah under Abū Saʿīd Ibn al-ʿArābī, ʿĀbid al-Shaṭṭ al-Muzaffar b. Sahl<sup>2</sup> and Abū ʿAlī al-Kirmānī.<sup>3</sup> He also studied under Abū Saʿīd Ibn al-ʿArābī<sup>4</sup>, the disciple of al-Junayd (d.298/910). One of his writings is *Ṭabaqāt al-nūssāk* which al-Makkī related in his *Qūt al-qulūb*.<sup>5</sup>

It can be assumed, therefore, that al-Makkī probably became

familiar with the teachings of Abū Saʿīd in particular and also with the wider ideas of al-Junayd while he was in Makkah. It can be assumed that he underwent a systematic study of ṣūfism under Abū Saʿīd while he was in this city.

### The Influence

The teachings of Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī influenced not only some of the Baṣrah ṣūfis during his own time, but also those who lived several hundred years thereafter. As has been pointed out elsewhere,<sup>6</sup> figures such as al-Ghazālī, Ibn ʿAbbād al-Rundī and Jalāl al-Dīn mention al-Makkī in their writings. The impact of al-Makkī on Ibn ʿAbbād al-Rundī has been studied by P. Nwyia in his book entitled *Ibn ʿAbbād De Ronda* and elsewhere in his writings. He expresses the view that Ibn ʿAbbād began his studies on ṣūfism by studying the *Qūt*.<sup>7</sup> According to Brockelmann, *al-Bayān al-Shāfi* of al-Makkī exerted great influence on Ibn ʿAbbād.<sup>8</sup>

It is worth mentioning that al-Ghazālī who lived over a century later than al-Makkī, acknowledged his indebtedness to al-Makkī in his seeking of true knowledge. As far as it is possible to ascertain, although many scholars have mentioned that al-Ghazālī was influenced by al-Makkī, no profound comparative study on this area has been done. In his *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, al-Ghazālī states that he studied the works of al-Muḥāsibī and those of al-Junayd, al-Makkī, al-Shiblī and Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī. Although of all these people al-Muḥāsibī is the earliest and the most prolific, and to him al-Ghazālī owes much,<sup>9</sup> it cannot be denied that al-Ghazālī also has a great debt to the *Qūt* of Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī.

Without denying the profound influence of al-Muḥāsibī (d.243/857),<sup>10</sup> the aim of this article is to study the influence of al-Makkī on al-Ghazālī with special reference to the "Book of Repentance." This task was not undertaken even by Susanna Wilzer who concentrated her studies on the *Kitāb al-tawba* of al-Ghazālī in 1952<sup>11</sup> in her unpublished Ph.D. thesis which is entitled *Untersuchungen Zu Ghazzālīs Kitāb al-Tawba*.

For the purpose of this study, the *Ihyā' ʿulūm al-dīn* which was published in 1968 in Cairo will be used as reference.<sup>12</sup> The other editions of the *Ihyā'*<sup>13</sup> will also be consulted. As for al-Makkī, this study will rely on the edition of the *Qūt* which published in 1961.<sup>14</sup> The other versions of the *Qūt* will also be consulted.<sup>15</sup>

The *Kitāb al-tawbah* provides an excellent model for an analysis of al-Ghazālī's dependence on al-Makkī. It should be noted that in forming the *Kitāb al-tawbah*, al-Ghazālī combines two chapters of al-Makkī's. They are chapters 32 and 37, entitled respectively, "The book of repentance" and "The explanation of major sins which can diminish and destroy good deeds."<sup>16</sup> In contrast to the chapters of al-Makkī, al-Ghazālī arranges his chapter of repentance in an organised way so that the reader can understand it easily.

It is worth emphasising that large sections of al-Ghazālī's chapter on repentance bear very close resemblance to al-Makkī's *Qūt al-qulūb*. Although al-Ghazālī mentions his indebtedness to al-Makkī only once explicitly in the chapter on *tawbah*, it is quite clear from a close scrutiny of both works that al-Ghazālī has leaned heavily on his predecessor in this section. This is true for al-Ghazālī's citations from the Qur'ān, the ḥadīth, the sayings of Sahl al-Tustarī and of Abu Sulaymān al-Dārānī, the stories of prophets, the story of the angel of death and numerous other examples.<sup>17</sup>

The following analysis will concentrate on four major ways in which al-Ghazālī's chapter differs from that of his source, the *Kitāb al-tawbah* of al-Makkī.

### 1. General Introduction

Firstly, al-Ghazālī begins his chapter with a general introduction explaining the arrangement he has adopted. This approach is lacking in al-Makkī's treatment of the topic.

