

The Light of Intellect and Spiritual Vision in Al-Ghazali's Mishkat Al Anwar

Ademi, Almarin

Ibn Haldun University, Turkey

Abstract

In this thesis, I discuss the whatness of knowledge through a 'being-knowing' perspective and analyze the Mishkat al Anwar (The Niche of Lights) of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, as a prime example of a Sufi epistemology derived through relating internally to oneself. The seeking of knowledge is preceded by the experience of existential doubt that is to be found in knowledge, and for al-Ghazali, certainty was to be found in Sufism and their experiential knowledge. As such the Sufi ways of knowledge that are based on Unveiling (kashf), Taste (dhawk), and the manifestation of Being (tajalli) are presented in the Mishkat al-Anwar of al-Ghazali as such an epistemology. Thus, when perception is clear of externality, which is causality and outward forms of bodies, being reveals itself to perception with all its ontological attributes. Ghazali proposes that knowing Light, which he equates with Being, comes from the 'holy prophetic spirit' which is a stage that is beyond the rational and reflective faculties. Two types of knowledge come through 'being-knowing', a contextual knowing to which separated beings manifest themselves, and a knowledge whereby Being manifests itself as a unified reality with no separation. Knowledge of such realities come through the turning inward, the unveiling, manifestation, and taste of being.

Keywords: Niche of Lights, Relating Internally, Unveiling, Manifestation, Taste