

The Influence of Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali's Thought on the Islamic Maghreb through His Book 'Ihya Ulum al-Din'

تأثيرات فكر أبي حامد الغزالي على بلاد المغرب الإسلامي من خلال كتابه الأحياء

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Abstract :

"The Revival of the Religious Sciences" is one of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali's most influential works, profoundly shaping religious and social thought in the Islamic West. Al-Ghazali proposed a reformist project that integrated jurisprudence with Sufism and theory with practice—a synthesis that resonated strongly in the Maghrebi context during periods of intellectual and political transformation. In Morocco and al-Andalus, zawiyas and educational institutions adopted *Ihya'* to orient religious discourse toward ethical and spiritual dimensions. The book deeply influenced many Maghrebi scholars, who engaged in teaching, explaining, and abridging it for broader accessibility. Despite opposition from rigid juristic circles, including bans and book burnings, its impact continued to grow. Al-Ghazali's thought thus became an integral part of the religious and cultural landscape of the Islamic West, inspiring various Sufi movements and shaping intellectual life.

Keywords: *Ihya'*, Influences, Islamic West, Sufism

الملخص

يُعد كتاب «إحياء علوم الدين» أحد أبرز أعمال أبي حامد الغزالي، والذي أثر بعمق في الفكر الديني والاجتماعي في المغرب الإسلامي. فقد قدّم الغزالي مشروعاً روحياً وفكرياً يهدف إلى إصلاح الدين عبر الجمع بين الفقه والتصوف، وبين النظرية والممارسة—وهو تركيب لاقى صدًى قوياً في السياق المغاربي الذي كان يشهد تحولات فكرية وسياسية كبيرة. في المغرب والأندلس، اعتمدت الزوايا والمؤسسات التعليمية الإحياء لتوجيه الخطاب الديني نحو الأبعاد الأخلاقية والروحية. وقد كان للكتاب تأثير عميق في عدد كبير من علماء المغرب، الذين انصرفوا إلى شرحه وتدريسه واختصاره لتقريبه من عامة الناس. ورغم هذا القبول الواسع، فقد واجه الكتاب معارضة من بعض الدوائر الفقهية المتشددة التي رأت في محتواه تهديداً لمصالحها السياسية. وقد أدّت هذه المعارضة في بعض الأحيان إلى حظر الكتاب أو إحراقه. غير أنّ تلك الاعتراضات لم تمنع استمرارية تأثيره وانتشاره، بل زادت الاهتمام به. وهكذا أصبح فكر الغزالي—المتجسّد في إحياء علوم الدين—جزءاً أساسياً من النسيج الديني والثقافي للمغرب الإسلامي، متجسّداً في مختلف الحركات الصوفية التي استمدّت رؤيتها منه.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإحياء، التأثيرات، المغرب الإسلامي، التصوف

● Introduction

During the first five centuries of the Hijri calendar, the Islamic world witnessed the emergence of prominent scholars in various fields of knowledge, including philosophy, jurisprudence, Sufism, literature, and others. Such was their impact that it became customary to designate a leading scholar at the head of every Hijri century as the "Renewer" (Mujaddid), in reference to the saying of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

"Indeed, Allah will send to this nation at the head of every hundred years someone who will renew its religion."

As a result, it was decided that the Renewer of the fifth century would be Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, due to his vast knowledge and great influence on his era, as well as on later periods across various branches of knowledge. His intellectual contributions offer researchers a wide scope for exploration—whether ethical, jurisprudential, philosophical, or Sufi. It was this latter aspect, Sufism, that played a decisive role in shaping his legacy, crowned by his seminal work *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences), which gained widespread fame and circulation among the societies of the Eastern Islamic world during the fifth Hijri century (eleventh century CE).

Eventually, this book made its way to the Maghreb and Andalusian regions—the Western Islamic world—then governed by the Almoravid dynasty, a regime that upheld the authority of jurists and their dominance over every detail of state affairs. This control culminated in the book's condemnation and burning by the same authority, along with the prohibition of its circulation among the people.

This study, entitled "Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali's *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* and Its Influence on the Western Islamic World," was motivated by the need to delve deeper into the circumstances of this event and to explore the true extent of the book's influence on the region. Previous studies that addressed Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali and his thought have mostly focused on his impact in the Eastern Islamic world, almost ignoring his presence and role in the Maghreb.

For this reason, I deemed it necessary to revisit the topic, re-examine it with a new perspective, and study it through a contemporary approach, based on the following central research question:

How did Imam Al-Ghazali's *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* influence the intellectual and political reality of the Western Islamic world?