In order to make the general concept of *tawbah* clearer, al-Ghazālī divides this concepts into four *pillars*. The first pillar concerns the true definition of *tawbah*. At this stage al-Ghazālī confirms that since it is an obligation, repentance should be performed by all Muslims immediately.<sup>18</sup> The second pillar for al-Ghazālī is concerned with those things for which repentance is required. According to al-Ghazālī, with regard to this matter, one should recognise the categorisation of sins into major and minor offences.<sup>19</sup>

The third pillar for al-Ghazālī discusses the explanation of the conditions of repentance and how one may amend bad deeds which have been committed previously. In this section he also discusses the explanation of the stages of penitents. As for the fourth pillar, it considers the motivation for repentance and how to find a solution for those who persist in sins.<sup>20</sup> Al-Ghazālī asserts that if one

understands all these requirements, one will be blessed by almighty God.

## 2. Summarising al-Makkī's Material

Al-Ghazālī often uses the technique of shortening and summarising al-Makkī's material. Instead of many scattered references to the meaning of *tawbah* which are to be found in the *Qūt*, al-Ghazālī gives a clear definition of *tawbah* in one place, providing a shortened version of the definition of it attributed to Sahl al-Tustarī which is also cited by al-Makkī:

Repentance is transformation (*tahwīl*) of blameworthy behaviour by praiseworthy behaviour and that is only achieved by keeping oneself in seclusion and silence and by consuming lawful food.<sup>21</sup>

It should be noted that al-Makkī's quotation of Sahl is much longer. Al-Ghazālī sees no need to quote Sahl in full. A minor difference between the definition of al-Makkī and al-Ghazālī is that the latter uses the term *tahwīl* rather than the word *tabdīl* preferred by al-Makkī. Moreover, al-Ghazālī chooses to omit the sentence "one's repentance will not be valid except by consuming..." used by al-Makkī.

In contrast to al-Makkī's approach, al-Ghazālī also summarises the definition of the word *naṣūh*, that is one who surrenders himself wholeheartedly to Allah (*al-khāliṣ li Allāh ta'ālā*).<sup>22</sup> The word *naṣūh*, according to al-Ghazālī, is derived from the word *al-nash*. He also quotes the tradition of the Prophet (SAS), which says:

The penitent is the beloved of Allāh and one who repents from sin is like one who has no sin.

It seems probable that al-Ghazālī borrowed this tradition from al-Makkī since they are both quoting this tradition in the same form, (*al-tā'ib ḥabīb Allah*) the first part of which is not an authentic tradition.<sup>23</sup>

In explaining the importance of *istiqāmah* (constant commitment), al-Ghazālī simply summarises from al-Makkī in a few sentences referring to the sinner who then repents to the end of his life thereafter.<sup>24</sup>

Al-Ghazālī simplifies the general definition of repentance in his conclusion by saying that repentance is to make up one's mind to

neglect the act of disobedience both straightaway and in the future.<sup>25</sup>

### 3. Enlarging al-Makkī's Material

At other times al-Ghazālī enlarges and expands on a topic from al-Makkī. Such a method can be seen throughout al-Ghazālī's chapter on repentance and it becomes the major part of this chapter. In view of the widespread use of this technique by al-Ghazālī, a few relevant examples have been chosen to illustrate it in the following discussion.

In order to expound the concept of repentance, al-Ghazālī asserts that repentance is based on three elements: knowledge (*ilm*), condition (*hay'ah*), and actions (*af'āl*). Through knowledge one will know the dangers of sin which might become a hindrance between man and God.<sup>26</sup> Once one knows the dangers of sin, one will make up one's mind to abandon it. At the same time one will also regret what one has done previously. Therefore, one will make the intention to repent. The stages in the process which take place before repentance are called *hay'ah* and the intentions and repentance are called *af'āl*.<sup>27</sup> This discussion by al-Ghazālī is not to be found in the relevant sections of the *Qūt*.

Al-Ghazālī goes on to expand another point: the obligation of repentance under the sub-topic entitled "The obligation of repentance and its virtues." He asserts that the obligation of repentance is prescribed by God in His verses and is also to be found in the traditions of the Prophet. Al-Ghazālī quotes many verses from the Qur'an in this connection including verse 14:31:

And O believers, turn ye all together towards Allah, that ye may attain bliss;

and chapter 66:8:

O ye who believe, turn to Allah with sincere repentance; in the hope that your Lord will remove your ills and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow.

