

A REAPPRAISAL OF AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S INTELLECTUAL PRESTIGE: HISTORICAL, ETHICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

Abu Hamid al-Ghazālī's prestige and authority among the Muslim public and scholars are undeniable. In the relevant literature, numerous books and articles praise his personality and scholarly depth. Besides these sources, it is also possible to find some scholars and works that focus on his contradictory statements and his similarities with opponents. However, it is almost impossible to find works criticizing him regarding scientific ethics. This article aims to open a new window to study al-Ghazālī through such a critique of scholarly ethics. To achieve this aim, we have followed the following steps: His political network, which is very influential on al-Ghazālī's thinking, his attitude towards the use of Ḥadīth, his relationship with philosophy, and his ethical attitude in scholarly works.

Keywords: Islamic Philosophy, al-Ghazālī's Authority, Scholarly Ethics, Critical Approach.

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1.0 Introduction

One of the most important and influential figures in the history of Islamic thought is Abu Hamid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111). We know him by the honorific titles of *Hujjat al-Islām* (the proof or authority on Islam) and *Imām* (the leader). These titles indicate al-Ghazālī's highly authoritative reputation among Islamic scholars.² Indeed, it is impossible to say that every scholar, without exception, accepts his authority. However, the fact that al-Ghazālī is known in every place of the Muslim lands and that his works have been translated into many languages proves a tremendous favor to him.³ As we will discuss later, politics played a role in his having such an excellent reputation. In addition, the fact that he wrote comprehensive works on Islamic morality based on Sufism and on essential parts of Islamic thought such as theology, philosophy, and jurisprudence, is also effective in forming this reputation. Therefore, al-Ghazālī is a scholar who will never lose his importance to the Islamic world.

The purpose of this article is to critically evaluate al-Ghazālī's prestige from various angles. We will make this critical evaluation within the framework of scientific ethics. It is crucial to note that this framework differs from a subject-based critique. Al-Ghazālī's subject-based criticism was made centuries ago, and his right and wrong views have been analyzed one by one in a reasoned manner. In the early days, Ibn Rushd (d. 1198) had written his famous *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut al-Falāsifa* responding to al-Ghazālī. Likewise, an influential scholar like Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), though not in a systematic refutation, addressed some of al-Ghazālī's claims about philosophy, theology, and mysticism one by one in his various

² Muhammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī, *al-Turāth wa al-Hadātha* (Beirut: Merkezu Dirāsāt al-wahdat al-ʿArabiyya, 1991), 165.18. For example, Professor Ejder Okumuş characterizes al-Ghazālī as an authoritative scholar in fiqh, language, logic, ethics, mysticism, philosophy, Ḥadīth, politics, and education. See, Ejder Okumuş, "Gazālī'nin Siyaset ve Yönetim Yaklaşımı," *Marife* 21/2 (2021), 705–726; Frank Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 61–87.

³ See, Frank Griffel, "Al-Ghazālī," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, 2020; Patrick Harris, "Power, Piety, and Rebellion in Al-Andalus: The Reception and Influence of Al-Ghazālī's Political Philosophy in Islamic Iberia," *The Hilltop Review* 5 (2012), 23–36.

works.⁴ Today, for example, Fatih Toktaş evaluates al-Ghazālī on individual issues in his work entitled *İslam Düşüncesinde Felsefe Eleştirileri*.⁵ Such works are easy to find. However, it is not easy to find a comprehensive study concerning the scholarly attitude of al-Ghazālī from an ethical point of view. Researchers prefer to gloss over this problem with a few sentences. What we want to do in this article, therefore, is not to evaluate al-Ghazālī's claims on individual issues and to explain where he was right and where he was wrong. What we want to do is to show that al-Ghazālī's scholarly precision and loyalty to science are weak. With this provocative study, we would like to enable an evaluation of al-Ghazālī from these aspects as well. Instead of building the ground for discussing scholarly ethics by referencing modern academic understanding, we create this ground with al-Ghazālī's approach. The attitude that cannot be excused in any way in the contemporary academic understanding is also inexcusable from his perspective. Al-Ghazālī talks about some ethical calamities that scholars face. He states that moral weaknesses such as hiding what one knows, not wanting the truth of others to be revealed, and being displeased when the truth is revealed through the tongue or pen of scholars one disagrees with are among the spiritual diseases of scholars.⁶ This article uses this understanding of al-Ghazālī as the framework of scholarly ethics.

The conclusion we want to reach here is to ask whether al-Ghazālī's prominence as a scholar is based on a scholarly justification. The first perspective that this questioning will give the reader is to realize that the fame of scholars does not always stem from scholarly competence. This perspective will strengthen our critical view of the scholars. The second perspective the reader will have is that it is problematic that even today, al-Ghazālī as an

⁴ Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb al-Radd 'alā al-Mantiqiyyīn*, ed. 'Abd al-Şamad Sharaf al-Dīn al-Kutubī (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-rayyān, 2005); Ibn Rushd, *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut al-Falāsifa*, ed. Sulaymān Dunyā (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1964).

⁵ Fatih Toktaş, *İslam Düşüncesinde Felsefe Eleştirileri* (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2013).

⁶ Abū Hāmid Ghazālī, *Ihyā' u 'ulūm al-Dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 1982), 1/44-48, 3/351, 354, 370.

authoritative influence on the understanding of religion in many Islamic countries.

In the following pages, we will briefly examine the impact of al-Ghazālī's political mission on this reputation. Then, we will deal with al-Ghazālī's approach to Ḥadīth. The subject of Ḥadīth, the basis of Islamic sciences, is essential here because he stands out with his identity as an Islamic scholar. We will then proceed with two subheadings on his relationship to philosophy and the ethical analysis of al-Ghazālī's attitude toward science.

2.0 Al-Ghazālī's Political Mission

Al-Ghazālī's political engagement began when he attended the Nizamiya Madrasa, founded by the Seljuk vizier Nizam al-Mulk (d. 1092). Al-Ghazālī, who took lessons from Imām al-Ḥaramayn Abū al-Ma'ālī al-Juwaynī (d. 1085) at the Nizamiya Madrasa in Nishapur, was appointed to the Nizamiya Madrasa in Baghdad in 1091 by Nizām al-Mulk after the death of al-Juwayni. Al-Ghazālī was very popular here; he attracted attention as a brilliant scholar, and the political authorities used him to serve their purposes. However, we know from al-Ghazālī's statements that al-Ghazālī was close to Malik Shah (d. 1092) in Isfahan before he came to Baghdad and even served as an envoy between the Sultan and the Caliph.⁷

Nizam al-Mulk and the Seljuk administration, who were instrumental in making him famous, asked al-Ghazālī to write works against the Bāṭiniyyah, whom they considered a political danger.⁸ According to Muhammad 'Abid al-Jabiri, these works were written following the policy of the Seljuk state. Moreover, according to him, even the famous four groups of truth seekers mentioned by al-Ghazālī in his *al-Munqidh* is an approach dictated by the Seljuk

⁷ Griffel, *Philosophical Theology*, 32; Muḥammad 'Ābid al-Jābirī, *Takwīn al-'Aql al-'Arabī* (Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-waḥda al-'arabiyya, 2009), 280.

⁸ Abū Ḥāmid Ghazzālī, *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*, ed. Ahmad Shamsaddin (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1988), 48, 75. In these sentences, al-Ghazālī also expresses the danger of falling into disfavor if he disobeys his orders. Griffel quotes al-Ghazālī's student Abū Bakr Ibn 'Arabī as claiming that al-Ghazālī was commissioned by Malik Shah to write a work against the Bāṭiniyyah. See, Griffel, *Philosophical Theology*, 32.

state.⁹ It is no secret that al-Ghazālī was commissioned by the state. He says, “The holy and worthy emir al-Mustazhir Billah requested him to write a refutation of the Bāṭiniyyah.”¹⁰ The aim here was to gain the support of the scholarly community for the Seljuk state’s struggle against the Bāṭiniyyah. In scholarly circles, the representation of the Bāṭiniyyah was known with Ismā‘ilī thought, and the primary motivation of al-Ghazālī’s attitude, known as anti-philosophy, was to strengthen the belief of the Ahl al-Sunnah against the Bāṭiniyyah and to shield the Seljuk state with this belief. Though scientific concerns came to the fore, the real struggle was political. While the Seljuk state defended the Sunnī (Ahl al-Sunnah) understanding of Islam, it also waged a vital battle against another rival, the Ismā‘ilī thought and philosophy that the Fāṭimīs adopted.¹¹

In conclusion, as Fehrullah Terkan notes, al-Ghazālī’s motivation was political. His primary goal was to restore the unity of the ummah that had been shattered in his time.¹² The way to do this is through religion. For this reason, al-Ghazālī harshly criticized religious groups and sects that opposed his understanding of religion, and he even made *takfīr* of some of them. Had he not pursued a political agenda, al-Ghazālī’s attitude toward dissenting opinions might have been more moderate and scholarly.