This main question led to several sub-questions to facilitate the study's scope, such as:

1. What were the conditions under which Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali's thought emerged?
2. How did the contents of *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* relate to the reality of the Islamic world?
3. How was *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* received in the Western Islamic world, and what were the different reactions to its ideas?

4. To what extent did Al-Ghazali's revivalist thought persist in the Western Islamic world, especially concerning the political conditions of the Maghreb in the 5th and 6th Hijri centuries (11th and 12th centuries CE)?

The methodology applied in this study is the historical, analytical, and descriptive approach, supplemented by comparative analysis where necessary. The nature of the topic and the diversity of its chapters required a combination of both descriptive-analytical and comparative methods.

1.Introducing Al-Ghazali and His Book Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din:

Most sources confirmed that¹His full name is Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad Al-Ghazali, known by his kunya (patronymic) as "Abu Hamid" and his title as "Zain al-

¹Ibn Asakir Al-Dimashqi, *Tabyin Kadhīb Al-Muftari fima Nusiba ila Al-Imam Abi Al-Hasan Al-Ash'ari*, Damascus: Al-Tawfiq Press, 1347 AH, p. 292.

Abu Al-Faraj Abdul Rahman Ibn Al-Jawzi, *Al-Muntazam fi Tarikh Al-Muluk wa Al-Umam*, 1st ed., Ottoman Encyclopedia Press, 1359 AH, vol. 8, p. 168.

Abu 'Amr Taqi Al-Din Ibn Al-Salah, *Tabaqat Al-Fuqaha' Al-Shafi'iyya*, edited by Muhyiddin Najeeb, 1st ed., Dar Al-Basha'ir Al-Islamiyya, 1987, vol. 1, p. 548.

Sibt Ibn Al-Jawzi, *Mir'at Al-Zaman fi Tarikh Al-A'yan*, edited by Masqar Salem Al-Ghamidi, Mecca: Institute of Scientific Research, 1987, vol. 2, p. 548.

Abu Al-'Abbas Shams Al-Din Ibn Khallikan, *Wafayat Al-A'yan wa Anba' Abna' Al-Zaman*, edited by Ihsan Abbas, Beirut: Dar Sader, vol. 4, p. 216.

Shams Al-Din Al-Dhahabi, *Siyar A'lam Al-Nubala'*, edited by Shu'ayb Al-Arna'ut, 1st ed., Beirut: Al-Risala Foundation, 1984, vol. 19, p. 323.

Abu Muhammad Abdullah Al-Yafi'i, *Mir'at Al-Jinan wa 'Ibrat Al-Yaqzan fi Ma'rifat Ma Yu'tabar min Hawadith Al-Zaman*, 1st ed., Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmiyya, 1977, vol. 3, p. 136.

Taj Al-Din Abu Nasr Al-Subki, *Tabaqat Al-Shafi'iyya*, edited by Abdul Fattah Muhammad Al-Hilu and Mahmoud Muhammad Al-Tanakhi, 1st ed., 'Isa Al-Halabi Press & Partners, 1968, vol. 6, p. 694.

'Imad Al-Din Abu Al-Fida' Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidaya wa Al-Nihaya*, edited by Abdullah ibn Abdul Mohsin Al-Turki, 1st ed., Dar Hijr for Printing and Publishing, 1998, vol. 6/1, p. 213.

Abu Bakr Ibn Al-Qadi Shahbah, *Tabaqat Al-Shafi'iyya*, edited by Hafiz Abdul 'Alim Khan, 1st ed., Beirut: 'Alam Al-Kutub, 1407 AH, vol. 1, p. 293.

Ahmad ibn Mustafa Taskopri Zadah, *Miftah Al-Sa'ada wa 'Unwan Ahl Al-Siyada*, Manuscript, King Saud University Library, Riyadh, No. 2016, folio 4 (Al-Mustafa Electronic Library).

Salah Al-Din Khalil ibn Aybak Al-Safadi, *Al-Wafi bil-Wafayat*, 2nd ed., Franz Steiner Publishing House, 1962, vol. 1, p. 274.

Abu Bakr Ibn Hidayat Allah Al-Husayni, *Tabaqat Al-Shafi'iyya*, edited by 'Adil Nuwaihith, 3rd ed., Dar Al-Afaq Al-Jadida, 1982, p. 192–193.