He then argues that even if the Qur'anic verses and traditions of the Prophet were not available, the obligation of repentance could still be realised by men using their own minds. Although al-Makkī also emphasises the subject of the obligation of repentance, this kind of reasoning as adduced by al-Ghazālī has never been put forward by al-Makkī.<sup>28</sup>

Al-Ghazālī elaborates further by saying that repentance should be

performed immediately without procrastinating. Therefore, after knowing the danger of sin, turning to God from it, is a virtuous act. Al-Ghazālī equates this situation with that of the person who swallows poison. In this situation, it is necessary to vomit in order to remove its deadly effect. However, one who swallows poison needs time in order to vomit it. According to al-Ghazālī, this period of time corresponds to the respite which is needed by one who wishes to atone for the previous vices.<sup>29</sup> In the case of al-Makkī, he also discusses this point in a very short and concise way by quoting a saying of Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī;

If the intelligent man were to weep for the rest of his life only for his previous disobedience, it would be fitting that this should make him grieve until his death. So how will it be for someone facing the rest of his life still retaining his previous ignorance?<sup>30</sup>

Al-Ghazālī expands his chapter of repentance with a new section, entitled "An explanation of the fact that the obligation of repentance is a general (injunction) for every individual and situation. Nobody at all may abandon it." Al-Ghazālī commences this section by quoting the Qur'anic verse 14:31;

And O believers, turn ye all together towards Allah, that ye may attain bliss.

He elaborates this point further by saying that repentance is an individual obligation (*farḍ 'ayn*) because every person is prone to commit sin and follow his lust.<sup>31</sup>

In order to emphasise this obligation, al-Ghazālī goes to the root of the problem by asserting that desire is the army of devils, whereas the intellect (*'aql*) is the army of angels. Desire comes very early in life whereas one's intellect reaches its maturity at the age of forty. Therefore, since desire prevails in a person from a very early age, one is prone to commit sin. Hence, the obligation of repentance is essential for every individual.<sup>32</sup>

Al-Ghazālī further states that perfect repentance is to be attained not only by abandoning sin but also by compensating for one's past dilatoriness. He goes on to quote the tradition of the Prophet which says: "Follow a bad deed with a good one which will obliterate it."<sup>33</sup> As for al-Makkī, he treats this whole topic by simply citing the above Qur'anic verse and ḥadīth quotations without a proper commentary.

Al-Ghazālī continues his discussion by explaining the dangers of procrastinating. According to him, there are two risks which result from such a practice. Firstly the darkness which results from acts of disobedience will engender a stain on one's heart. Secondly, if death approaches, one would have no opportunity to repent. Such an explanation by al-Ghazālī is not to be found in the relevant section of the *Qūt*.<sup>34</sup>

Al-Ghazālī goes on to remind the reader that man's heart and life are trusts which are bestowed on him by God. If man makes full use and takes good care of them Allah will grant him mercy; if not, He will punish him. In order to strengthen this argument, al-Ghazālī relates an account which is reported by one of the gnostics (*ʿarifūn*) concerning two mysteries which are confided by God to man. The first mystery is when one is born and emerges from one's mother's womb and the second mystery is at the departure of one's soul. Although this account is also to be found in the *Qūt*, al-Makkī leaves it without explanation.<sup>35</sup>

Al-Ghazālī then embarks on a wider-ranging discourse on the nature of man. He points out that he has already discussed this topic in greater detail elsewhere in the *Ihyā'*, in the section entitled "The Book of the wonders and pitfalls of the heart." He asserts that there are four attributes which are to be found in man. They are divine attributes (*al-ṣifāt al-rabbāniyyah*), devilish attributes (*al-ṣifāt al-shayṭāniyyah*), bestial attributes (*al-ṣifāt al-bahīmiyyah*) and predatory attributes (*al-ṣifāt al-sabʿiyyah*).<sup>36</sup>

Divine attributes include pride, glory, arrogance, love of praise, eulogy, might and wealth, and the desire to live forever. It is as if man has arrogated to himself the attributes of God. Al-Ghazālī goes on to say that man may claim "I am your Almighty God." From this emanates a group of major sins which are neglected by men and not considered as sin by them. They are, however, major sins which lead to perdition and are the source of many acts of disobedience just as he (al-Ghazālī) has discussed in the quarter (*rubʿ*) which deals with sins leading to perdition (*al-kibr wa al-fakhr wa ḥubb al-madh wa al-ʿizz wa al-ghinā wa ḥubb dawām al-baqā' wa ṭalab al-istiʿlā ʿalā al-kāfah ḥatta ka'annahū yurīd an yaqūl: Ana rabbukum al-ʿlā, wa hādhihī yastashʿab minhu jumlatan min kabā'ir al-dhdhunūb ghafala ʿanhā al-khalaq wa lam yaʿudūhā dhunūban wa hiya al-muhlikāt al-ʿazīmah al-latī hiya ka al-ummahāt li akthar al-maʿāṣī kamā istaqṣaināhu fī rubʿ al-muhlikāt*).<sup>37</sup>

