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بِوَسِيْلَتِي اِسْلَامٌ اِنْبَارًا يَجْنِبُ مِلْدِيْنَا

***AL-SA'ĀDAH* IN THE QUR'ĀN AND SUNNAH: AN
ANALYSIS OF AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S VIEWS**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Al-Sa`ādah or happiness is the ultimate goal of human kind. In Islam, people desire to obtain success and happiness in both the world and the hereafter. The present study seeks to examine the real concept of *al-Sa`ādah*, from the Qur`ān and Sunnah perspective with special reference to the theory of happiness introduced by al-Ghazālī to show the true meaning of happiness in life and to safeguard those who seek happiness in vain means. The study focuses on: (a) al-Ghazālī's life and works; (b) al-Ghazālī's concept of *al-Sa`ādah*; and (c) al-Ghazālī's techniques to achieve happiness. The researcher has applied qualitative method which relies on primary and secondary sources available in the libraries. The thesis is primarily based on some famous writings of al-Ghazālī concerning *al-Sa`ādah* such as *Kimiyā' al-Sa`ādah*, *Bidāyah al-Hidāyah*, *Mizān al-'Amal* and *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* etc. This study has made certain important findings about al-Ghazālī's concept of happiness. His concept primarily focuses on the happiness of Hereafter, though the world is not neglected. In order to achieve *al-Sa`ādah*, al-Ghazālī stresses on the improvement of the soul and the main method to achieve it is by knowledge and action. The research suggests that knowledge and action are interrelated to one another. In order to gain happiness in both the world and Hereafter, man should obtain knowledge and action, and only with this, will man achieve happiness.

ملخص البحث

السعادة هي الهدف النهائي للنوع البشري، فإن الإنسان دائماً يسعى للحصول على النجاح الحقيقي والسعادة الدائمة. إن هذه الدراسة تهدف إلى البحث عن المفهوم الحقيقي للسعادة من منظور القرآن والسنة مع التركيز الخاص على نظرية السعادة التي قدمها الإمام الغزالي. وذلك لإظهار المعنى الحقيقي للسعادة، وإرشاد الذين يبحثون عنها دون جدوى. إن هذه الدراسة تركز بشكل خاص على: (أ) معرفة سيرة الغزالي ومؤلفاته، (ب) والتحري عن مفهوم السعادة عند الغزالي، (ج) والتدقيق وإمعان النظر في سبل ووسائل السعادة لديه. إن الدراسة تتبنى وتنتهج الأسلوب النوعي الذي يعتمد على المصادر الأولية والثانوية التي تتوفر في المكتبات. إن البحث بكامله يعتمد على بعض الكتابات الشهيرة للغزالي عن السعادة، مثل: كيمياء السعادة، وبداية الهداية، وميزان العمل، وإحياء علوم الدين وما إلى ذلك. ووصلت الدراسة إلى بعض النتائج المهمة حول نظرية الغزالي للسعادة. وذلك بأن الغزالي يركز مبدئياً على السعادة الأخروية، وإن لم يهمل السعادة في الدنيا. وقد أكد الغزالي على تحسين وتقوية الروح لأجل الحصول على السعادة. والسبيل الأساسي الوحيد لتقوية الروح هو عن طريق المعرفة والعمل، فالدراسة ترى أن المعرفة والعمل مترابطان معاً، ولأجل الحصول على السعادة في الدارين، يجب أن يتحلى الإنسان بالعلم ويطبقه بالعمل. وهذا هو السبيل الوحيد للوصول إلى الهدف المنشود.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage (Qur'ān and Sunnah).

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Noor Mohammad Osmani
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage (Qur'ān and Sunnah).

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Examiner

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Islamic Revealed
Knowledge and Heritage

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Nurul Asiah Fasehah Bt. Muhamad

Signature

Date

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AI-GHAZĀLI’S VIEWS**

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Al-Sa`ādah or happiness is the ultimate goal of human kind. In Islam, people desire to gain success and happiness in both world and hereafter. But today's world has changed people's perception of life, nature and universe.