3. Al-Ghazālī’s Approach to Ḥadīth

We know that al-Ghazālī wrote works in many fields of Islamic sciences. Especially in his works on morality and mysticism, he made much more use of Ḥadīth. It is because Ḥadīth are the foundation of Islamic sciences. When giving a fatwa, a jurist must know what the

⁹ Jābirī, *Takwīn al-‘Aql al-‘Arabī*, 275, 280–283.

¹⁰ Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī, *Faḍā’ih al-Bāṭiniyyah*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī (Cairo: Muassasa dār al-kutub al-thaqāfiyya, 1964), 3.

¹¹ According to Fehrullah Terkan, al-Ghazālī’s main criticism of the philosophers in *Faḍā’ih al-Bāṭiniyyah* stems from his belief that they provide intellectual support to the Bāṭinīs who produce arguments against the Sunnī tradition. In other words, according to al-Ghazālī, philosophers weaken the arguments of the Sunnī tradition. Fehrullah Terkan, “Üç Mesele -2: Tanrı ve Cüz’ilere Dair Bilgisi,” *Gazzālī Konuşmaları*, ed. M. Cüneyt Kaya (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2017), 89.

¹² Terkan, “Tanrı ve Cüz’ilere Dair Bilgisi,” 88.

Prophet said on the subject. When interpreting a verse, a commentator must know what the Prophet said on the subject before expressing his own opinion. In formulating his moral teachings, a Sūfī must be in agreement with the Prophet’s Ḥadīth. In short, we can say that it is possible only to rise to a position of competence in Islamic sciences by reaching a certain level in the science of Ḥadīth. Moreover, al-Ghazālī considered the *mutawātir sunna* and the Qur’ān equally binding.¹³ In addition, according to al-Ghazālī, one of the fundamental sciences, which he calls the sciences of the hereafter, is the science of Ḥadīth.¹⁴ Therefore, we may rightly expect that a scholar considered a proof (*ḥujjat*) in religion should be sensitive to Ḥadīth, distinguish authentic Ḥadīth from weak and fabricated narrations, and show the necessary sensitivity before attributing a narration to the Prophet.

Now, do we see this sensitivity in al-Ghazālī’s works? When we look at al-Ghazālī’s works, in which he uses many *Ḥadīth* narrations, we see that he does not show this sensitivity. *Iḥyā’ al-‘Ulūm al-Dīn* and *Mīzān al-‘Amal* are the most important of these works. In these works, al-Ghazālī references Qur’anic verses as well as Ḥadīth narrations not included in the authentic books. As ‘Irāqī has shown us, the number of narrations in the *Iḥyā’* narrated with weak *sanad* is more than two hundred, the number of narrations that we cannot find in reliable Ḥadīth sources is more than one hundred and twenty, and the number of narrations considered fabricated is more than twenty.¹⁵

¹³ Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī, *al-Mustaṣfā’ min ‘Ilm al-Uṣūl*, ed. Ahmad Zaki Hammad (Riyadh: Sidra, no date), 711.

¹⁴ Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’*, 1/56.

¹⁵ Zayn al-Dīn ‘Irāqī, *al-Mughnī ‘an Ḥaml al-Asfār fī al-Asfār fī Takhrīj mā fī al-Iḥyā’ min al-Akḥbār* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2005). There are differences in these numbers. Some have been overlooked and added later, as well as different classifications of Ḥadīth scholars. It is impossible to say that every narration without a source is fabricated. Some of the narrations that are considered weak are also disputed. However, these discussions are a matter for ḥadīth researchers. We are trying to draw attention here to the fact that al-Ghazālī was not careful in his use of ḥadīth narrations. See, M. Yaşar Kandemir, “İrâkî, Zeynüddin,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 1999.

More recent studies say similar things. For example, a study of the Ḥadīth narrations in *Mīzān al-ʿAmal* shows that twenty-four of the eighty-one narrations used in this work are *ṣaḥīḥ*, seven are *ḥasan*, twenty-six are weak, and thirteen are fabricated narrations. In addition, some sayings that cannot be found in the sources are cited as Ḥadīth. At the same time, forty-seven of these Ḥadīth are also found in the *Iḥyāʾ*. According to the research, fifty of these narrations in *Mīzān al-ʿamal* are in the rejected (*mardūd*) category, while thirty-one of them are in the acceptable (*maqbul*) Ḥadīth category.¹⁶

The information provided by another study is in the same direction. It states that the *Iḥyāʾ* contains many fabricated Ḥadīth, which belong to the category of *mardūd* Ḥadīth.¹⁷ However, it is not possible that al-Ghazālī did not know the famous hadith narration, “Whoever knowingly attributes a lie to me, let him prepare for his place in the fire.” As someone familiar with the methodology of Ḥadīth, al-Ghazālī has theoretical knowledge of how to determine the authenticity of a narration. On the other hand, al-Ghazālī, who considers the *mutawātir sunna* as evidence equal to the Qurʾān, and who knows that fabricating a Ḥadīth is a great offense that will lead to the punishment of hell, does not have sufficient sensitivity on that matter.

This attitude of al-Ghazālī towards Ḥadīth has long been known. He has faced severe criticism from the *ʿulamā* since his own time. He openly admits that he is not on a good level in Ḥadīth.¹⁸ Ibn Taymiyya was one of those who criticized him in this regard. According to him, al-Ghazālī was well-intentioned but extremely ignorant about Ḥadīth. Although al-Ghazālī’s *Iḥyāʾ* contains much valuable information in accordance with the Sunnah, it also contains many fabricated and weak narrations. Al-Ghazālī includes so many fabricated and weak narrations because he relies on Sūfī sources and

¹⁶ Büşra Sultan Özdemir, *Gazālī'nin Mīzānu'l-Amel Adlı Eserindeki Hadislerin Tahrici ve Değerlendirilmesi* (Konya: Necmettin Erbakan University, Master's Thesis, 2015), 94–97.

¹⁷ Halil Kaya, “Gazzālī’de Haber ve Hadis Kavramları,” *Hadis Tetkikleri Dergisi* 14/2 (2016), 52–53.

¹⁸ Abū Ḥamid Gazālī, “*el-Kânûnu'l-Küllî fi't-Te'vîl*,” trans. Mahmut Kaya, M. Cüneyt Kaya, *Kelam ve Halk: İlcâmu'l-Avâm an İlmî'l-Kelâm - El-Kânûnu'l-Küllî Fi't-Te'vîl* (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2018), 115.

lacks the knowledge to distinguish the Ḥadīth in these sources.¹⁹ Ibn Taymiyya is not alone in his criticisms. Abu al-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 1201), who wrote on many fields of Islamic sciences, said that al-Ghazālī's *Ihyā'* was full of weak and fabricated narrations and that al-Ghazālī took whatever he heard as Ḥadīth.²⁰ Similarly, al-Dhahabi (d. 1348) said that although the *Ihyā'* has excellent benefits, it also includes many false narrations of Ḥadīth.²¹

Although it is clear that al-Ghazālī was either less knowledgeable or less sensitive about Ḥadīth, some scholars consider this case acceptable for different reasons. For example, Mehmet Görmez, a professor of Ḥadīth, has the following to say on the subject: "All of these criticisms against al-Ghazālī have been made with regard to his famous work *Ihyā' al-'Ulūm al-Dīn*, which has gained a great reputation in the Islamic world. However, although there are weak and fabricated Ḥadīth in the *Ihyā'*, the number of Ḥadīth that would be considered *munkar* in terms of content and whose attribution to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) could be seen as an exorbitant mistake at first glance is relatively small."²² Another professor of Ḥadīth, Erdinç Ahatlı, points out that many weak narrations are also found in the works written for the public by scholars such as Qadi 'Iyaḍ, al-Dhahabi, and Ibn al-Jawzi and notes that this is to some extent unavoidable in books of preaching and advice.²³ The authenticity of the narration to which al-Ghazālī refers

¹⁹ Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū' Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyya*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Qāsim, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad (Riyadh: Maṭābi' al-Riyāḍ, 1961), 4/71-72; Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya, *Bayān Talbīs al-Jahmiyya fī Ta'sīs Bida'ihim al-Kalāmiyya*, ed. Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad Al-Hunaydī (Madina: Majma' al-Malik Fahd li-tibā'at al-muṣḥaf al-sharīf, 2005), 6/125-127.

²⁰ Abū al-Faraj 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntazam fī Ta'rīkh al-Muluk wa al-Umam*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir 'Aṭā, Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Qādir 'Aṭā (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, 1995), 17/124-127.

²¹ Abū 'Abdillāh Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, *Siyaru A'lām al-Nubalā'* (Beirut: Muassasa al-risāla, 1982).

²² Mehmet Görmez, Gazālī'de Sünnet, *Hadis ve Yorum* (Ankara: Otto Yayınları, 2014), 60. In the following pages of his book, Görmez is also helpless in the face of fabricated narrations, especially in al-Ghazālī's *Mukāshafa al-Qulūb*.