In the *Qūt*, al-Makkī lists man's divine attributes as follows: pride, glory, arrogance, love of praise and eulogy, and the attribute of might and wealth. He then concludes that these are sins which leads to perdition (*al-kibr wa al-fakhr wa al-jabariyah wa ḥubb al-ḥamd wa al-madh wa waṣaf al-ʿizz fa hādhi al-muhlikāt*).<sup>38</sup>

This is all that al-Makkī says in section 32 of the *Kitāb al-tawbah* about man's divine attributes. Moreover, he does not include any discussion of the divine attributes in his treatment of major sins (section 37) on which as already mentioned, al-Ghazālī draws for his analysis of repentance.<sup>39</sup>

Al-Ghazālī's second group of attributes are devilish. Such attributes cover envy, injustice, cunning, deceit, commanding others to perform corrupt deeds and to conspire, which includes incitement to innovation, hypocrisy and going astray (*al-ḥamd wa al-baghy wa al-ḥilah wa al-khidāʿ wa al-amr bi al-fasād wa al-makr wa fihī yadhkhu al-ghish wa al-nifāq wa al-daʿwah ilā al-bidaʿ wa al-dalāl*). In this section al-Ghazālī makes his discussion almost as brief as that of al-Makkī.

Al-Ghazālī's categorisation is also quite similar to that of al-Makkī who defines the devilish attributes as follows: envy, injustice, cunning, deceit and commanding others to perform corrupt deeds. These are grave offences (*mūbiqāt*) (*al-ḥasad wa al-baghy wa al-ḥilah wa al-amr bi al-fasād fa hādhihī mūbiqah*).<sup>40</sup>

Al-Ghazālī goes on to explain bestial attributes. These include greed (the attribute of) the dog, and the urge to satisfy the appetite of the belly and the pudenda. From this there result adultery, homosexuality, theft, squandering the property of orphans and accumulating the ephemeral things (of this world) for the sake of (different) appetites (*al-shirrah wa al-kalb wa al-ḥirṣ ʿalā qadā shahwah al-baṭn wa al-farj wa minhu yatashaʿab al-zinā wa al-liwāt wa al-sariqah wa akl māl al-aytām wa jamʿ al-ḥitām li ajl al-shahawāt*).

Al-Makkī's explanation of bestial attributes is shorter than al-Ghazālī's and is found not in the *Kitāb al-tawbah* at all but in section 25 ("The Explanation of the definition of the lower soul and the change of rapture of gnostics"). The bestial attributes are love of eating, drinking and marriage (*ḥubb al-akl wa al-shurb wa al-nikāh*).<sup>41</sup> Al-Makkī categorises the bestial attributes listed by al-Ghazālī as offences which are included under major sins (*kabā'ir*).



These are engendered by the belly (*batn*), pudenda (*farj*) and limbs (*jawāriḥ*).<sup>42</sup>

The fourth categorisation of attributes for al-Ghazālī is predatory. Such attributes embrace anger, hatred, attacking people by striking, abusing their honour, murder, seizing property. From these will spring various kinds of sins (*al-ghadab wa al-ḥiqd wa al-tahajjum ʿalā al-nās bi al-darb wa al-shatm wa al-qatl wa istiḥlāk al-amwāl wa yatafarraʿ ʿanhā jumal min al-dhdhunūb*).<sup>43</sup> This seems to be a further elaboration of al-Makkī who describes these attributes as sins committed by man in this world. In this category, he includes striking people, abusing their honour, usurping their property, lying and slandering, all of which lead to perdition (*Darb al-insān wa shatm al-ʿrād wa akhdh al-amwāl wa al-kidhb wa al-buhtān fa hādhhī mubīqāt*).<sup>44</sup>

Al-Ghazālī asserts that all these four categories of attributes will emerge naturally in man by degrees. The bestial attributes appear first. These are followed by predatory ones. The devilish attributes will emerge thereafter. The last group to appear are the divine ones. This discussion on man's nature in relation to four kinds of attributes is not derived from al-Makkī.