Al-Sa`ādah refers to “everlasting felicity and bliss, the highest being the vision of God which is promised to those who in worldly life have lived in willing submission and conscious and knowing obedience of God's commands and prohibition.”¹

True happiness in Islam is “when we have sought the peace of mind, the satisfaction of the heart and the comfort of the self.”² Al-Qaderi said “This can be achieved by remembering Allah, regard Him as Omni-Present and All- Knowing in every moment of your life. Search for His Message in its authentic form, and practice it. Mould your morals in conformity with Divine Laws and take the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) as model.”³

Meanwhile, according to Al-Ghazālī, the genuine happiness comes from the knowledge that we are creations of God, and have therefore been made for a purpose.

¹ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *The Meaning and Experience of Happiness in Islam*, (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1993), 1.

² Muhammad Abdul Aleem Siddiqui Al-Qaderi, *The Quest for True Happiness*, (Pakistan: Women Islamic Mission of Pakistan, 1950), 4.

³ *Ibid.*, 18.

Peace comes from knowing that we are merely 'travelers in a foreign land', and will before long return to an eternal paradise⁴.

As we can see, al-Ghazālī's concept of happiness and other scholars' concept do not differ much from each other. Basically, the root of genuine happiness in Islam lies in having firm faith in Allah, and love Him and the Prophet (p.b.u.h). However, the philosophical aspect of al-Ghazālī's theories of happiness adds to its holistic approach as it is in total conformity with the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

Thus, this research seeks to explain the concept of *al-Sa'ādah* from the Qur'ān and Sunnah, with special reference to the concept of *al-Sa'ādah* from al-Ghazālī's point of view. The research will also focus on the techniques and means of achieving happiness according to al-Ghazālī.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Al-Sa'ādah is the goal of every human being. In accordance with the reality of today's life, it seems that general Muslims do not grasp the real meaning of this concept and fail to feel the importance of methods suggested by the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Looking at the statistics provided by the National Anti Drug Agency of Malaysia, it is the Malay Muslims who constitute the highest percentage of those who take drugs for enjoyment in Malaysia.⁵ They adopt the Western lifestyles and take drugs to trigger happiness.

This research seeks to examine the true concept of *al-Sa'ādah*, from the Qur'ān and Sunnah perspective with special reference to the theory of happiness introduced

⁴ Tom Butler, Bowdon, *50 Spiritual Classics: 50 Great Books of Inner Discovery, Enlightenment and Purpose* (London & Boston: Nicholas Brealey) <<http://www.butler-bowdon.com/the-alchemy-of-happiness.html>> (accessed 22 December 2008).

⁵ National Anti Drug Agency, Ministry of Internal Security, <http://pembina.com.my/index.php?option=com_rokdownloads&task=download&id=4&Itemid=48> (accessed 28 July, 2008).

by al-Ghazālī to show the true meaning of happiness in life and to safeguard those who seek happiness in vain means.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1- Who is al-Ghazālī and what are his significant works in the field of *al-Sa`adah*?
- 2- What is the concept of al- *Sa`adah* according to al-Ghazālī?
- 3- What are al-Ghazālī's techniques and methods to pursue happiness?

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

The present study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- 1- To identify al-Ghazālī's life and works.
- 2- To investigate al-Ghazālī's concept and theories of *al- Sa`adah*.
- 3- To examine al-Ghazālī's techniques to achieve happiness.

1.5 JUSTIFICATION OF RESEARCH

To the best of researcher's knowledge, after going through different websites of local and private universities and their libraries, this study has not been done before. The research is significant due to the importance of *al-Sa`adah* in the Muslims' life in this world and the hereafter. Furthermore, this research is practical in nature in order to help Muslim population to comprehend the concept of *al-Sa`adah* from the Qur`ān and Sunnah's point of view as reflected in the writings of al-Ghazālī.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many contributions with regard to the concept of *al-Sa'ādah*, particularly on how to achieve *al-Sa'ādah*. However, there are very few discussions that focus on al-Ghazālī's concept of *al-Sa'ādah*.

The book entitled *Miftāḥ Dār al-Sa'ādah*⁶ by Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah explains about *al-Sa'ādah* with special reference to the methods of *al-Sa'ādah*. The author analyzed relevant Qur'ānic verses and *Aḥādīth* to explain the issue and suggested practical means to obtain *Sa'ādah* in both worlds.