²³ Erdinç Ahatlı, "Vaazlarda Ayet ve Hadislerden Yararlanma Adlı Oturumun Müzakeresi" (Vaaz ve Vaizlik Sempozyumu 17-18 Aralık 2011, Ankara: Diyanet

is not essential here. What is important is that the fabricated or weak narration does not contain an exorbitant error of meaning and that it is considered common in the scholarly tradition to say such things when addressing the public. Nevertheless, Sıtkı Gülle, who has made a careful translation of the *Ihyā* into Turkish, admits that this work contains absurd narratives.²⁴

The fact that al-Ghazālī was accepted as an authority despite his lack of sensitivity to Ḥadīth can only be seen as a reflection of his political power and mission in scholarly circles. The main reason for emphasizing this flaw is to show in the following lines that al-Ghazālī's opposition to philosophy on religious grounds cannot have a sound basis.

4. His Relationship with Philosophy

When considering his relationship to philosophy, it is crucial to ask whether al-Ghazālī's approach conforms to the scientific method. The scientific method aims to reveal the truth about a relevant subject. In doing so, the ideas held to be false are refuted individually, and the claim that cannot be refuted can be accepted as valid. On the other hand, the idea claimed to be true is confirmed by supporting it with all possible arguments so that it cannot be challenged. It is also possible to use these two approaches together. In the scientific method, however, it is essential to be unprejudiced, focus on the claim rather than the claimant, and aim at revealing the truth.

On this basis, let us examine al-Ghazālī's motivation toward philosophers. At the very beginning of his most important work, *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*, in which he strongly criticizes philosophy in the person of al-Farabi (d. 950) and Ibn Sina (d. 1037), he uses aggressive and accusatory language against these philosophers. Al-Ghazālī's most basic allegation against philosophers is this: philosophers claim that their teachings, especially in metaphysics, are based on demonstration and are certain, but their claims in this field

İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2013), 393–400.

²⁴ Abū Ḥāmid Gazālī, *İhyā'u Ulūmi'd-Dîn*, trans. Sıtkı Gülle (İstanbul: Huzur Yayınevi, 2008), 3/577 n. 20.

are based on conjecture and supposition. If they were based on conclusive evidence, they would agree on metaphysical matters just as they agree on mathematics and would not contradict each other.²⁵ This assertion of al-Ghazālī is not unjustified and unwarranted. However, al-Ghazālī, while presenting his views, did not prefer to offer persuasive proofs and used aggressive language that overshadowed his thoughts against the philosophers.

According to al-Ghazālī, the position of al-Farabi and Ibn Sina is heresy rather than a philosophical error.²⁶ Moreover, they preferred to adopt the creed of unbelief to consider themselves superior and more virtuous than the common people.²⁷ Therefore, according to al-Ghazālī, philosophers such as al-Farabi and Ibn Sina should be fought with the support of other sects because they attack the fundamental principles of religion. It is noteworthy that al-Ghazālī, by saying that “hatred and enmity disappear in times of need,” even called on the Mu‘tazilah, Karramiyyah, and Waqifiyyah sects, whom he often criticized, for help.²⁸

In this article, we will not discuss al-Ghazālī’s reasons for the *takfīr* of the philosophers. Whether or not differences of opinion on these issues can cause *takfīr* is a matter of debate. While *takfīr* is a religious concept, can it be a concept applied to a result of rational reasoning? If a conclusion reached through rational methods is wrong, the person is accused of being ignorant or wrong, not an unbeliever. Since al-Ghazālī’s opposition to the philosophers went beyond scholarly sensibilities, it also prevented him from adopting an objective attitude. According to Ibn Rushd, who was sometimes very critical of these philosophers, al-Ghazālī forced them to accept what they claimed to be impossible and often attributed to them things that the philosophers had not said.²⁹

The most important example is the claim that God does not know the particulars, which is one of the reasons for the *takfīr* of al-

²⁵ Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa*, ed. Sulaymān Dunyā (Cairo: Dār al-ma‘rifā, 1966), 76.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 76.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 74, 81.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, *Ta.hāfut*, 82.

²⁹ Ibn Rushd, *Tahāfut*, 249, 270, 874.

Farabi and Ibn Sina. For those who learned al-Farabi and Ibn Sina through al-Ghazālī's passages, this claim is almost entirely valid. However, both al-Farabi and Ibn Sina included statements refuting this accusation in their most fundamental books that al-Ghazālī could not have been unaware of. For example, al-Farabi, in his work *al-Siyāsa al-Madaniyya*, states that all existence comes from God through emanation and that God, knowing His essence, hence actually knows all existence and nothing is hidden from Him.³⁰ Similarly, in *al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*, when he talks about the process of revelation from God to man, he says that the person who receives revelation will be a warner with this revelation in matters of the future and of the particulars. In order to be able to inform about the things that already exist, this revelation must contain information about them. Therefore, God, the source of this revelation, must also have knowledge of these particulars.³¹ If we read carefully, al-Farabi makes many statements that indicate that God knows the particulars, but it is not easy to say that God does not know them. It must be admitted that it is possible, albeit difficult, to interpret al-Farabi's words along the lines of al-Ghazālī because they are not very clear.

However, in the case of Ibn Sina, we face more explicit statements. Understanding these statements along the lines of al-Ghazālī requires serious manipulation and bias. For example, Ibn Sina says: "On the contrary, the Necessary Being knows everything in a universal manner, but nothing is hidden from Him. Nothing in the heavens and the earth is hidden from Him. It is one of those interesting matters that require an innate keenness of intellect and understanding to comprehend."³² Likewise, in his book *al-Ishārāt*, Ibn Sina clearly states that God knows the particulars and says, "Although God's knowledge of the particulars transcends time and

³⁰ Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Siyāsa al-Madaniyya al-Mulakkab bi-Mabād al-Mawjūdāt*, ed. Favzi Najjār (Beirut: al-Matba'at al-kātūlikiyya, 1964), 34.

³¹ Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *el-Medīnetü'l-Fāzıla: Tanrı-Âlem-İnsan*, trans. Yaşar Aydınlı (İstanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2019), 198.

³² Ibn Sīnā, *Kitābu'ş-Şifā: İlahiyāt, Metafizik*, trans. Ekrem Demirli, Ömer Türker (İstanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2014), 2/342-344; M. Cüneyt Kaya, "Sadreddin Konevi'nin Metafizik Eleştirisi: İbn Sīnā'da Zorunlu Varlık'ın Cüz'ileri Bilmesi Sorunu," *Felsefe Arkivi* 36/2 (2012), 29.

genius, God knows the particulars in a sacred way.”³³ Despite these and many similar statements, the matter that al-Ghazālī underlines as a reason for *takfīr* of the philosophers has become perhaps one of the most well-known issues in the history of Islamic thought.

Under the influence of his campaign against the philosophers, al-Ghazālī violated scientific ethics. Moving away from objectivity with his interpretations, al-Ghazālī tried to blame and discredit the scientific disciplines themselves based on the false conclusions of the philosophers. His criticism of al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and the Ikhwan al-Safa’ went beyond philosophers to philosophy. He even considered a branch of science we need at every point in the universe, such as mathematics, harmful. Under the influence of Neo-Pythagoreanism, Islamic philosophers, especially al-Kindi (d. 865) and the philosophers of the Ikhwan al-Safa’, have attached great importance to mathematics. According to these philosophers, mathematics is the only science that shows us the meaning of the verse, “We created everything with a measure” (al-Qamar 54/49). For this reason, al-Kindi and the Ikhwan al-Safa’ argued that mathematics would lead one to realize God’s art and to monotheism. According to al-Kindi, it is through philosophy that we gain knowledge of God, the First Cause. The study of philosophy should begin with mathematics because philosophy cannot be understood without knowledge of mathematics.³⁴ Similarly, Ikhwan al-Safa’ said that the mathematical sciences are essential for learning the natural sciences and that we can understand God’s art through these sciences. The natural sciences are one of the ways through which we can know God. Therefore, the science of mathematics is at the beginning of the path that leads us to the knowledge of God.³⁵

³³ Ibn Sīnā, *el-İşârât ve’t-Tenbihât: İşaretler ve Tembihler*, trans. Muhiittin Macit et al. (İstanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2017), 145, 165–169; Rahim Acar, “Allah’ın Cüz’ileri Bilmesi: Klasik İbn Sīnâ Yorumunun Değerlendirilmesi,” *Divan: Disiplinlerarası Çalışmalar Dergisi* 20 (2006), 116; Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ta’līqāt*, ed. ‘Abd al-Rahmān Badawī (Beirut: Dār al-Islāmiyya, no date), 24–29.

³⁴ Kindī, “Aristoteles’in Kitaplarının Sayısı Üzerine,” trans. Mahmut Kaya, *Kindī: Felsefî Risâleler* (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2018), 272–278.