From these categorisations, al-Ghazālī elaborates further and develops a wider analysis of sins, which he divides into two. The first group of sins are those which concern the relationship between man and God, and the second group spring from man's dealing with other human beings. Amongst the sins which concern man's relationship with God are: neglecting prayer or fasting and abandoning the prescribed obligations which are related to Him. The second group of sins which affect man's relations with his fellows include neglecting of alms giving, murder, seizing property, summoning people to commit *bidʿah*, distorting the true teaching of religion and abusing honour.<sup>45</sup>

Within al-Makkī's chapter of repentance, there are six categories of sins. Al-Ghazālī takes al-Makkī's sixth category (*mā kāna bayna al-ʿabd wa mawlāhu*) as the basis of his discussion about the first group of sins which concern man's relationship with God. Al-Makkī's third category becomes (*maʿāṣin takūnū min didd al-Sunnah*) al-Ghazālī's second section dealing with sins affecting man's relationship with his fellow-men. It should be noted that al-Makkī's third and sixth categories of sins are left without any explanation.<sup>46</sup>

Lateron, al-Ghazālī formulates his own classifications of sins. According to him, there are three stages of sin. Firstly, there is infidelity (*kufr*) which can deter one from knowing God and His messenger.<sup>47</sup> This stage covers such sins as despair of His mercy, associating partners with God, arrogance and pride.

The second stage of sin is that which concerns the soul. According to al-Ghazālī, once the soul is protected, it enables one to know God and His messenger. This stage embraces such practices as murder, suicide, amputating one's limb, adultery, homosexuality, abusing one's honour and attacking and striking people.<sup>48</sup>

The third stage covers sins which are related to property, which is people's sustenance. These sins include theft, robbery, cheating, taking usury, squandering the property of orphans, fabricating witness in gaining property and the use of force against other people to gain their property. Al-Ghazālī also includes here such practices as giving false witness for gaining property.<sup>49</sup> This kind of classification is not to be found in al-Makkī's chapter.

When al-Ghazālī begins his third pillar, which is entitled "The perfection of repentance, its condition and perpetuity to the end of time," he explains that repentance will be perfect through regret, which is a feeling caused by hatred of sin. Perfect repentance can also be achieved through perpetual sorrow and tenderness of heart. Here is always an abundance of tears which accompanies those who practise remembrance.<sup>50</sup> In contrast to al-Ghazālī, in order to explain the same point al-Makkī simply cites the saying of Yaḥyā b. Mu'adh al-Rāzī who says:

For all of his (man's) life, he is between two days, the day which is past and the day which remains, and he sets them aright with three things. As for the past, it is by regret and asking forgiveness (from Allah), and as for that which remains it is by abandoning confusion and those who practise it, keeping to the company of novices, and sitting with those who practise remembrance (of God). The third thing is keeping to purifying one's nutrition and persistence in practising (good) deeds. A sign of true repentance is tenderness of heart and abundance of tears.<sup>51</sup>

Moreover, according to al-Ghazālī, the sign of true repentance is that the bitterness of sin which is absorbed in one's heart will be replaced by the feeling of sweetness after abandoning it.<sup>52</sup> One should also replace the feeling of leaning towards sin with the feeling

of hatred of it and substitute for the feeling of wishing to commit it, with the effort to avoid it. Al-Ghazālī notes that there are some sins which cannot be atoned for except by feeling distress at one's worldly life and hatred of luxurious ways. He quotes a tradition as follows: "Some sins are sins which cannot be atoned for except by feeling distress in earning (one's) life." In another version the ḥadīth is, "...which cannot be atoned for except by feeling distress at (one's) life."<sup>53</sup>

In order to emphasise that sorrow can atone for sins, al-Ghazālī goes on to relate a story of prophet Yūsuf (AS) when he was in prison, and the angel Gabriel. Yūsuf asked about his father and the angel replied that Ya'qūb was sorrowing for the loss of Yūsuf. The angel said that Allah had granted Ya'qūb a reward equal to that of a hundred martyrs.<sup>54</sup> This kind of explanation is lacking in al-Makkī's chapter.

Later on al-Ghazālī raises the problem of the truth of repentance. He highlights two views regarding this issue: one is that the essence of repentance is to remember sin, and the other view is that it is to forget sin. Al-Ghazālī elaborates this issue at greater length and he comes to the conclusion that remembrance of sin is the path of novices who have to practise such an action in order to encourage them to experience regret and sorrow. If the novice is not absorbed in such a practice, it is to be feared that he will not regret and repent. Al-Ghazālī is also of the opinion that forgetting sin is the path of those who attain a higher station.<sup>57</sup> This kind of interpretation is not found in al-Makkī's chapter.

