

The Ideological and Theoretical Sources of Ahmad Ghazali's Teaching of Sufism

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ABSTRACT: This article is a philosophical analysis of the ideological and theoretical sources of Sufism, one of the thinkers of the medieval Muslim East, Ahmad Ghazali, who left an important mark in the history of Sufism. Also, the article contains information about the formation process of Ahmed Ghazali's teaching of Sufism and the thinkers who influenced him and their scientific works.

KEYWORD: Sufism, philosophy, Sufi, Quran, Sunnah, world view, hadith, source.

Introduction. If we look at the history of Sufism, we can see that in its early stages it consisted of simple views and concepts and was more practical. At first, Sufis were mostly engaged in obedience and paid great attention to secularism and mathematics. At that time, mystical views were not recorded as teachings, but were passed down orally to generations. In the later periods, pamphlets and books on Sufism were created, houses were built, and programs were drawn up to determine the manners and customs of Sufis.

Also, by the beginning of the 9th century, the theoretical foundations of Sufism were developed, practical spiritual and psychological exercises of Sufis, self-education and training activities were formed. It should be noted that along with the study of the historical development and theoretical aspects of Sufism, the study of the activities of great sheikhs and saints is also important. In particular, the role of scholars of Movarounnahr and Khurasan in the wide spread of views of Sufism as a unified doctrine in Islamic countries and becoming an important reality in social life.

Discussion. Ahmad Ghazali is one of the manifestations that left an important mark in the history of Sufism and the thinker of the medieval Muslim East. In order to understand the essence of Ahmed Ghazali's Sufism, first of all, it is necessary to have a clear idea about the sources from which his ideas formed. Examining various elements that entered the worldview of the thinker under the influence of various ideologies and sources, as well as under the influence of various philosophical and theological schools and religious beliefs, will undoubtedly clarify the understanding of the formation process of Ahmad Ghazali's doctrine of Sufism.

In addition, the analysis of Ahmad Ghazali's works on Sufism shows that the formation and development of his system of views was deeply influenced by many sciences and religious beliefs of his time. One of the main sources of his teachings of Sufism is the Quran and the Sunnah. Thus, the Qur'an, as the main source of religious rules and social rules, moral and cultural standards of Muslims, played a huge role in the formation of the system of Ahmad Ghazali's views. Based on this, the analysis and discussion of any issues of Sufism by the thinker was carried out not only from the point of view of reason or intuition, but also by referring to the Quran and Sunnah.

In fact, as noted by the famous Tajik scientist academician B.G. Gafurov, “Sufism was born and grew in the essence of Islam, widely used the Qur’an, Hadiths and other elements of Islam, especially since the elements of Islam were interpreted in a unique way in its early stages, it became a symbol of opposition to orthodox Islam” [1].

The teaching of Sufism used the verses of the Holy Qur’an and Hadith about man, his reality, why he was created, what he is capable of and what he is incapable of, and similar problems, and gave them a mystical and philosophical content.

In fact, objective studies have proven that Sufism cannot be understood without studying the Holy Qur’an and Hadith, and that Islam is the original root of Sufism. Indeed, Sufism is an Islamic doctrine that arose on the basis of the Qur’an and Sunnah, appeared in the bosom of Islam, was formed and served for its development [2]. The Holy Qur’an is the spiritual source of Sufism, that is, the “theoretical source”. Many examples can be cited from Sufism literature to confirm the above point.

Ahmad Ghazali considered the text of the Qur’an recorded by Zayd and Uthman as the main one. Ahmad al-Ghazali relied on his text in developing the foundations of his mystical system, especially in establishing the basic principles of existence, defining the most general categories of existence, and the names and attributes of Allah.

Ahmad Ghazali tried to prove the image of God, the necessity of man’s pursuit of God, the issue of monotheism, the infinite power of God as the sole source of the creation of the universe, his justice, free will, punishment and predestination, the messages brought by the prophets, their teachings, the necessity of revelations, the resurrection, the creation of the world and other things based on the Qur’an recorded by Zayd and Uthman.

However, Ahmad al-Ghazali was not a simple commentator of the Holy Quran, because while analyzing most of the issues of Sufism, he drew from his own ideas and the concepts of other Sufis.

In Ahmad al-Ghazali’s Sufism, the Sunnah is honored as a source of information about behavior or how to please God, and as a complementary source to the Quran. That is why the thinker considers following the Sunnah as one of the main contents of Muslim life, and studying it as an important component of Muslim education. But he understands this in the spirit of his mystical worldview.