³⁵ Ikhwan al-Safa’, *Rasâilü Ikhwan al-Safa’ wa Khullān al-Wafā’* (Qum: Maktab al-İlām al-İslāmī, 1985), 1/75. For an example of explaining that there is a ratio/measure in everything that God has created, see, Ikhwan al-Safa’, *Rasâil*,

Despite his knowledge of the fundamental dynamics of this approach, al-Ghazālī opposed the science of mathematics. According to him, mathematics is neither commanded nor forbidden by religion. There is no clear *nass* on this subject. On the other hand, a certain amount of mathematical science is necessary to fulfill the commands of the Shari‘ah, such as calculating the amount of *zakāt*, which is obligatory, and determining the times of prayer. Furthermore, rejecting the science of mathematics is not a service to religion either.

On the other hand, according to al-Ghazālī, those who want to delve deeper into the science of mathematics should be prevented.³⁶ According to him, mathematics is the science on which the science of the heretical philosophers is based. Therefore, those who study mathematics at an advanced level will be infected with the evil of the philosophers. In this regard, al-Ghazālī said that there are very few people who engage in this science and do not fall away from religion.³⁷ In another work, he characterizes mathematics, geometry, and astronomy, which he considers among the sciences that religion does not directly favor, as deceptive conjectures and useless true knowledge.³⁸ With this attitude, we see that al-Ghazālī’s opposition to the philosophers went beyond individuals and turned to sciences such as philosophy and mathematics, which are the capital and wealth of humanity. However, this attitude has no scientific basis or explanation. It is unacceptable that he considered mathematics, which he admitted was based on conclusive evidence and did not pose a

1/223.

³⁶ In this regard, Ömer Mahir Alper, probably based on a reading of the *Iḥyā’*, has suggested that the people we should keep away from these sciences are those who act with imitation. However, according to al-Ghazālī, everyone who wants to delve deeper into these sciences should be prevented because we cannot know in advance who will be harmed by these sciences. Moreover, according to his statements in *al-Mustaṣfā’*, even if these sciences are true, they are useless. In fact, al-Ghazālī points out the need to refrain from them by saying, "I seek refuge in God from useless knowledge." See Ghazālī, *al-Mustaṣfā’*, 4; Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’*, 1/22; Ömer Mahir Alper, "Gazzālî'nin Felsefî Geleneğe Bakışı: O Gerçekten Bir Felsefe Karşıtı Mıydı?," *Darulfunun İlahiyat* 4 (2001), 94.

³⁷ Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, 39.

³⁸ Ghazālī, *al-Mustaṣfā’*, 4. For an article on al-Ghazālī’s negative view of the sciences, see Hasan Aydın, "Gazzālî'nin Aklî/Felsefî Bilimlere Yönelik Eleştirileri ve Bilim Tarihindeki İzdüşümleri," *Kebikeç* 48 (2009), 83–100.

religious problem, as dangerous because it could lead one to the sciences of the philosophers. His criticism of philosophy and mathematics in the name of a narrow defense of religion to meet the demands of the political atmosphere in which he found himself is extremely problematic from a scientific point of view. He also used the defense of religion as a tool in the political struggle of the Seljuk Empire against the Fatimids. However, people who do not know al-Ghazālī's political mission and motivation and who know him only through his books have thought that al-Ghazālī's condemnation of philosophical sciences was purely scientific. It is the situation in which we find ourselves as an Islamic society. In conclusion, we believe that al-Ghazālī's negative attitude toward philosophers and his use of their essential elements of thought without naming them is an ethical problem rather than an unconscious contradiction.³⁹

5. His Ethical Attitude in Science

Al-Ghazālī wrote works on almost all fields of Islamic sciences. However, it is difficult to claim that these works are original. Whether al-Ghazālī was original is a problem, but we will not focus on it. Our problem is not al-Ghazālī's originality but the incompatibility of his attitude with scholarly ethics. This is because al-Ghazālī did not always disclose the sources and people he used. Moreover, it is a much more difficult ethical problem for him to belittle, *takfīr*, and accuse these people of heresy in his various works.

We need the following brief explanation to clarify the matter. In Sufism, for example, the fact that al-Ghazālī followed Abu Talib al-Makki's *Qūt al-Qulūb* and al-Muhasibi's *al-Riāya* almost verbatim

³⁹ Jābirī, on the other hand, sees an apparent contradiction in al-Ghazālī's position. However, it is strange to accept that a scholar like al-Ghazālī would fall into such simple contradictions because the situations mentioned above are neither rare nor unimportant. Therefore, it is more likely to be a conscious choice than an unconscious contradiction. Such a choice, in turn, has led to an ethical violation. As Jābirī points out: al-Ghazālī's political mission influenced this choice. Perhaps the reason for al-Ghazālī's anger at his engagement with politics is that politics drove him to this violation. See al-Jābirī, *al-Turāth wa al-Hadātha*, 172–174.

should lead us to question his originality in Sūfī thought.⁴⁰ Similarly, in theology, the claim that he added nothing new to the problems discussed by his teacher al-Juwayni should lead us to question al-Ghazālī's originality in theology.⁴¹ Although al-Ghazālī has an important place in the methodology of Fiqh, the claim that al-Ghazālī did not stand at a very different point within the existing tradition and that what already existed was presented in a different form by al-Ghazālī should be investigated more closely.⁴² Each of the issues mentioned here requires a separate study. However, this lack of originality is not an ethical problem but a quality problem because al-Ghazālī has mentioned the sources he used in these areas. However, it is an ethical problem when the sources of the ideas used are not mentioned or even denigrated. We can illustrate this claim with a few examples.

The first example of this is the disputes over *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifah*. As is well known, al-Ghazālī's most important work on philosophy is *Tahāfut*, in which he criticizes the philosophers on twenty subjects. According to al-Ghazālī, in order to understand these criticisms and *takfīr*, these issues must be explained in detail. For this purpose, al-Ghazālī wrote *Maqāṣid*. Al-Ghazālī, who despised the method of philosophy and accused philosophers of blasphemy, claimed to have made it a habit from childhood to learn

⁴⁰ Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, 57; Ekrem Demirli, "Gazzâlî ve Tasavvuf," *Gazzâlî Konuşmaları*, ed. M. Cüneyt Kaya (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2017), 279.

⁴¹ İlhan Kutluer, "Gazzâlî ve Felsefe," *Gazzâlî Konuşmaları*, ed. M. Cüneyt Kaya (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2017), 14. Frank Griffel has explained at length the ways in which philosophy influenced al-Ghazālī's theological thought. See, Griffel, *Philosophical Theology*. It can also be said that al-Ghazālī did not make a thematic contribution to the science of kalam; his contribution—some would say a corruption—was to include logic. This is a methodological contribution. See, M. Sait Özervarlı, "Gazzâlî," *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 1996. Ismail Haji Abdullah, however, argues in his doctoral dissertation that al-Ghazālī followed in the footsteps of al-Juwaynī not only in matters of theology but also in modes of expression, but that al-Ghazālī's fame caused these similarities to be overlooked. See, Ismail Haji Abdullah, *The Influence of Imam Al-Juwayni on the Theology of Imam al-Ghazālī* (University of St. Andrews, Ph.D. Dissertation, 1996).

⁴² H. Yunus Apaydın, "Gazzâlî ve Fıkıh Usulü," *Gazzâlî Konuşmaları*, ed. M. Cüneyt Kaya (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2017), 175, 219.

every thought he encountered down to the finest detail.⁴³ As a result of this habit, al-Ghazālī claims that he reached a depth that even those considered authorities in the field of philosophy could not reach and recognized errors and dangers they could not see. He reached this depth in less than two years, without any help from anyone, simply by reading philosophical books. Finally, he claimed he spent a year reviewing his received information. Thus, he could distinguish without hesitation between those aspects of philosophy based on deception and fraud and those that were true.⁴⁴

As a result of this preoccupation with philosophy, al-Ghazālī, who wanted to criticize it and protect Muslims from the dangers of philosophy, felt that it was necessary to present information about philosophy before presenting his criticisms in his book *Tahāfut*. Accordingly, he wrote *Maqāṣid* as an introduction before his book of criticism and refutation, *Tahāfut*.⁴⁵ According to Alparslan Açıkgenç, who studies Islamic thought, the philosophy treated in *Maqāṣid* is Aristotelian philosophy, on which Peripatetic thought is primarily based. According to Açıkgenç, one of al-Ghazālī's important aims in writing this work was to show that he was competent enough to understand and explain Aristotelian philosophy, which is difficult to understand. According to him, *Maqāṣid* is a successful work that explains Aristotelian philosophy as it is, and it will be clearly seen when compared with Ibn Sina's *al-Najāt*.⁴⁶

Sulayman Dunya, in his introduction to *Maqāṣid*, says that although al-Ghazālī points out that the issues he mentions in *Maqāṣid* are themes he will later criticize in *Tahāfut*, there is no criticism of logic in *Tahāfut*. However, the reason for writing *Maqāṣid* was to give preliminary information about what he would criticize in *Tahāfut*. Al-Ghazālī even excluded the mathematical sciences from *Maqāṣid*, saying that there was nothing to criticize since they did not contain anything contrary to reason and religion. Al-Ghazālī, who

⁴³ Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, 23–25.

⁴⁴ Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, 34–35.