#### 4. Summarising and Enlarging al-Makkī's Material

Another method which al-Ghazālī utilises in forming his *Kitāb al-tawbah* is to summarise some of al-Makkī's points and thereafter to re-elaborate them at greater length. In order to highlight this, one relevant example is being given; although many others could be mentioned. In the section which is entitled "The explanation of a minor sin which becomes a major sin," al-Ghazālī says that a small sin can also become major one after committing seven actions; namely persistence in sin, belittling sin, concealing God by one's sin, displaying one's sin, causing other people to commit sin, helping other people to commit sin, inventing of a sin by a learned man, which is followed by other people thereafter.\*\*\*

In the equivalent section in al-Makkī's work, al-Makkī lists nine

reasons. Al-Ghazālī reduces them to seven only. However, having retained those seven reasons he then re-elaborates all these at length.<sup>58</sup> He asserts that a major sin is surrounded by many small sins; therefore one may commit small sins first before committing a major sin. According to al-Ghazālī, the first reason why a minor sin becomes a major one is through persistence in sin. Another reason which makes a small sin become a major one, is belittling a sin. According to al-Ghazālī, if a person regards his sin as big, it becomes a minor sin to Allah.<sup>59</sup> He quotes the tradition of the Prophet who says:

The believer is one who feels that his sin is as big as a mountain which is above him, and fears that it will fall upon him, (whereas) the hypocrite is he who feels that his sin is as small as a fly which passes before his nose and he swats it away.<sup>60</sup>

After quoting this tradition, al-Ghazālī reproduces the passages from al-Makkī's *Qūt* with some modification.

Another factor which can make a small sin become a major one, is the feeling of pleasure which can be aroused after committing a small sin. He equates this situation with a salesman who feels very happy after cheating his customer. According to al-Ghazālī, this attitude will engender dilatoriness and persistence in it. Such a cause is discussed by al-Makkī without any example.<sup>61</sup> Belittling Allah's concealing of one's sins and belittling Allah's clemency are two causes which make a small sin into a major one. Here al-Ghazālī re-elaborates in greater detail the points which are discussed by al-Makkī.<sup>62</sup>

Another factor is a situation in which a learned man commits sin, and this is then followed by other people. The sin will be regarded as a major one after it has been committed by other people. Therefore, according to al-Ghazālī, there are two tasks for the learned man. Firstly, to avoid committing sin and the second is to conceal his sins. This is because, if the layman sees the sin of a learned man, he will follow it.<sup>63</sup> After pointing out all these reasons, al-Ghazālī then copies several passages from the *Qūt*. Careful study of this section shows that al-Ghazālī reproduces from al-Makkī the reasons which make a small sin into a major one. Unlike al-Makkī, however, al-Ghazālī presents his case in a systematic way so that the reader can understand it easily.

## Conclusion

Almost all the material in al-Ghazālī's chapter of *tawbah* is taken from al-Makkī's chapter, including the conclusion. Frequently the material is copied verbatim. On other occasions, al-Ghazālī makes minor changes,<sup>64</sup> either to the wording itself or to the order of sentences.<sup>65</sup> Al-Ghazālī's presentation is however more organised and the material is dealt with systematically. His ideas are not presented in the scattered and disordered way which is found in al-Makkī's chapter.

Many of the traditions in al-Ghazālī's chapter of repentance are similar to those found in al-Makkī's. Both of them have used traditions which have been criticised as *da'if* (weak) by later scholars such as al-Subkī, al-'Irāqī, al-Murtaḍa and more recently Zakī Mubārak.<sup>66</sup>

## Notes

1. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, ed. Ihsan 'Abbās (Beirut: Dār al-Šādir, n.d), 4:303; see also Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, tr. De Slane, (London: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1961).
2. *Ibid.*, 2:543.
3. *Ibid.*, 2:248; Al-Makkī refers to al-Kirmānī as "our master in Makkah".
4. Abu Sa'īd Ahmad Muhammad Ibn Ziyād Ibn Bishr Ibn al-A'rābī, who was born in Basrah, is said to have lived in Baghdad, and frequented the circle of the Baghdad ṣūfīs under the supervision of al-Junayd. After leaving Baghdad, he settled in Makkah and later on became the venerated *shaykh* of the two Holy cities, Makkah and Madinah. Abū Sa'īd compiled many treatises on a variety of topics including mysticism and history. Abdel Kader lists 12 treatises attributed to Abu Sa'īd, see Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Hilyat al-awliyā* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1932) 1:375; Al-Subkī, *Tabaqāt al-Šāfi'iyyah al-kubrā* (Cairo:Matba'ah al-Hasīniyah, 1964)1:93; 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntazam fī tārikh al-mulūk wa'l-umam* (Hyderabad: Matba'ah Da'irah al-Ma'ārif al-Uthmāniyah, 1358 AH), 4:381; Abū 'l-Falāḥ b. al-'Imād al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr, 1350 AH), 3:154; Ali Hasan Abdel Kader, *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd* (London: Luzac and Co., 1962), p. xii.
5. Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb fī mu'āmalāt al-mahbūb wa wasf tariq al-murīd ilā maqām al-tawhīd* (Amman: Mu'assasah Khaldūn, 1990), 1:330.