Al-Ghazālī in his book *Kīmiyā' al-Sa'ādah* (Malay translation by Yusope Hj. Wanjor, *Kimia Kebahagiaan*)⁷ emphasized on the discussion of happiness in the light of Sufī perspective. The author explains about the four stages to achieve the alchemy of happiness which are; the knowledge of self, the knowledge of God, the knowledge of the world and the knowledge of the Judgment Day.

Bidāyah al-Hidāyah (Malay translation, *Hidayah Permulaan*)⁸ contains the same contents as the *Kīmiyā' al-Sa'ādah*. Al-Ghazālī in this book emphasizes that Allah's commands divided into two; *farḍ* (obligation) and *nawāfil* (recommended). *Farḍ* is resembled as a business fund that allows human to gain happiness; and, *nawāfil* as the business profit that ensures man the status and dignity.

Another book by al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulum al- Dīn*,⁹ does not explain about *al-Sa'ādah* clearly but the author discusses some issues and methods of *al-Sa'ādah* in that book such as *syukr* (gratefulness), *tawbah* (repentence), *ḥusnu al-zānn* (good

⁶ Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, Muḥammad bin Abi Bakar, *Miftāḥ Dār Al-Sa'ādah*, (Cairo: Dar Al- Ḥadīth, 1994)

⁷ Al-Ghazālī, Abu Hāmid Muḥammad bin Muḥammad, *Kimia Kebahagiaan*, translated from Arabic by Yusope Hj. Wanjor (Bandung, Indonesia: Penerbitan Mizan, 1984).

⁸ Al-Ghazālī, *Hidayah Permulaan*, translated from Arabic.

⁹ Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al- Dīn*, (Cairo: Dar Ibn Haytham, 2004).

opinion) and *ṣabr* (patience) as the author believes that all doings to gain Allāh's love is the genuine happiness.

Meanwhile, al- Ghazālī also explains generally about al-*Sa'ādah* in his book *Mīzān al- 'Amal* (Malay translation by Muhammad Mustafa Abul Ala, *Timbangan Amal Menuju Kebahagiaan Akhirat*)¹⁰. The author emphasizes that knowledge and practice is the most important thing to achieve happiness. He also states some theories of happiness from *ṣūfi* perspective.

Fann al-Dhikr wa al-Du'ā' 'inda Khātumul Anbiyā' is another book by al- Ghazālī (Malay translation by Ahmad Sunarto, *Menjala Pahala dengan Zikir dan Doa*)¹¹. The book tells about two important ways to gain al-*Sa'ādah*, which are; *dhikr* and *du'ā'* introduced by Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h).

Another book by al-Ghazālī, *Al-Maḥabbah, Al-Shauq wa Al-Riḍā* (Malay translation by Muhammad Aes Madji & Hasan Ihwani, *Rindu dan Cinta Menurut Al-Ghazālī*)¹². The author explains in detail about these three components of al-*Sa'ādah* which are also included in his famous book *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al- Dīn*.

Muhammad Abul Quasem in his book *The Ethics of al- Ghazālī, a Composite Ethics in Islam*¹³ explains about al-Ghazālī's concept of happiness in one chapter of his book. Al-Ghazālī believes that happiness and misery are caused by the condition of the soul. Therefore, al-Ghazālī often gives great emphasis upon the improvement of the soul.

¹⁰ Al-Ghazālī, *Timbangan Amal Menuju Kebahagiaan Akhirat*, translated from Arabic by Muhammad Mustafa Abul Ala (Dār Taqwa).

¹¹ Al-Ghazālī, *Menjala Pahala dengan Zikir dan Doa*, translated from Arabic by Ahmad Sunarto (Dār Taqwa, 1995).

¹² Al-Ghazālī, *Rindu dan Cinta Menurut Al-Ghazālī*, translated from Arabic by Muhammad Aes Madji & Hasan Ihwani (Selangor: Pustaka Ilmi, 1998).