⁴⁵ Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī, *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifa*, ed. Sulaymān Dunyā (Egypt: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1961), 31–32.

⁴⁶ Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī, *Felsefenin Temel İlkeleri: Makasid el-Felasife*, trans. Cemalettin Erdemci (Ankara: Vadi Yayınları, 2002), 15.

mentions logic, which contains a small amount of error, in *Maqāṣid*, did not criticize this science in *Tahāfut*, even though he considered it erroneous. This critical detail pointed out by Dunya shows that al-Ghazālī was not faithful to the explanation-criticism system he introduced between these two works.⁴⁷

According to Dunya, the information presented in al-Ghazālī's *Maqāṣid* is much more than the topics he criticizes in *Tahāfut*. However, al-Ghazālī did not include mathematics because there was nothing to criticize rationally and religiously. Therefore, the topics that al-Ghazālī would not criticize in logic, metaphysics, and natural sciences should not have been included in *Maqāṣid*. However, they are included. Dunya argues that this inconsistent attitude stems from al-Ghazālī's desire to demonstrate his knowledge in these fields. It would have prevented a possible criticism that al-Ghazālī rejected subjects he did not know.⁴⁸

After these explanations, let us come to the substantial similarity of *Maqāṣid* with Ibn Sina's *Dānishnāma*. Murat Demirkol, who translated the Persian *Dānishnāma* into Turkish, points out the significant similarity between *Dānishnāma* and *Maqāṣid* in his preface to the work and gives examples.⁴⁹ Seyyed Hossein Nasr had previously pointed out this similarity and claimed that *Maqāṣid* is almost identical to *Dānishnāma*.⁵⁰ In addition to Nasr, Jules Janssens, who compares *Dānishnāma* and *Maqāṣid* in detail, argues that although *Maqāṣid* is not a literal translation of *Dānishnāma*, it is entirely inspired by it. According to Janssens, al-Ghazālī's contribution to *Maqāṣid* is almost nothing except for a few summaries and the concretization of some abstract ideas.⁵¹

Coming back to Demirkol, according to him, even the figures drawn in *Maqāṣid* are very similar to each other, except for some

⁴⁷ Ghazālī, *Maqāṣid*, 13–14.

⁴⁸ Ghazālī, *Maqāṣid*, 20–23. 20-23.

⁴⁹ Ibn Sīnā, *Dānišnāme-i Alāī: Alāī Hikmet Kitabı*, trans. Murat Demirkol (İstanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2013), xxii, n. 19.

⁵⁰ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages: Avicenna, Suhrawardī, Ibn 'Arabī* (New York: Caravan Books, 1997), 148, n. 5.

⁵¹ Jules Janssens, "The Dānesh-Nāmeḥ of Ibn-Sīnā: A Text to Revisit? Le Dānesh-Nāmeḥ d'Ibn Sīnā: Un Texte à Revoir?," trans. Sophie Lee, *Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale* 28 (1986), 163–177.

bringing forward and postponements in the logic section. We know that the order of logic, nature, and metaphysics in the philosophical works was changed to logic, metaphysics, and nature in *Dānīshnāma* for some reason. Al-Ghazālī, who claims that his primary purpose in *Maqāṣid* is to convey the philosophers' teachings as they are, did not imitate the general practice of philosophy but imitated Ibn Sina's unusual order by using the same justification that Ibn Sina provided. However, following al-Ghazālī's claim to convey philosophical teachings as they are, the order in the work should have been in accordance with the general acceptance of philosophy, not Ibn Sina, who is an exception. According to Demirkol, the similarity of *Maqāṣid* to *Dānīshnāma* is even greater than that of Ibn Sina's *al-Ishārāt* to *Dānīshnāma*. According to Demirkol, who considers it normal for works written in close periods to have similar aspects, there are examples of this in history. When we look at these examples, we see that the authors of the later work refer to the earlier work, while al-Ghazālī does not mention Ibn Sina and *Dānīshnāma* in *Maqāṣid*. For Demirkol, this is not acceptable. In conclusion, Demirkol cautiously summarizes the situation by saying, "I do not want to consider the similarity between *Maqāṣid* and *Dānīshnāma* as a case of copying or plagiarism, but further studies are necessary."⁵²

What this information and studies show us is very clear: Al-Ghazālī's work, which he wrote to demonstrate his knowledge of the basic principles of philosophy before criticizing it and to show his mastery of philosophy, his understanding of it at the deepest level, even better than those who are considered authorities in philosophy, is almost identical to Ibn Sina's work, and there is no originality worth mentioning. Is it reasonable for a person who has truly mastered philosophy at the level of those considered authorities to repeat and imitate a work to such an extent?

The second example concerns the science of logic, which al-Ghazālī tried to present as such, although he was not original in his thinking. The philosophical sciences are broadly divided into logic, mathematics, natural sciences, and metaphysics. Al-Ghazālī's attitude towards philosophers in metaphysics is quite harsh. He has

⁵² Ibn Sīnā, *Dānīshnāma*, xxii–xxvii.

no definite objection to mathematics and natural sciences since no religious prohibition exists. However, he pointed out some secondary dangers despite the absence of any religious prohibition. He has very positive thoughts about the science of logic. In the introduction to his work *al-Mustasfā*, in which he begins with explanations of the topics of logic, he states that these topics are an introduction to all sciences and that the knowledge of the person who does not understand them cannot be trusted.⁵³ According to al-Ghazālī, logic is a science that examines the ways of forming evidence, the methods of syllogism, the conditions of conclusive proofs, and how to make the correct definition. Moreover, there is nothing in religion that requires the rejection of this science.⁵⁴ As a result of al-Ghazālī's positive approach to logic, he explicitly included it in the methodology of Fiqh.⁵⁵

Although al-Ghazālī considers logic necessary, he wants to show that he did not receive it from Aristotle. According to him, the science philosophers call logic is known in theology as “*kitāb al-nazar*.” He says he uses the names “*kitāb al-jadal*” and “*madārik al-‘uqūl*” for this science. According to him, people who want to appear intelligent despite their limited intelligence use the concept of logic as an exaggerated name. They assume that logic is known only to philosophers and that theologians do not know this science.⁵⁶ Whether it was taken from Aristotle or already known to theologians, al-Ghazālī adopted this science, which he learned almost entirely from the works of Ibn Sina and based it directly on the Qur’ān. According to al-Ghazālī, who discusses this issue in detail in *al-Qisṭās al-Mustaqīm* (The Just Balance), the criterion (*mizān*/balance) needed to test correct arguments and knowledge is explicit in the Qur’ān. In this work, al-Ghazālī claimed that the syllogisms used in logic are already found in the Qur’ān and cited some verses as references. The purpose of the work is to respond to the claim of a

⁵³ Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā*, 16–17.

⁵⁴ Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, 40.

⁵⁵ ‘Azmi T. al-Sayyed Ahmad, *Al-Ghazālī's Views on Logic* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, Ph.D. Dissertation, 1981), 187; Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā*, 4; Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī, *Mi‘yār al-‘ilm fi al-Manṭiq* (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2013).

⁵⁶ Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 85.

member of the Shi‘ī Tālimī sect.⁵⁷ Moreover, al-Ghazālī clearly states that the caliphate commissioned him to write a book against such ideas.⁵⁸

In this work, al-Ghazālī seeks God’s protection from resorting to opinion (*ra’y*) and analogical reasoning (*qiyās*) to arrive at true knowledge, describing them as the devil’s balance (*mīzān*).⁵⁹ According to al-Ghazālī, who refers to the Qur’anic phrase “measure with the right criterion”,⁶⁰ five criteria were revealed to people in the revelation.⁶¹ According to him, some used these criteria under other names before him. However, he was the first to identify these criteria in the Qur’ān and the first to use these names. It is possible to see that these criteria were used in some societies before Prophet Muhammad and Prophet Jesus, and they learned them from the scriptures of Prophet Abraham and Prophet Moses.⁶² In addition to this statement, al-Ghazālī claims that with the mentioned Qur’anic criteria, he can measure religious knowledge as well as knowledge of sciences such as mathematics, engineering, and medicine and distinguish the true from the false in all sciences.⁶³

So which aspect of these statements is not compatible with the ethics of science? The problem here is that although al-Ghazālī received the principles of this science from the philosophers, he did not express them explicitly. This attitude of al-Ghazālī was first clearly criticized by Ibn Rushd. According to Ibn Rushd, al-Ghazālī took most of his ideas from the works of philosophers and thus became a respected scholar among his contemporaries. Instead of saying that he had benefited from them, he went so far as to say that

⁵⁷ Michael E. Marmura, “Ghazālī’s Attitude to the Secular Sciences and Logic,” *Essays on Islamic Philosophy and Science*, ed. George F. Hourani (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), 102.

⁵⁸ Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, 48.

⁵⁹ Abū Hāmid Ghazālī, *al-Qisṭās al-Mustaqīm*, ed. Ihsān Zunūn al-Thāmirī (Amman: The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Center, 2014), 19.

⁶⁰ al-Qur’ān 17:35; 26:182.