Although collections of religious hadiths - Imam Bukhari’s “Al-Jami al-Sahih”, Imam Muslim’s “Al-Jami al-Sahih”, Imam Abu Dawud’s “Kitab al-Sunan”, Imam Ibn Majhi’s “Kitab as-Sunan”, Imam al-Tirmidhi’s “Al-Jami’ al-Kabir”, Imam Nasai’s “Kitab as-sunan al-kubra” were compiled during Ahmad Ghazali’s time, the Sufi scholar judges the authenticity or inauthenticity of this or that hadith and critically examines its chain of transmission from generation to generation. These people had to really exist, have the fame of a righteous pious Muslim, and the chronological framework of their lives should correspond to the chain of narrators of the hadith. In addition, Ahmad Ghazali made some demands according to the content of the hadith: it should be consistent with common logic in its origin and should not contradict the principles of Islam. Based on these principles, Ahmad Ghazali cites a number of hadiths in his works.

The Quran and Sunnah were not the only sources of his Sufi teachings. Along with them, the Shafi school founded by Imam Muhammad al-Shafe’i (in 820 CE) in the beginning of the 8th-9th centuries had a significant influence on the formation of the views of Ahmed Ghazali. His collection of hadiths entitled “Musnad al-Imam al-Shafi’i” as a source of jurisprudence embodying the principles and ideas of Islam, played a major role in the formation of Ahmed Ghazali first as a jurist and then as a Sufi. According to the Iranian researcher Nasrullah Pour Javad, “Khwaja Ahmad” (Ahmad Ghazali) was the greatest Sufi-Qalandar, yet he was both an imam and a Shafi’i jurist at the same time, and always followed the laws of the Sharia” [3].

Results. Now let's get acquainted with the main source of his teachings, that is, his Sufism, which had a significant and decisive influence on Ahmad Ghazali. As we know, during the life and work of the thinker, Sufism developed rapidly in the countries of the Near and Middle East. In particular, the main ideas of Sufism passed from hidden social protest to the level of a unique scholastic philosophy, and could not help but affect the basis of understanding of the world of the ideas of Ahmad Ghazali.

It is known that Sufism was not essentially a single stream, neither at the initial stage of its development nor after that. It could not become a coherent, well-formed and well-defined system of views, nevertheless, the analysis of the main problems of Ahmad al-Ghazali's Sufi teachings followed the direction and style of Abu Abdullah Harith ibn Asad al-Anazi al-Muhasibi (d. 857), Hakim Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ali al-Tirmizi (died at the end of the 10th century), Abu Yazid (Bayazid) Tayfur ibn Isa ibn Adam ibn Surushon al-Bistami (died 875), Abu Muhammad Sahl ibn Abdullah al-Tustari (818-896), Abul-Qasim Junayd al-Baghdadi (d. 910), Abu-l-Mughis al-Husayn ibn Mansur ibn Mahammad al-Baydavi al-Hallaj (858- 922), Abul-Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn al-Junayd al- Hazzaz (d. 911), Abu Bakr Dulaf ibn Jahdar al-Shibli (861-946), Abu Talib al-Makki (d. 996) and others in the field of Sufism, and creatively developed their basic rules [4].

Ahmed Ghazali mainly based on the teachings of Abu Talib al-Makki on social justice, strengthening of kindness, moral and ethical ideals, conscientiousness, brotherhood between people, classification of sciences, etc., and these ideas were reflected in his mystical treatises.

In addition, Ahmad Ghazali relied on al-Muhasibi in analyzing many fundamental mystical and philosophical problems: methods of self-observation, the mutual compatibility of a person's external actions and intentions in his heart, state - ecstatic state, methods of organizing inner life in the direction of spiritual and moral purification, etc. Ahmed Ghazali was especially influenced by Muhasibi's book "Ar-rioya li-huquq Allah".

At the same time, the ideas of Abu Bakr al-Nassaj, the leader of the dervish order in Tus, Abu Ali Farmadi in Nishapur, and his teacher al-Juwaini had a serious and effective influence on the formation of Ahmad Ghazali's worldview in the direction of Sufism. However, the views of Muhammad ibn al-Junayd, Bayazid Bistami and Mansur al-Hallaj had a specific influence on Ahmad Ghazali. The reason is that Ahmad Ghazali was attracted to Bayazid's ideas, especially the problems of love and purification of the soul.

Conclusion. In conclusion, it should be said that the ideological and theoretical sources of Ahmad Ghazali's Sufism are the Qur'an, Hadith and Sunnah. And the formation process of his Sufism doctrine was developed by the teachings of Abu Bakr al-Nassaj, Abu Ali Farmadi, al-Juwayni, Bayazid Bistami, Abu Talib al-Makki and other scholars.

Although Ahmed Ghazali took the path of one or another Sufi in many matters, he had his own position. Therefore, according to some scientists, it is expressed in the system of individual spiritual enlightenment views of the thinker.

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