¹³ Muhammad Abul Quasem, *The Ethics of al- Ghazālī, a Composite Ethics in Islam*, (Selangor: Central Printing, 1975).

Al-Qaraḏāwī in his book *Al-Īmān wa al-Ḥayāh*¹⁴ explains about *al-Sa'ādah* in a few chapters. The author highlighted that the real *al-Sa'ādah* can be achieved with the true *īmān*. He also explains in detail about the other methods of *al-Sa'ādah* such as *syukr* (gratefulness), *tawbah* (repentance), *ḥusnu al-zānn* (good opinion) and *ṣabr* (patience).

The book entitled, *Al-Ṭarīq ila al-Sa'ādah*,¹⁵ by Ḥamid Ḥasan Raqīṭ states thirty-five ways to achieve happiness. The author stated the Qur'ānic *āyāt* to support his argument. The author started the book with the explanation of *al-Sa'ādah* concept and emphasized on *īmān* as the main cause or method to achieve happiness in *Islām*.

Moreover, the book entitled *Wasā'il Mufīdah li al-Ḥayāh al-Sa'ādah*¹⁶ by Shaykh 'Abdur Raḥmān bin Nāṣir al-Sa'dī contains twelve chapters dealing with issues related to *al-Sa'ādah* such as the reason why we need *al-Sa'ādah* and ways to achieve *al-Sa'ādah* in a brief manner. The author quoted the Qur'ānic *āyāt* to support his arguments.

Professor Muhammad Naqīb al-Attas did a commendable work on the topic of happiness from Islamic perspective in his book *The Meaning and Experience of Happiness in Islam*¹⁷. The author highlighted the meaning of happiness and its experience from the *mu'min*'s point of view.

Muhammad Abdul Aleem Siddiqui (M.A.A Siddiqui) in his book *The Quest for the True Happiness*¹⁸ highlighted that to get the true happiness (*al-Sa'ādah*) is by

¹⁴ Al-Qaraḏāwī, Yūsuf, *Al-Īmān wa al-Ḥayāh*, (Cairo: Maktabah wahbah, 1998)

¹⁵ Hamid Hasan Raqīṭ, *Al-Ṭarīq ila al-Sa'ādah*, (Sharjah: Markaz al-sharīṭ al-Islāmī, 2001).

¹⁶ Sheīkh 'Abd. Rahman bin Nāṣir Al-Sa'dī, *Wasā'il Mufīdah li al-Ḥayāh al-Sa'ādah*, (Riyāḏ: Maṭābi' al-hamīdī, 1998).

¹⁷ Syed Muhammad Naqīb Al-Attas, *The Meaning and Experience of Happiness in Islam*.

¹⁸ Muhammad Abdul Aleem Siddiqui, *The Quest for the True Happiness*, (Pakistan: Women's Islamic Mission of Pakistan, 1950)

remembering God and taking The Prophet (p.b.u.h) as the role model. However, his analysis of the issues was very brief which needs further clarification.

Sa'ad Khalaf al-Afnān in his book *Subul al- Sa'ādah*¹⁹ emphasized on the meaning of *al- Sa'ādah* and the methods of achieving it. He also discussed the impact of *al-Sa'ādah* on human behavior from the spiritual point of view which was not covered by the modern psychology.

The book *Thalāthūn Sababan li al- Sa'ādah*²⁰ by 'Ā'id bin 'Abdullah al-Qarnī discussed about thirty ways to achieve *al- Sa'ādah*. Among the methods introduced by him are satisfaction, helpfulness, and love. The author provides Qur'ānic verses to support his argument.

Salmān Naṣīf furnished thirty five tips to achieve *al-Sa'ādah* in his book *Sirru al- Sa'ādah*²¹. He also emphasized on the real happiness which lies in achieving success in the hereafter.

It has become clear that all these authors generally discussed Islamic perspective of *al-Sa'ādah* and ways to achieve it. Though some of them tried to shed some light on al-Ghazālī's views of happiness, no independent research has been carried out, to the best of researcher's knowledge, on the proposed topic of Ghazālī's views of *al-Sa'ādah* and its analysis based on the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Some reflections will also be made to the views of other scholars to evaluate al-Ghazālī's views.