Abdul Ra'uf Al-Munawi, *Al-Kawakib Al-Durriyya fi Tarajim Al-Sada Al-Sufiyya*, edited by Abdul Hamid Saleh Hamdan, Egypt: Al-Azhariyya Library for Heritage, vol. 1, p. 703–704.

Ismail Pasha Al-Baghdadi, *Hadiyyat Al-'Arifin: Asma' Al-Mu'allifin wa Athar Al-Musannifin*, Istanbul: Al-Ma'arif Al-Jalila Press, 1955, vol. 2, p. 79.

Din". He was born in 450 AH / 1058 CE in Tus². He is commonly referred to as "Al-Ghazali." Ibn Al-Athir mentions in his book Al-Lubab: "Al-Ghazali—with a fatha on the 'ayn and a shadda on the zay, followed by an alif and then a lam—I believe this nisba (attribution) refers to 'ghazal' (spinning yarn), as was customary among the people of Jurjan and Khwarazm. I also heard someone say that it is pronounced lightly (without shadda), referring to Ghazala, a village near Tus³

1.1 Scholarly Upbringing:

The academic life of Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali witnessed many stages that marked decisive turning points in his educational journey. He studied aspects of jurisprudence in Tus under Ahmad ibn Muhammad Al-Radhkani⁴. Later, he traveled to Jurjan⁵, where he studied under Imam Abu Nasr Al-Isma'ili⁶ and compiled his ta'liqa (notes and commentaries).

On his return journey to Tus, he was attacked by a band of highway robbers who stole everything he possessed. This incident motivated him to memorize all he had learned, especially after the leader of the band mocked him, saying: "How can you claim to possess knowledge when we have taken all your books from you? You are now stripped of your learning."

Margaret Smith, *Al-Ghazali the Mystic*, Hijra International Publisher, 1983, p. 9.

²tus is a city in Khorasan, located approximately ten parasangs (about 55,987 meters) from Nishapur. It comprises two towns: one called Tabaran and the other Nuqan.

Reference: Abu Abdullah Yaqut ibn Abdullah Al-Hamawi, *Mu'jam Al-Buldan* (Geographical Dictionary), Beirut: Dar Al-Fikr, 1977, vol. 4, p. 49.

The conversion from parasang to meter throughout this research is based on: Muhammad Rawas Qal'aji, *Dictionary of the Language of Jurists: Arabic-English-French*, 3rd ed., Beirut: Dar Al-Nafa'is, 2011, p. 311.

³ Abu Al-Hasan Ali ibn Abi Al-Karam Al-Shaybani (Ibn Al-Athir), *Al-Lubab fi Tahdhib Al-Ansab*, Beirut: Dar Sader, 1980, vol. 2, p. 379

⁴ Al-Subki, *Tabaqat Al-Shafi'iyya*, previously cited source, vol. 6, p. 195. Tashkubri Zadah, *Miftah Al-Sa'ada*, previously cited manuscript, folio 4. Al-Yafi'i, *Mir'at Al-Jinan*, previously cited source, p. 195. Ibn Asakir, *Tabyin Kadhib Al-Muftari*, previously cited source, p. 291. Abu Al-Hasan Abdul Ghafir Isma'il, *Al-Mukhtasar min Al-Siyah li-Tarikh Nishapur*, summarized by Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn Al-Azhar Al-Sarifini, edited by Muhammad Ahmad Abdul Aziz, 1st ed., Dar Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmiyya, 1989, p. 93.

⁵ Jurjan (with damma on the first letter and ending with a nun) is a great city located between Tabaristan and Khorasan. Al-Hamawi, *Mu'jam Al-Buldan*, previously cited source, p. 119.

⁶ Al-Subki, *Tabaqat Al-Shafi'iyya*, previously cited source, vol. 6, p. 195. Ibn Hidayat, *Tabaqat Al-Shafi'iyya*, previously cited source, p. 193.