⁶¹ These five balances are as follows: Mīzān al-ta‘ādul (It includes three balances: al-mīzān al-akbar, al-mīzān al-awsaṭ, al-mīzān al-aṣghar), Mīzān al-talāzum, and Mīzān al-ta‘ānud. Ghazālī, *al-Qisṭās*, 25; Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, 52.

⁶² Ghazālī, *al-Qisṭās*, 52.

⁶³ Ghazālī, *al-Qisṭās*, 74.

he had taken the science of logic, particularly from the Qur'ān. However, even if all the ideas of the philosophers were wrong and their knowledge of logic only was accepted as accurate, they would deserve praise and thanks. Instead, al-Ghazālī chose to denigrate all philosophers.⁶⁴ According to Ibn Rushd, who says he does not know why al-Ghazālī took such an attitude, this is entirely ugly.⁶⁵

We see a similar ethical critique in Ibn Taymiyya. In this context, he states: "Al-Ghazālī called his book *al-Qiṣṭās al-Mustaqīm* and based it on the teachings of the prophets. However, he learned them from Ibn Sina, and Ibn Sina learned them from the books of Aristotle".⁶⁶ İbrahim Çapak, a contemporary professor of logic, confirms a similar criticism. According to him, al-Ghazālī's treatment of syllogism, and especially the way he expresses it in his work *al-Qiṣṭās al-Mustaqīm*, although different in content, is similar in form to Aristotelian and Stoic logic.⁶⁷ However, it is noteworthy that al-Ghazālī's attitude, which we present here as an ethical problem, is characterized as a revolution by İlhan Kutluer. According to Kutluer, the science of logic was deliberately presented by al-Ghazālī as a balance extracted from the Qur'ān to Islamicize knowledge at a time when even the mention of the word logic was met with a reaction.⁶⁸ In our opinion, Kutluer's well-intentioned interpretation would be acceptable were it not for the many points that al-Ghazālī took from other scholars and presented as his own ideas. However, as we discuss in our article, al-Ghazālī's attitude, which we see as an ethical problem, is not only related to the issue of logic.

The third example is that al-Ghazālī, despite his opposition to Ibn Sina and the Ikhwan al-Safa', benefited greatly from them. There are significant similarities between the thoughts of Ibn Sina and those

⁶⁴ In this respect, Ibn Rushd is right, for al-Ghazālī clearly states that for al-Farabi and Ibn Sīnā in particular, and philosophers in general, *taḳfīr* should be openly proclaimed. See, Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, 35–36; Abū Hāmid Ghazālī, *Fayṣal al-Tafriqa bayn al-Islām wa al-Zandaqa*, ed. Maḥmūd Bayjū (Damascus, 1992), 56.

⁶⁵ Ibn Rushd, *Tahāfut*, 546.

⁶⁶ Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb al-Radd 'alā al-Mantiqiyyīn*, 56.

⁶⁷ Abū Hāmid Ghazālī, *el-Kiṣṭāsü'l-Müstakim: Dosdoğru Ölçü*, trans. İbrahim Çapak (İstanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2016), 40 (Intro).

⁶⁸ Kutluer, "Gazzâlî ve Felsefe," 16–17.

of the Ikhwan al-Safa'. We know that Ibn Sina influenced al-Ghazālī. Therefore, al-Ghazālī's similarity to the Ikhwan al-Safa' can be considered indirect. However, although al-Ghazālī harshly criticized the Ikhwan al-Safa', he was also influenced by ideas present in the Ikhwan al-Safa' but not in Ibn Sina.⁶⁹ Therefore, we may say that al-Ghazālī benefited from Ikhwan al-Safa' directly. At this point, it is remarkable that he was influenced by Ibn Sina and the Ikhwan al-Safa' and, at the same time, accused both of heresy.

Al-Ghazālī's harsh criticisms of Ibn Sina and his utilization of Ibn Sina while making many criticisms, especially in metaphysics, show that he violated scholarly objectivity and condemned himself to the agenda and direction of politics. We have briefly explained some of this through the similarity between *Maqāsid* and *Dānishnāma* and the similarity of al-Ghazālī's *al-Qiṣṭās al-Mustaqīm* to Aristotelian logic. In addition, al-Ghazālī's *Mishkāt al-Anwār* shows that he followed Ibn Sina more closely. *Mishkāt al-Anwār* is one of al-Ghazālī's most important philosophical works. While in his other works, he describes traditional Sufism, in this work, he presents a more philosophical Sufism. In this work, metaphysics/theology dominates, and al-Ghazālī's explanations are highly philosophical.

As Ibn Rushd points out, *Mishkāt al-Anwār* is the work that most clearly demonstrates al-Ghazālī's extensive use of philosophers in metaphysics.⁷⁰ As Richard Frank points out, al-Ghazālī benefited from philosophers in general, Ibn Sina's philosophy in particular, and adapted many of their elements to his system.⁷¹ For example, Ibn Sina's concepts, such as *al-awwal*, the celestial intelligences, and the active intellect, were transformed in al-Ghazālī into *nūr al-anwār*, the supreme lights (*al-anwār al-'aqliyya al-ma'nawiyya*), and the

⁶⁹ While it is clear that Ibn Sīnā influenced al-Ghazālī on issues such as the soul, epistemology, and ethics, aspects that are absent in Ibn Sīnā but present in the Ikhwān show that al-Ghazālī also benefited from the Ikhwān. Griffel has summarized these similarities with various references without going into detail. Since we will give an important example of how the Ikhwān influenced him in the following pages, there is no need to mention the same sources here. For sources see, Griffel, *Philosophical Theology*, 199–200, 283.

⁷⁰ Ibn Rushd, *Tahāfut*, 209.

⁷¹ Richard Frank, "Al-Ghazālī's Use of Avicenna's Philosophy," *Revue Des Études Islamique* 55–57 (1989 1987), 273–285.

supreme divine light, respectively. Similarly, the distinction between existence (*wujūd*) and non-existence (*'adam*) is transformed in al-Ghazālī into the distinction between light and darkness.⁷² In addition, it is clear that Ibn Sina influenced al-Ghazālī in matters such as the hierarchy of existence, the explanation of the relationship between the sensible world and the divine world, and the conception of the best possible world.⁷³ In Ibn Sina's doctrine of the soul, al-Ghazālī directly borrowed some of Ibn Sina's concepts of orders of theoretical faculties, such as the *hayūlānī*, *bilmalaka*, *bilfi'īl*, *mustafād*, and *qudsī* intellects, and combined them with the concept of the soul to classify perceptions according to their functions.⁷⁴ *Mishkāt al-Anwār* is apparently reminiscent of Ibn Sina's statements. It follows an emanationist doctrine, albeit with minor differences. Al-Ghazālī, who in *Mishkāt al-Anwār* defends the metaphysics of light (*nūr*), adopts a corresponding epistemology. We can trace these similarities in many works. It is also possible to find many studies on the topics on which al-Ghazālī benefited from Ibn Sina.⁷⁵ The details of these similarities that we have outlined are not our subject. Our

⁷² İlhan Kutluer, "Felsefe ile Tasavvuf Arasında: Gazzâlî'nin Mişkâtü'l-Envâr'ında Entelektüel Perspektifler," 900. Vefat Yılında Uluslararası Gazzâlî Sempozyumu (7-9 Ekim 2011 İstanbul), Milletlerarası Tartışmalı İlmî Toplantı Bildirileri (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2012), 519.

⁷³ Kutluer, "Gazzâlî ve Felsefe," 29, 46.

⁷⁴ Binyamin Abrahamov, "Ibn Sînâ's Influence on al-Ghazālî's Non-Philosophical Works," *Abr-Nahrain* 29 (1991), 5, 8-12; Abū Ḥamid Ghazzālî, *Mishkāt Al-Anwār* (Beirut: 'Ālam al-kutub, 1986), 142-143, 165-166; Ibn Sînâ, *en-Necât: Felsefenin Temel Konuları*, trans. Kübra Şenel (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2018), 169-171. In al-Ghazālî, these concepts are *hissî*, *khayālî*, *'aqlî*, *fikrî*, and *qudsî/nabawî* souls. According to him, all these are the light. Concerning this issue, we see that the concept of the *qudsî* intellect/soul was used in different ways before Ibn Sînâ and the Ikhwan al-Safa'. For example, in *al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, al-Farabiused the *qudsî* soul in the sense of the Active Intellect (Gabriel). In another work, similar to Ibn Sînâ's usage, he used it as the power of the human soul. See, Adnan Gürsoy, "İbn Sînâ'nın Nübüvvet Teorisinde Kutsî Akıl," *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 23/2 (2014), 4-6; Adnan Gürsoy, "İbn Sînâ Felsefesinde Sezgi ve Sezgisel Bilgi," *Hikmet Yurdu* 8/16 (2015), 153-180.