¹⁹ Sa'ad Khalaf Al- Afnan, *Subul Al- Sa'ādah*, 1989.

²⁰ 'Ā'id bin 'Abdullah al-Qarnī, *Thalathūn Sababan lil Al- Sa'ādah*, (Beirut: Dār Ibn Hazim, 1996).

²¹ Salmān Naṣīf, *Sirru al- Sa'ādah*, (Beirut: Dār- al- Bashā'ir al-Islāmīyah, 1996).

1.7 METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

This research uses qualitative method. Primarily, researcher relies on library research which refers to primary and secondary sources available in the libraries regarding *al-Sa'ādah*. The researcher would compile the relevant Qur'ānic *āyāt*, *Āḥādith* and al-Ghazālī's writings as the primary references, and investigate the writings of famous classical and modern scholars, regarding al-Ghazālī's concept and techniques of *al-Sa'ādah* and analyze them critically. The researcher will also refer to the writings of some Western scholars on al-Ghazālī, relevant books and articles on the same issue.

1.8 CHAPTERIZATION OF RESEARCH

This research comprises of five Chapters as follows:

Chapter One : Introduction

Chapter Two : Al-Ghazālī's life and works.

Chapter Three : Al-Ghazālī's views on the concept and theories of *al-Sa'ādah*.

Chapter Four : Al- Ghazālī's techniques to achieve *Sa'ādah*.

Chapter Five : Conclusion

CHAPTER TWO

AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S LIFE AND WORKS

Al- Ghazālī is considered as one of the greatest thinkers and reformers in the history of Islam. He is regarded to be the reformer of the fifth century of the Islamic era²². In this chapter the researcher will discuss the biography of al-Ghazālī, his works and also influence on both Muslims and non-Muslims.

PART ONE: AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S BIOGRAPHY

His full name is Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad bin Muḥammad bin Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī al-Shāfi'ī. He received many titles such as *Sharf al- A'immaḥ*, *Hujjat al- Islam*, and *Zain al-Dīn*²³, while, his family title is al-Ghazālī²⁴. There are two theories regarding this title. First, it is said to be the name of a village in the district of Ṭūs in the province of Khurāsān in Persia²⁵. Second, it refers to his family weaving (*Ghazl*)²⁶business.

Al-Ghazālī was born on 450 AH/1058 AC in Ṭūs, a city in Khurāsān. His father was not a famous person but his grandfather was one of the prominent men of that age²⁷. Both his parents died when he was very young. He was left with his younger brother, Aḥmad. He and his younger brother then stayed with a poor *ṣūfi* mystic, a friend of his father²⁸. The *ṣūfi* supported the brothers for three to five years

²² Muhammad Abul Quasem, 11.

²³ Farid Jiha, *Al-Imām Abū Ḥāmid Al- Ghazālī Fī Dhikri Tis 'umi'ah Sanah 'ala waḥātīhi*, 29.

²⁴ Al-Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad bin Muḥammad, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-dīn*, translated from Arabic by Maulana Fazlul- Karim, (Lahore, Pakistan: Sind Sagar Academy, Vol. 1), 2.

²⁵ Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Edinburg, 1908/1026, vol.3, 326.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 3.

²⁸ Timothy Sullivan, "Al- Ghazali's Crisis of 1095", *History Review*, University Vermont, Vol 6, December 1994, retrieved online from: <<http://www.uvm.edu/~hag/histreview/vol6/sullivan.html>> (accessed 11 January 2009).

before he sent them to Nīshāpūr, for formal education at *madrasah*²⁹. Prior to that, they were sent to primary school and then to private *maktab*. Within the short period of time the boys managed to memorize the whole Qur’ān and began to learn Arabic³⁰. He also studied fiqh under Imam Razakānī’s supervision.

In 1070, al-Ghazālī left his native village for higher education. He and his brother went to Jurjān to enroll in a *madrasah*³¹. They studied Fiqh (jurisprudence) for about 7 years under Imām Abū Naṣr Ismā’īl’s supervision. Then, they returned to Tūs³².

He married in 1078, when he was just 20 years old. He had four children, three daughters and the son. Al-Ghazālī got the title “Abū Ḥāmid” because of his only son³³. Unfortunately, the only son died in his early age.