6. See chapter one of W. Mohd Azam, "An Evaluation of the Qūt al-Qulūb of al-Makkī with an Annotated Translation of his Kitāb al-Tawbah," (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1991).

7. P. Nwyia, "Ibn 'Abbād al-Rundī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1943), 3:670-671; see also L. Massignon, "Abū Tālib al-Makkī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1943), 1:153.

8. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1934) 1:217.

9. Margaret Smith, "The Forerunner of al-Ghazālī," *The Journal of The Royal Asiatic Society*, Part 1, (January 1936): 57-65.

10. Ibid.

11. Susana Wilzer, "Untersuchungen Zu Ghazzalis Kitab at-Tauba," (Ph.D. thesis, University of Erlangen, 1952).

12. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, 5 vols. ed. Zayn al-'Abidīn al-Fadl al-Husayn al-'Iraqī (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Halabī, 1968).

13. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, 4 vols. (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'rafah, n.d.).

14. Al-Makkī, *Qūt*, 2 vols. (Amman: Mu'assasah Khaldūn, 1990).

15. Al-Makkī, *Qūt*, 4 vols. (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'rafah, 1932); Unfortunately the *Kitāb al-tawbah* is not included in the manuscript of the *Qūt* (British Library Ms. no. 7726 and Chester Beatty, Ms. no. 3698).

16. *Qūt*, 2:304-318.

17. The following examples illustrate al-Ghazālī's dependence on al-Makkī:

The saying of Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī: If the intelligent man were to weep for the rest of his life only for his previous disobedience, it would be fitting that this should make him grieve until his death. So how will it be for someone facing the rest of his life still retaining his previous ignorance. *Ihyā'*, 4:68; cf *Qūt*, 1:370. For the other saying of Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī, see *Ihyā'*, 4:68; cf *Qūt*, 1: 377; for the story of the angel of death who comes to one who is dying, see *Ihyā'*, 4: 15; cf *Qūt*, 1: 367; for the account of two mysteries bestowed by God on man, see *Ihyā'*, 4:16; cf *Qūt*, 1:368; and for the tradition which is about two angels conversing with each other; and for acceptance of repentance, see *Ihyā'*, 4:19; cf *Qūt*, 1: 369.

18. *Ihyā'*, 4:4.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. *Ihyā'*, 4:5, cf *Qūt*, 1:369.

22. *Ihyā'*, 4:6, cf *Qūt*, 1:365.

23. This tradition is not in the six canonical ḥadīth collections. In fact al-

Iraqī criticises the first part of the ḥadīth as not being an authentic tradition, *Ihyā'*, 4:6.

24. *Ihyā'*, 4:55; cf *Qūt*, 1: 365-366.

25. *Ihyā'*, 4: 7.

26. *Ibid.*, 4: 4-5.

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*, 4:6; cf *Qūt*, 1:364.

29. *Ihyā'*, 4:11.

30. *Qūt*, 1:366; cf *Ihyā'*, 4:15.

31. *Ibid.*, 4:11-12.

32. *Ibid.*, 4:12.

33. *Ibid.*, 4:15; cf *Qūt*, 1: 366.

34. *Ihyā'*, 4:16.

35. *Qūt*, 1: 367-368; cf *Ihyā'*, 4:16.

36. *Ibid.*, 4:19-20. According to A. Quasem, the first two attributes of man's nature are taken by al-Ghazālī from al-Makkī and the last two attributes from philosophers. It seems that A. Quasem does not acknowledge that al-Ghazālī has taken the idea of bestial attributes from al-Makkī who also lists the description of bestial attributes in his *Qūt* (A. Quasem, *The Ethics of al-Ghazālī*, Petaling Jaya, no publisher, 1975), 48-50; cf *Qūt*, 1:177. Elsewhere in his writings, al-Ghazālī repeats the attributes of the nature of man, for example in *Mishkāt al-anwār* and in *Majmū'at rasā'il al-Imām al-Ghazālī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1986), 39.