After much effort, Al-Ghazali managed to recover his belongings but reflected: "This man has spoken words of truth—God made him utter them to guide me. When I returned to Tus, I devoted myself for three years to memorizing everything I had written."⁷

Al-Ghazali's quest for knowledge did not stop there. He intensified his efforts, and his next destination was Nishapur⁸, where he studied under Imam Abu Al-Ma'ali Al-Juwayni (d. 478 AH / 1085 CE), known as "Imam of the Two Sanctuaries." He pursued his studies with tireless diligence until he surpassed his peers, completing his education in a short period and authoring his work titled *Al-Mankhul*. Regarding this book, his teacher Al-Juwayni remarked: "You have buried me alive—could you not have waited until I was dead?"⁹

After the death of Imam Al-Haramayn (478 AH / 1085 CE), Al-Ghazali decided to leave Nishapur and head to the Seljuk court, where he met the vizier Nizam Al-Mulk¹⁰. He attended his scholarly gatherings, which attracted prominent scholars and eloquent preachers. Many debates were held in the vizier's presence, in which Al-Ghazali repeatedly prevailed, drawing the minister's attention and admiration. The vizier honored him with the title "Zain al-Din" (The Ornament of the Faith) and "Sharaf al-A'imma"¹¹ (The Honor of the Imams). He then entrusted him with the teaching post at the Nizamiyya of Baghdad, which Al-Ghazali reached in Jumada Al-Awwal, 484 AH / 1091 CE. There, he spread knowledge among his students, whose number reached three hundred, including prominent imams such as Ibn 'Aqil¹² and Abu Al-Khattab¹³. These scholars were impressed by his eloquence and cited his words in their works. His reputation extended beyond the scholarly circles to the general public in Iraq.

⁷ Al-Subki, same source, vol. 6, p. 195. Tashkubri Zadah, *Miftah Al-Sa'ada*, previously cited manuscript, folio 4. Abdul Rahim, *Al-Ghazali's Thought*, previously cited reference, p. 21

⁸ Nishapur (with fatha on the first letter, commonly pronounced as Nasha), is a great city that was opened during the caliphate of 'Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) in 13 AH, and some say during the caliphate of 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab. Al-Hamawi, *Mu'jam Al-Buldan*, previously cited source, vol. 5, p. 331

⁹ Ibn Al-Jawzi, *Al-Muntazam*, previously cited source, vol. 8, pp. 168–169. Al-Subki, *Tabaqat Al-Shafi'iyya*, previously cited source, vol. 6, p. 197. Al-Yafi'i, *Mir'at Al-Jinan*, previously cited source, p. 136. Sibṭ Ibn Al-Jawzi, *Mir'at Al-Zaman*, previously cited source, p. 549

¹⁰ Nizam Al-Mulk (d. 485 AH / 1092 CE): His full name is Abu Ali Al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Ishaq. He studied Hadith and jurisprudence and sought the court of Dawud ibn Mikail ibn Seljuk, the father of Sultan Alp Arslan, under whom he served as vizier for ten years, and later for Alp Arslan's son, Malik Shah. He was known for the grandeur of his court and his extensive knowledge of jurisprudence. He was assassinated by the Batiniyya sect. Source: Ibn Khallikan, *Wafayat Al-A'yan*, previously cited, vol. 12, p. 169

¹¹ Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidaya wa Al-Nihaya*, previously cited, vol. 12, p. 169.

¹² Ibn 'Aqil (431–513 AH): 'Ali ibn 'Aqil ibn Muhammad, known as Abu Al-Wafa', was the leading Hanbali scholar in Baghdad. He authored numerous works. Same source, vol. 21, p. 228.

¹³ Abu Al-Khattab (d. 510 AH): His full name is Mahfuz ibn Ahmad Al-Kaludhani Al-Azji, one of the prominent figures of the Hanbali school with many authored works.

Source: Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn 'Uthman Al-Dhahabi, *Tadhkirat Al-Huffaz*, edited by Zakariya 'Umayrat, 1st ed., Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmiyya, 1998, vol. 4, p. 40

His stay in Baghdad lasted four years until 488 AH / 1095 CE¹⁴. His contemporary, Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali's biographer Abdul Ghafir, said: "Everyone admired Al-Ghazali's teaching and debates; none equaled him. After becoming the Imam of Khorasan, he became the Imam of Iraq. He then turned his attention to the science of Usul (principles of jurisprudence), which he had mastered, producing new works in it and renewing the jurisprudential school, among other achievements."¹⁵

He traveled to Jerusalem, visited Hebron, and then performed the pilgrimage (Hajj) before returning to his birthplace, where he remained in seclusion, devoting himself to the purification of the heart and the remembrance of God. This state of retreat and solitude for the purpose of self-discipline lasted for ten years¹⁶, during which he consistently practiced isolation and spiritual struggle.