Later in 1080, he once again went to Nīshāpūr. He became student of Abul Ma’ālī al- Juwaynī known as Imām al-Ḥaramayn. He studied along with Harrāsī, Aḥmad bin Muḥammad together with other 400 students³⁴. Under al-Juwaynī’s supervision, they studied Uṣūl al-din, Uṣūl al-fiqh, Manṭiq, Hikmah and Falsafah. After the death of al- Juwaynī in 1085, he went to Baghdad where he was invited to the court of Nizām al- Mulk Tūsī³⁵. The vizier was highly impressed by al-Ghazālī’s scholarship. There are some of the prominent teachers of al-Ghazālī;³⁶

1) Imām Abū Ḥāmid Aḥmad bin Muḥammad al- Razakānī al-
Ṭūsī.(460AH/1067AD)

2) Abū Naṣir al-Ismā’īlī(668AH/1274 AD)

²⁹ Ira Lapidus, *A history of Islamic Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 165-166.

³⁰ Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-dīn*, 3.

³¹ *Madrasah*: an institution for religious education.

³² Margaret Smith, *Al-Ghazālī: The Mystic*, (London: n.p, 1944), 5.

³³ Sulāiman Dunia, *Al-Haqīqah fi Nazar Al-Ghazālī*, (Cairo, 1965), 22.

³⁴ Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm Al-dīn*, 3.

³⁵ The powerful vizier of the Seljuq sultans.

³⁶ Al-Shamī, Ṣolih Ahmad, *Al-Imam al-Ghazālī, Ḥujjat al-Islām wa Mujaddid al-mi’ah al-khāmisah*, (Damascus: Dar al-Qalam), 34.

- 3) Abū al-Ma‘ālī Juwaynī, prominently known as Imām al-Ḥaramayn(d. 478AH/1085AD)
- 4) Imām Al-Zāhid Abū ‘Alī al-faḍīl bin Muḥammad bin ‘Ali al- Farmīdī al-Ṭūsī(477AH/1083AD)

In 1091, he was appointed as a leading professor in the Nizāmiyyah of Baghdad by the vizier of Seljuq sultans³⁷. He used to lecture to more than 300 students. His participation in Islamic debates and discussions made him popular throughout the Muslim world.

The year 1095 was regarded as year of crisis for al- Ghazālī. It could be observed that there were two important parts of al-Ghazālī’s life; before crisis of 1095 and after the crisis; or the so called early period and later period of al-Ghazālī’s life. Abul Quasem writes: “The creative part of his life can be broadly divided into an early period, and a later period when he became a mystic.”³⁸

In the early period of al-Ghazālī’s life, endowed with an encyclopedic knowledge and saintly character, he extended his accomplishments over various fields of learning such as ethics, logic, dogmatic theology and Islamic jurisprudence. However, in his later period, he lays much emphasis on the *ṣūfī* teachings and started having *ṣūfī* lifestyle as he was trained in his early age by the friend of his father.

Al-Ghazālī’s crisis of 1095 has molded his life to a better person. This was a sudden revolution in his life. What exactly happened to al-Ghazālī? What caused the crisis which played great role in shaping his ideas and thought in later life? The following passages in the next subtopic would deal with these issues in some details.

³⁷ Watt, W.Montgomery, *The faith and Practice of al- Ghazālī*, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1953), 11.

³⁸ Muhammad Abul Quasem, 11.

He left Baghdad on the cause of going on pilgrimage. Then, he went back to Baghdad after 2 years to make arrangements for his family, fetch his children and his wives³⁹. He disposed of his wealth and adopted the *ṣūfī* lifestyle.

In 1096, he settled in Ṭūs to spend several years in seclusion. After 10 years, he ended his seclusion for a short lecturing period at the Nizāmiyyah of Nīshāpūr and later returned to Ṭūs until his death in December 1111⁴⁰.