37. *Ihyā'*, 4:19-20.

38. *Qūt*, 1:390.

39. *Ibid.*, 2:304-306.

40. *Ibid.*, 2:304.

41. *Ibid.*, 1:177. Apart from these categories of attributes, al-Makkī has others. These are the attributes of servanthood (*awṣāf al-ʿubūdiyyah*) which cover fear, modesty and humility (*al-khawf wa l-tawāḍuʿ wa l-dhull*), and the attributes of men of spirituality (*awṣāf al-ruḥāniyyin*).

42. *Ibid.*, 1:390; see also vol. 2:304.

43. *Ihyā'*, 4:20.

44. *Qūt*, 1:390.

45. *Ihyā'*, 4:21.

46. *Ibid.*, 4:21-23; cf *Qūt*, 2:304.

47. *Ihyā'*, 4:25.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid., 4: 25-26.

50. Ibid., 4:43; cf *Qūt*, 1:370.

51. Ibid., 1:370.

52. *Ihyā'*, 4:43; cf *Qūt*, 1:369.

53. *Ihyā'*, 4:45; cf *Qūt*, 1:379-380. This tradition is an unauthentic one and has been criticised by al-Irāqī.

54. *Ihyā'*, 4:45; cf *Qūt*, 1:379-380.

55. *Ihyā'*, 4:49; cf *Qūt*, 1:383.

56. *Ihyā'*, 4:52; cf *Qūt*, 1:372-373.

57. *Ihyā'*, 4:53; cf *Qūt*, 1:371.

58. *Ihyā'*, 4:4.

59. Ibid., 4:40; cf *Qūt*, 1:370.

60. *Ihyā'*, 4:41; cf *Qūt*, 1:370.

61. *Ihyā'*, 4:41; cf *Qūt*, 1:373.

62. *Ihyā'*, 4:41; cf *Qūt*, 1:373.

63. *Ihyā'*, 4:42.

64. For example, the saying of ʿUmar (RA) and others: "ʿUmar said: Sit (all of you) with penitents, for they are the tenderest of heart." The only difference between al-Makkī and al-Ghazālī is that the former prefers the word "*sha'y*" (something) before the word "*af'idah*" (hearts), whereas the latter omits it. *Ihyā'*, 4:19; cf *Qūt*, 1:370.

One of them said: "I recognise the punishment (for my sins) in the misshapen form of my donkey", and another said, "I recognise the punishment (for my sins) even in the rat (*fa'r*) in my house." A minor difference between al-Makkī and al-Ghazālī is that the former prefers the *nār* (fire) instead of *fā'r* (rat) employed by the latter. *Ihyā'*, 4:68; cf *Qūt*, 1:377.

65. For example, the Companions and the Successors disagreed on the number of major sins; (the number ranged) from four to seven, to nine, to eleven and to more than that (number); Ibn Masʿūd said: "they are four". Ibn ʿUmar said: "They are seven" and ʿAbd Allah b. ʿAmru (said): "They are nine." Whenever the saying of Ibn ʿUmar reached Ibn ʿAbbās, he used to say: "They are closer to seventy than to seven." He said: "Whatever is forbidden by God is a major sin." Others said: "Whatever is prescribed by Allah with hellfire, is amongst the major sins." One of the pious predecessors (*salaf*) said: "Whatever is prescribed by Allah in this world with punishment (*ḥadd*) is a major sin". It has been said: "They are uncertain and their number cannot be ascertained just like the night of



Power (*laylat al-qadr*) and the (special) moment on Friday." Ibn Mas'ūd said at the time when he was asked about that: "Read from the beginning of *surah al-Nisā'* until the thirtieth verse when Allah says "*in tajtanibū kabā'ir mā tunhawna 'anhū*". Whatever is forbidden by God in this chapter up to here (verse 31) is a major sin." Obviously, al-Ghazālī simply omits some the sentences or changes the word order of al-Makkī's *Qūt*; for example al-Ghazālī prefers to use the sentence "the Companions and the Successors disagreed on the number of major sins" rather than "There was disagreement among the '*ulamā'*' from the Companions and the Successors" employed by al-Makkī; *Ihyā'*, 4:21-23; cf *Qūt*, 2:304.

66. Al-Subkī in his *Ṭabaqāt* lists all weak traditions which are related by al-Ghazālī in his *Ihyā'*. See *Ṭabaqāt*, 6:215.