After this period, he resumed teaching at the Nizamiyya of Nishapur in 499 AH / 1105 CE¹⁷, responding to the request of Fakhr Al-Mulk Jamal Al-Shuhada'¹⁸. However, his purpose for returning to teaching had changed, as he himself stated: "In the past, I used to spread knowledge that brought prestige and status, and that was my intention and aim. But now, I call to the knowledge by which prestige is abandoned... I ask Him (God) to reform me first, then reform others through me; to guide me first, then guide others by me; to show me the truth as truth and grant me the following of it; and to show me falsehood as falsehood and grant me the avoidance of it."¹⁹

¹⁴ Ibn Asakir, *Tabyin Kadhib Al-Muftari*, previously cited source, p. 292. Al-Subki, *Tabaqat Al-Shafi'iyya*, previously cited source, vol. 6, pp. 196–197. Ibn Al-Jawzi, *Al-Muntazam*, previously cited source, vol. 8, p. 169. Sibṭ Ibn Al-Jawzi, *Mir'at Al-Zaman*, previously cited source, p. 549. Farid Juha, *Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali: His Life, Works, Scholars' Opinions on Him, and His Place in the History of Civilization*, 1st ed., Dar Tlas for Studies, Translation and Publishing, 1986, p. 126 (quoted from the French version in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Macdonald, 1st ed., 1927, vol. 2, p. 154

¹⁵ Abdul Ghafir authored *Kitab Al-Siyāq fi Tarikh Nishapur*, a lost work which contained the first biography of Al-Ghazali; the surviving fragments were transmitted by Ibn Asakir in *Tabyin Kadhib Al-Muftari*, previously cited source, p. 292.

¹⁶ Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, *Al-Munqidh min Al-Dalal wa Al-Mawasil ila Dhi Al-'Izza wa Al-Jalal*, edited by Jamil Saliba and Kamil 'Ayyad, Beirut: Dar Al-Andalus, p137–139

¹⁷ Same source, p. 159

¹⁸ Fakhr Al-Mulk (d. 500 AH): Abu Al-Muzaffar 'Ali ibn Nizam Al-Mulk, the eldest of his sons. In 488 AH / 1095 CE, he was appointed vizier to Sultan Barkiyaruq and later to King Sanjar ibn Malik Shah. He was assassinated by a Batini assassin. Source: Abu Al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Abi Al-Karam Al-Shaybani (Ibn Al-Athir), *Al-Kamil fi Al-Tarikh*, 4th ed., Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmiyya, vol. 9, p. 100

¹⁹ Al-Ghazali, same source, p. 160.

As for his death²⁰, after returning to teach briefly at the Nizamiyya of Nishapur in 499 AH / 1105 CE, as previously mentioned, he went back to his hometown of Tus. There, he divided his time between completing readings of the Qur'an and sitting with the spiritual masters in the local khanqahs (Sufi lodges).

He continued teaching Sufism and imparting knowledge to his students at his school until he passed away on Monday, 14th Jumada Al-Akhirah in the year 505 AH / 1111 CE in Tus, where he was also buried.²¹

1.2 Study of the Book *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*:

Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali authored numerous works in various fields of knowledge. However, none of his writings attained the widespread popularity and circulation that *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences) enjoyed. Copies of this book can be found, without exaggeration, in nearly every major library around the world²². Moreover, it is considered his most debated and controversial work. This raises a fundamental question: What is the reason behind its extraordinary fame? Is it the content of the texts, the method of classification, or are there other factors that contributed to its prominence?

Imam Al-Ghazali composed *Ihya'* after leaving Baghdad in 488 AH / 1095 CE, during his period of seclusion. Ibn Al-Jawzi states: "He began writing *Ihya'* 'Ulum al-Din in Jerusalem and completed it in Damascus."²³

Similarly, Ibn Asakir reports:

"He entered Syria and resided there for nearly ten years, visiting sacred sites and composing his renowned works, unmatched by others—such as *Ihya'* 'Ulum al-Din."²⁴

Thus, the book was written primarily between Jerusalem and Damascus, according to these accounts. For greater precision regarding the time of its composition, as previously mentioned²⁵, Abu Bakr ibn Al-Arabi met Al-Ghazali in Baghdad in 490 AH / 1097 CE and acquired a copy of

²⁰His brother Ahmad said: "On Monday at dawn, my brother Abu Hamid performed ablution, prayed, and said: 'Bring me the shroud.' He took it, kissed it, and placed it over his eyes, saying: 'Obedience and readiness to meet the King (Allah).' Then he stretched out his legs, faced the Qibla, and passed away. Source: Ibn Al-Jawzi, Abdul Rahman ibn 'Ali ibn Muhammad Abu Al-Faraj, *Al-Thabat 'Inda Al-Mamat*, edited by Abdullah Al-Laithi Al-Ansari, 1st ed., Beirut: Al-Kutub Al-Thaqafiyya Foundation, pp. 177–178.