Al- Ghazālī's Spiritual Crisis

Al-Ghazālī's stammer began suddenly in July 1095, while he was teaching at Nizāmiyyah *madrasah*. Four months later his stammer turned into muteness. Secretly, he left Baghdad in November the same year. In the next two years; he performed *hajj* and studied Sufism in Damascus. In June, 1097, he returned to Baghdad. There, his stammer underwent second resolution and regained his ability to speak again. He preached against materialistic excess and reminded his colleagues in Baghdad of the Last Day and Final Judgment of God⁴¹. The painful experience of Ghazālī's recovery is obvious to his colleagues. Al-Ghazālī said that his stammer was a sign of his religious confusion and grief in his heart⁴².

According to modern psychology, al- Ghazālī's stammer is called neurotic stammer. This stammer is caused by great emotional and mental trauma or cumulative stress⁴³. This type of stammer also begins unexpectedly. However, it is characterized

³⁹ Timothy Sullivan, "Al- Ghazālī's Crisis of 1095", *History Review*, University Vermont, Vol 6, December 1994, retrieved online from: <<http://www.uvm.edu/~hag/histreview/vol6/sullivan.html>> (accessed 11 January 2009).

⁴⁰ Watt, *The faith and Practice of al- Ghazālī*, 11.

⁴¹ Timothy Sullivan, "Al- Ghazālī's Crisis of 1095", *History Review*, University Vermont, Vol 6, December 1994, retrieved online from: <<http://www.uvm.edu/~hag/histreview/vol6/sullivan.html>> (accessed 11 January 2009).

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Barbara, Dominick A., *The Psychodynamics of Stuttering*, (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1982), 4.

by a gradual increase in the physical ailment if the psychological problem is not resolved.

Some psychoanalysts believe the subject has a need to stammer in order to express mental disorder or emotional conflict that cannot be expressed otherwise⁴⁴. Others state that the stammer is due to anxiety caused by coping with the world in which he lives and in his "chaotic attempts to adjust to other people."⁴⁵ It might also have caused by conflict between a powerful desire to speak and an equally powerful desire to be mute. If the subject has a message he feels it must be expressed but cannot be in his present environment, he also might stammer.

Common to all of these concepts is the element of emotional conflict. This conflict, it can be inferred, is the result of social experience or the individual's perception of that experience. There are two possible resolutions of this type of stammer; the emotional problem or conflict results in either recovery of vocal capacity or muteness⁴⁶.

Al-Ghazālī's stammer apparently was caused by the conflicts that he faced between the simple worship blended with *ṣūfī* rituals which he had originally known as a boy and the lifestyle that he led as an intellectual, the tension between philosophy and theology which he bridged on a more than intellectual basis and most importantly, the division between Islamic ideal of the state and the reality in which he lived and worked.

⁴⁴ Freud, Henry, *Psychotherapy and the Problem of Stuttering*, (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1966), 139.

⁴⁵ Barbara, *The Psychodynamics of Stuttering*, 4.

⁴⁶ Glauher, Peter, *Stuttering: A Psychoanalytic Approach*, (New York: Human Sciences press, 1982), 3.

Through his intellectual studies, al-Ghazālī discovered the differences between Islamic theology and philosophy. Al-Ghazālī first encountered formal theology at the *madrasah* in Nīshāpūr. There he was taught by the most excellent theologian of the age, al-Juwaynī⁴⁷. Because of this study he came to a period of skepticism in his life. He did not know how to identify the true knowledge. When he was a child, he relied on his teachers and parents' words for knowledge. Then he came to rely on his own sense of perception and did not accept others' words as the truth. Knowledge gained through senses was not necessarily the true knowledge. Then he realized that "knowledge did not come through proof or argument, but by a light which God cast into my breast; that light is key to most knowledge."⁴⁸

Therefore, al-Ghazālī questioned the rational basis for his faith. He realized that Islam rested on many assumptions which could not necessarily be rationally justified⁴⁹. The believers should not subject theology to rigorous philosophical or logical scrutiny with favorable results. Rather faith depends upon acceptance of God's revelation. Thus, reliance on God and faith resolved al-Ghazālī's first crisis. Al-Ghazālī gave theology a philosophical background. He introduced the practice of logic to the study of *shari'ah* and presented and explained the philosophers' deviations from the true path to the public⁵⁰.