⁷⁵ W. H. T. Gairdner, "Al-Ghazālî's Mishkāt al-Anwār and the Ghazālî-Problem," *Der Islam* 5 (1914), 121-153; A. J. Wensinck, "Ghazālî's Mishkāt al-Anwār (Niche of Lights)," *Semietische Studien: Uitde Nalatenschap*, (1941), 192-212; Kutluer, "Gazzâlî'nin Mişkâtü'l-Envâr'ında Entelektüel Perspektifler," 519-533.

criticism is that al-Ghazālī took Ibn Sina’s metaphysics and used it in his works while at the same time claiming that Ibn Sina did not rely on demonstration in metaphysics and was against religion. In fact, according to al-Ghazālī, the position of philosophers like Ibn Sina is not a simple defect but a conscious effort to deceive Muslims.⁷⁶ Kutluer is aware of this unethical attitude of al-Ghazālī, especially when he discusses Ibn Sina’s influences in *Mishkāt al-Anwār*. However, according to him, we cannot consider al-Ghazālī’s attitude as a contradiction because al-Ghazālī’s aim in *Tahāfut* is to discredit philosophers in the eyes of Muslims. In other words, we cannot say that al-Ghazālī fell into an unconscious contradiction in this regard.⁷⁷ It is noteworthy that although researchers focus on whether al-Ghazālī’s attitude is contradictory, his unjust and deliberate denigration of philosophers is not discussed as an ethical problem.

There are many examples in which al-Ghazālī largely followed the thought of Ibn Sina. Some of these examples we showed in the similarity of *Dānishnāma* and *Maqāṣid*, some of which we showed in *al-Qistās al-Mustaqīm*, and some of which we showed in *Mishkāt al-Anwār*. Some are also seen in *Mizān al-‘Amal* and *al-Najāt*. The idea that the soul has two aspects, one directed to the higher realm from which it receives the knowledge of the truth, and the other directed to the body from which it performs actions following its nature, is almost identical to Ibn Sina’s distinction of the theoretical and the practical intellect.⁷⁸ It is also clear that al-Ghazālī’s statements about

⁷⁶ Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 84.

⁷⁷ Kutluer, “Gazzâlî ve Felsefe,” 46; Kutluer, “Gazzâlî’nin Mişkâtü’l-Envâr’ında Entelektüel Perspektifler,” 509–511. In his article ‘The Method of Understanding al-Ghazālî’, Gürbüz Deniz, who approaches the issue from a different perspective, claims that what seems to be a contradiction in al-Ghazālî’s actually due to his aim to address all segments of society at different levels. See, Gürbüz Deniz, “Gazzâlî’yi Anlamanın Usulü,” 900. Vefat Yılında Uluslararası Gazzâlî Sempozyumu (7-9 Ekim 2011 İstanbul), *Milletlerarası Tartışmalı İlmi Toplantı Bildirileri* (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2012), 17–41. From Ibn Rushd’s point of view, however, al-Ghazālî clearly contradicted himself. For a study analyzing Ibn Rushd’s view see, Atilla Arkan, “Bir Meşşâî Filozofun Gazzâlî Algısı: İbn Rüşd’ün Gözüyle Gazzâlî,” *Sakarya Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 15/27 (2013), 121–142.

⁷⁸ Abū Hāmid Ghazālī, *Mizān al-‘Amal*, ed. Sulaymān Dunyā (Egypt: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1964), 265; *Ibn Sīnā, en-Necât*, 169; Griffel, *Philosophical Theology*, 66–

the faculties of the animal soul are surprisingly similar to Ibn Sina's statements and classification.⁷⁹ Since our topic is not the Ibn Sina-Ghazālī similarity, it would be better to leave it here.

We may establish another kind of similarity with the Ikhwan al-Safa'. The Ikhwan al-Safa' is a secret community of thought that emerged in Basra in the tenth century. We know the ideas of this community from the fifty-two treatises that have come down to us. It is almost certain that this community was Shi'ī, but it is also likely that they were Ismā'īlī. As Shi'ī-Ismā'īlī-Bāṭinī, they directly confront the Sunnī thought in which al-Ghazālī was involved. As mentioned, the *'ulamā* also played a role in the Seljuks' struggle against the political danger of the Bāṭinīyyah ideas. In this regard, al-Ghazālī was commissioned to write works against Bāṭinīyyah ideas. Therefore, we can easily assume that al-Ghazālī's view of the Ikhwan al-Safa' was unfavorable from the beginning.

However, al-Ghazālī's own statements are binding on this issue. In *al-Munqidh*, he mentions the Ikhwan al-Safa' by name. Al-Ghazālī says that the Ikhwan al-Safa' continued the Pythagorean philosophy and that this philosophy was worthless, inadequate, and extremely weak. Therefore, he claims that the philosophy of the Ikhwan al-Safa' can only be a crumb of philosophy.⁸⁰ Not content with this, al-Ghazālī goes on to argue that the authors of the treatises of the Ikhwan al-Safa' used verses, Ḥadīth and the eloquence of the Sūfīs to lure the hearts of the fools into superstitious ideas.⁸¹ In other words, according to al-Ghazālī, just as al-Farabi and Ibn Sina deceived Muslims, the Ikhwan al-Safa' wanted to deceive hearts with verses and Ḥadīth.⁸²

We will not criticize any of these claims in this article. However, the fact that al-Ghazālī benefited from the thoughts of the Ikhwan al-Safa', whom he accused in this way, especially in metaphysics, soul, and epistemology, should be questioned. We cannot consider this as a disciple being influenced by his master. The

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⁷⁹ Ghazālī, *Mizān al-'Amal*, 201–203; *Ibn Sīnā, en-Necāt*, 166–168.

⁸⁰ Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, 55.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 46–47.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 44; Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 76, 84.

disciple admires his master, and it is reasonable for him to follow him. However, it is an ethical problem to take a significant system from those you insult and accuse of heresy and being deceptive, especially on metaphysical and epistemological issues that are central parts of philosophy.

For example, according to the Ikhwan al-Safa', there are fifteen degrees of souls. Seven of those degrees are above the human soul, and seven of the degrees are below it. However, scholars have expressed them in five degrees from bottom to top: vegetative, animal, human, angelic (*malakī*), and holy (*qudsī*). Here we see that the holy soul is the highest level among human souls.⁸³ As a result of the relationship between the human holy soul and the Universal Soul (*kullī nafs*), divine knowledge comes into question. In order to better understand this relationship, it is necessary to summarize the Ikhwan's hierarchy of existence. As we know, the Ikhwan adopted the Neoplatonic theory of emanation. Ikhwan's interpretation of the theory of emanation differs from that of al-Farabi and Ibn Sina. In the emanation theory advocated by al-Farabi and adopted by Ibn Sina, there are ten intelligences and nine heavenly planets, and the First Intelligence (*al-'aql al-awwal*) emanates from God.⁸⁴ However, the Ikhwan al-Safa' was more faithful to Plotinus' emanation scheme. Instead of talking about the ten intelligences, he followed the order of the One, the First Intelligence, the Universal Soul, the Universal Matter (*hayūlā*), the First Body (*al-falak*), and then the planets and the Earth as we know it. In this interpretation, the First Intelligence, also called the Universal Intelligence (*al-'aql al-kullī*) and the Active Intellect (*al-'aql al-af'āl*), is the first created by God's unique creative act. The emanation accepted in all other beings started from the First Intelligence.⁸⁵ In this hierarchical explanation of existence,

⁸³ See, Ikhwan al-Safa', *Rasāil*, 1/311.

⁸⁴ Fārābī, *Medīnetü'l-Fâzıla*, 80–85.

⁸⁵ Ikhwan al-Safa', *Rasāil*, 4/198-212. By the way, although the Ikhwān use the term emanation on a few occasions for the emergence of the Universal Intellect, their general statement declares that God created the Intellect. See, Ikhwan al-Safa', *Rasāil*, 3/184, 187, 238; Brandon Zimmerman, "Does Plotinus Present a Philosophical Account of Creation?," *The Review of Metaphysics* 67/1 (2013), 55–105.

the Universal Soul has a lower status than the Universal Intelligence.⁸⁶

According to the Ikhwan al-Safa', the Universal Soul penetrates the planets with God's permission, and thus different characteristics emerge from each planet. For example, the information, inspiration, and dreams that come out with the influence of the planet Mercury are in fact through the influence of the Universal Soul.⁸⁷ In addition, although the Ikhwan al-Safa' generally mentions inspiration, revelation, and dreams together, they also distinguish between inspiration from angels and revelation from God.⁸⁸ According to the Ikhwan al-Safa', the knowledge given to the prophets is universal, rational, and based on *rabbānī* (divinely) teachings.⁸⁹ However, in the divine wisdom that comes to the human soul, whether it comes to the prophets or the soul-purified saints, there is the enlightenment of the Universal Soul to the human soul.⁹⁰

As for al-Ghazālī, he also slightly differentiated a similar system. We see that al-Ghazālī, in his *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, also classifies the soul into five categories and that the highest one is the holy (*qudsī*) soul.⁹¹ It is also possible that this fivefold classification was taken from Ibn Sina. What is important here is the meaning and function attributed to the holy soul. In order to understand the function of the holy soul, it is first necessary to summarize the emanationist scheme accepted by al-Ghazālī. We see that al-Ghazālī accepts the Neoplatonic hierarchy, which is much more similar to the Ikhwan al-Safa' than to al-Farabi. In *al-Ma'ārif al-'Aqliyya*, al-Ghazālī states that the intelligence is the first being created directly

⁸⁶ Ikhwan al-Safa', *Rasāil*, 3/185.