As a result of his approach to theology and philosophy, al-Ghazālī gained fame as an intellectual. Because of this, he was invited to the court of Nizām al-Mulk, the

⁴⁷ Watt, W. Montgomery, *Muslim Intellectual*, (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1963), 21.

⁴⁸ Al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance from Error*, translated from Arabic by Richard Joseph MacCarthy (Louisville, KY : Fons Vitae, 1980), 30.

⁴⁹ Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, 52.

⁵⁰ Timothy Sullivan, "Al- Ghazali's Crisis of 1095", *History Review*, University Vermont, Vol 6, December 1994, retrieved online from: <<http://www.uvm.edu/~hag/histreview/vol6/sullivan.html>> (accessed 11 January 2009).

vizier of the Seljuq sultanate, located near Baghdad. Al-Ghazālī was then appointed as the chief professor at Nizāmiyyah *madrāsah* in Baghdad in 1091.

Despite his position, al-Ghazālī found new causes for anxiety. The tension that he felt at the court and later at the Nizāmiyyah was the result of the differences between the Islamic ideal of government, expressed in the Qur’ān and Hadīth, and the political reality in which he lived. The tension was further augmented by al-Ghazālī’s actual involvement in the political quilt that was Islam in the eleventh century⁵¹.

All of these tensions contributed to al-Ghazālī’s speech impediment in July, 1095. In his search for the truth of Islam, the one he knew would lead him to God; al-Ghazālī had tried many different paths. Al-Ghazālī firmly placed himself in the camp of the Sunnis. However, as we have seen, he was not satisfied with the options that the Sunnis offered in theology and philosophy. The answer to his spiritual dilemma was clear, as he states in *Deliverance from Error*. The only aspect of the religion he had not tried was Sufism⁵². Certainly he was familiar with Sufism on an intellectual basis both from his experiences as a boy and through his studies, but this was not enough. "What remained for me was not to be attained by oral instruction and study but only by immediate experience and by walking in the mystic way."⁵³ He had not "had real experiences" since he was a "man of words."⁵⁴

At the same time, al-Ghazālī was still drawn to the secular world of Sunni orthodoxy. He had matured in a society that valued worldly success, intelligence and power. He fully recognized that his present secular way of life could lead him to

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance from Error*, 26.

⁵³ Ibid., 55.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

damnation. Spiritually, the choice was clear. However, the choice to abandon his career in Baghdad did not come easily. Finally, al-Ghazālī decided to leave Baghdad and its corrupt environments in November 1095, which resulted to the second and final resolve of his speech problem- the immediate cessation of the stammer⁵⁵.

Al-Ghazālī left his position, family, and fortune to wander throughout southwest Asia. He made *ḥajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) thereby fulfilling one of the major prescriptions of the religion and perhaps partially alleviating his guilty conscience⁵⁶. He also visited a *ṣūfī* teacher in Damascus and wandered in Jerusalem. During this time, he lived as an ascetic in possession of only the clothes on his back, a radical departure from his earlier lifestyle. In part, this was a return to the religion of his youth. He had finally embraced what he had only known as words. He then returned to Baghdad in June, 1097. However, his intention upon his return was not to begin teaching at Nizāmiyyah. Rather he returned to fetch his children and presumably his wife. There he preached against the worldliness and iniquity he saw, activities in which he had participated only two short years before. Sometime around 1099 he left Baghdad and returned to Nīshāpūr, where he had first studied formally. While there he established a religious institute and lived as an ascetic.⁵⁷

Then in July 1106, a peculiar thing happened. He returned to teach at the Nīshāpūr *madrasah*. Al-Ghazālī still valued the essential precepts of the orthodox Sunnis. He did not reject these precepts at Baghdad. Rather he rejected the worldliness that had soiled Islam and left to search for spiritual meaning. Al-Ghazālī found his

⁵⁵ Timothy Sullivan, "Al- Ghazali's Crisis of 1095", *History Review*, University Vermont, Vol 6, December 1994, retrieved online from: <<http://www.uvm.edu/~hag/histreview/vol6/sullivan.html>> (accessed 11 January 2009).

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, 143-151.