⁸⁷ Ikhwan al-Safa', *Rasāil*, 4/212-213, 222.

⁸⁸ Ikhwan al-Safa', *Rasāil*, 4/105, 120.

⁸⁹ Ikhwan al-Safa', *Rasāil*, 4/330, 412.

⁹⁰ Ikhwan al-Safa', *Rasāil*, 2/10-11. Since the Ikhwan al-Safa' advocates a hierarchical structure and the Universal Intellect is higher than the Universal Soul, we can say that all knowledge comes first from the Universal Intellect. In other words, the Universal Soul is an important step in the transfer of knowledge to the human soul, rather than being the primary source. See, Emrah Kaya, "Reason and Rationality in the Epistles of Ikhwan al-Safa'," *İlahiyat Tetkikleri Dergisi* 52 (2019), 155–172.

⁹¹ Ghazālī, *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, 165–166.

by God, the intelligence is more valuable than the soul, and the soul is the first being subject to influence.⁹² This statement is the understanding of emanation based on the One - Intelligence - Soul that we see in the works of the Ikhwan al-Safa'. According to Ahmet Kamil Cihan, who translated al-Ghazālī's work into Turkish, al-Ghazālī's table of being and the relationship between beings and numbers overlap with the explanations of the Ikhwan al-Safa', a follower of Pythagoreanism, except for minor differences.⁹³

After these explanations, we can give an example of how al-Ghazālī was influenced by the Ikhwan al-Safa', whom he accused of heresy. According to al-Ghazālī, the sciences are acquired through human learning or divine teaching. In human learning, one either receives knowledge from a person outside oneself, which is *ta'allum*, or from within oneself, which is contemplation (*tafakkur*). Inward knowledge is the soul's taking advantage of the Universal Soul. According to al-Ghazālī, a capable human soul can benefit from a little contemplation much more than an ordinary human soul can benefit from much contemplation. He says most theoretical and practical knowledge is acquired this way.⁹⁴

The second way, the *rabbānī* teaching, is either revelation or inspiration. According to al-Ghazālī, the Universal Intelligence is the teacher, and the holy soul is the student. The holy soul acquires all sciences without the human ways of learning, which consist of study or contemplation. Thus the prophets receive all knowledge directly from God. Inspiration is the warning (admonition) of the Universal Soul to the lesser human soul according to the capacity and ability of that soul. The knowledge that comes from revelation is called prophetic knowledge (*wahy*), and the knowledge that comes from inspiration is called *ladunnī* knowledge. In this knowledge, too, there is no intermediary between the soul and God, i.e., it is not knowledge learned from someone else.⁹⁵

⁹² Abū Hāmid Ghazālī, *al-Ma'ārif al-'Aqliyya*, ed. 'Abd al-Karīm al-'Uthmān (Damascus: Dār al-fikr, 1963), 29, 45.

⁹³ Abū Hāmid Ghazālī, *el-Me'ārifü'l-Aklyyye: Düşünme, Konuşma ve Söz Üzerine*, trans. Ahmet Kamil Cihan (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2017), 25 (Intro).

⁹⁴ Abū Hāmid Ghazālī, *al-Risāla al-Ladunniya* (Mısır, 1910), 23–25.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 26–29.

Al-Ghazālī mentions a hierarchy here. According to this hierarchy, al-Bāri' Ta'ālā (God) is at the top, followed by the Universal Intelligence, the Universal Soul, and other creatures. The knowledge from the Universal Intelligence is a revelation, and the knowledge from the Universal Soul is an inspiration.⁹⁶ Since the Universal Intelligence is superior to the Universal Soul, the prophet who receives knowledge from the Universal Intelligence is superior to the saint who receives knowledge from the Universal Soul. In the same way, revelation from the Universal Intelligence is superior to inspiration from the Universal Soul. This hierarchical order and the epistemological function attributed to the concepts of the Universal Intelligence and the Universal Soul come from the Ikhwan al-Safa. According to al-Ghazālī, the intellect has no function in the metaphysical realm, and rational thinking in this area can even be misleading. The main reason for al-Ghazālī's criticism of the philosophers was that in metaphysical matters, they acted entirely on conjecture and pretended to be based on demonstration.⁹⁷ Where, then, did al-Ghazālī get the knowledge of this hierarchical order, which cannot be obtained by human reason and possessed by the heretical philosophers? It is clear that such a structure does not exist in the Qur'ān or the authentic Hadīth.

The influence of the Ikhwan al-Safa on the thought of al-Ghazālī is quite apparent to those familiar with both fields.⁹⁸ The statements in this article do not aim to make such a comparison but to show that al-Ghazālī profited greatly from the Ikhwan al-Safa', whom he denigrated, belittled, and even called heretical, without quoting any sources. As can be seen from the example, the themes used are not ordinary conceptual quotations but elements that have an important place in his system of thought. It is also important to note

⁹⁶ Ibid., 29–32.

⁹⁷ Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 76.

⁹⁸ Abdullah Özkan's Ph.D. dissertation, completed in 2016, provides essential information on this topic. This thesis, which takes a comprehensive view, is important for comparison, as it also benefitted from the previous literature. Concrete examples of how the Ikhwan al-Safa' influenced al-Ghazālī can be found in abundance. However, we should know that there is no ethical questioning here either. See, Abdullah Özkan, "Al-Ghazālī and Rasā'il Ikhwan al-Safa': Their Influence on His Thought" (University of California, Doktora Tezi, 2016).

that a significant part of these elements come from the metaphysical subjects that were the cause of al-Ghazālī's attack. Therefore, it is clear that al-Ghazālī's attitude is incompatible with scientific ethics.⁹⁹

Conclusion

Al-Ghazālī is an influential and essential Islamic thinker who has always been the subject of academic studies. With his comprehensive and consequential works on different fields of Islamic sciences, al-Ghazālī's influence has been alive for centuries. However, there are relatively few works that criticize him. It is possible to find studies on his works' inconsistencies and other sources' intense influence on al-Ghazālī. Some inconsistencies are recognized as changes in al-Ghazālī's thought over time. On the other hand, al-Ghazālī's verbatim quotations from other sources can be considered a normal influence within the tradition. It is also possible to read about al-Ghazālī's relations with state officials in many sources. However, there are not enough studies on the negative effects of al-Ghazālī's close relationship with politics on his works, nor are there any studies that evaluate the receptions characterized as interaction as an ethical problem. This article focused on the ethical questioning of al-Ghazālī's attitude in his scholarly activities rather than addressing the inconsistencies in his works or the similarities with other scholars one by one.

To this end, after providing brief but concrete information about al-Ghazālī's closeness to politics, we pointed out his inattentiveness in the field of hadith, which cast a shadow over his reputation as an authority in Islamic sciences. We then explained that the negative atmosphere he created against philosophy covered up the truth. Finally, we pointed out how al-Ghazālī used philosophy,

⁹⁹ In addition to all these, many studies briefly point out that al-Ghazālī benefited from Ibn Sina and the Ikhwan al-Safa', especially in the field of ethics and even in interpreting some verses of the Qur'an, without naming them. In particular, the works of Richard Frank and Binyamin Abrahamov provide satisfactory information. Also see, Mesut Okumuş, "Gazzâlî'nin Kur'an Yorumlarında İbn Sînâ'nın Etkileri," *İslâmî Araştırmalar Dergisi* 13/3-4 (2000), 341-353; Emrah Kaya, *İslâm Düşüncesinde Bilginin Aklîliği* (Ankara: Fecr Yayınları, 2022).

which he despised and denigrated, even in metaphysical matters, without citing sources.

In summary, we draw the following conclusions. First, al-Ghazālī's scholarly originality is doubtful, especially in the philosophical field. Even if his expression is original in terms of new classifications or forms, there is nothing in terms of subject matter and approach that would make him stand out from ordinary scholars and warrant the title of authority. Second, al-Ghazālī's approach to philosophy was politically motivated and not based on a pure scholarly concern. Third, this attitude of al-Ghazālī has not been sufficiently criticized from an ethical point of view in studies on al-Ghazālī. The importance of this critical article can be better understood since al-Ghazālī is still regarded as an authority in Islamic countries, and many of his works are read repeatedly in scholarly circles.

It should not be forgotten that al-Ghazālī's attitude towards philosophy, in particular, was born out of a desire to preserve the traditional Sunnī understanding of religion at a time when Shi'ī-Bāṭinī ideas were politically dangerous. His views on these issues should not influence the way Muslims view philosophy today when political conditions have changed. However, it is also crucial for researchers to note that approaching scholarly issues with political or other motivations without paying attention to scholarly ethics may save the day but will lead to the blurring of the truth in the future.