²¹Ibn Al-Jawzi, *Al-Muntazam*, previously cited source, vol. 8, p. 170. Al-Subki, *Tabaqat Al-Shafi'iyya*, previously cited source, vol. 6, p. 201. Abu Al-Fida', *Al-Mukhtasar*, previously cited source, p. 225

²²For further details on the manuscripts of *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* preserved in the world's most famous libraries, see: Abdul Rahman Badawi, *Mu'allafat Al-Ghazali*, previously cited reference, pp. 98–111

²³Ibn Al-Jawzi, *Al-Muntazam*, previously cited source, vol. 8, p. 169

²⁴Ibn Asakir, *Tabyin Kadhib Al-Muftari*, previously cited source, p. 293.

²⁵Ibn Al-'Arabi, *Al-'Awassim min Al-Qawassim*, previously cited source, p. 24.

Ihya' from him. This indicates that the book was completed between 488 AH and 489 AH at the latest.

Al-Ghazali himself explains his motivation for writing *Ihya'* as follows: "The guides on the path are the scholars, the heirs of the prophets, yet they have become scarce in this age; only pretenders remain. Most of them have been overtaken by Satan, turning good into evil and evil into good, until the true knowledge of religion has been effaced... They have deceived the people into believing that religious knowledge is limited to issuing fatwas or adjudicating disputes.

"...which judges use to settle disputes among the quarrelsome masses, or elaborate rhymes that preachers employ to captivate the common people. As for the knowledge of the path to the Hereafter and the way of the righteous predecessors... this has become concealed from creation and forgotten altogether. Since this represents a grave deficiency in the religion and a serious affliction, I deemed it essential to engage in composing this book to revive the sciences of religion and reveal the methods of the early imams..."²⁶

From Al-Ghazali's own words, it becomes clear that the main motive behind authoring *Ihya'* 'Ulum al-Din was to revive spiritual knowledge in accordance with the Sufi²⁷ tradition. He structured the book into four quarters:

The Quarter of Worship ('Ibadat):

This section deals with the inner secrets, etiquettes, meanings, and fine details of religious practices. It includes ten books:

The Book of Knowledge, The Book of the Foundations of Belief, The Book of the Secrets of Purity, The Book of the Secrets of Prayer, The Book of the Secrets of Zakat, The Book of the Secrets of Fasting, The Book of the Secrets of Hajj, The Book of the

²⁶ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, previously cited source, vol. 1, p. 7

²⁷ Ibn Al-Jawzi, *Al-Muntazam*, previously cited source, vol. 8, p. 169. Abdul Wahhab Farhat, "Al-Ghazali and His Sufism," *Al-Amir Abdul Qadir Journal of Islamic Sciences*, no. 22, 2006, p. 66. Abdul Amir Al-A'sam, *The Philosopher Al-Ghazali*, previously cited source, p. 85.

Etiquette of Qur'an Recitation. The Book of Remembrance and Supplication
The Book of the Order of Litanies at Specific Times²⁸

The Quarter of Customs ('Adat):

This part focuses on the secrets and subtleties of daily social interactions and the fine points of their Sunnah. It includes ten books:

The Book of the Etiquette of Eating. The Book of the Etiquette of Marriage. The Book of the Ethics of Earning a Living. The Book of Lawful and Unlawful Matters
The Book of the Etiquette of Companionship and Social Relations with Various Groups. The Book of Listening and Ecstasy. The Book of Seclusion. The Book of Travel Etiquette. The Book of Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil. The Book of the Etiquette of Living and the Morals of Prophethood²⁹

The Quarter of Destructive Vices (Muhlikat):

This part discusses every blameworthy trait that the Qur'an commands to be removed, along with the purification of the soul from them and cleansing of the heart. It also contains ten books:

The Book of the Marvels of the Heart. The Book of Disciplining the Soul. The Books on the Vices of the Two Appetites: the Appetites of the Stomach and the Private Parts

The Book on the Vices of the Tongue. The Book on the Vices of Anger, Hatred, and Envy. The Book on the Condemnation of the World. The Book on the Condemnation of Wealth and Miserliness. The Book on the Condemnation of Prestige and Hypocrisy

The Book on the Condemnation of Pride and Conceit. The Book on the Condemnation of Self-Deception

The Quarter of Saving Virtues (Munjiat):

This part discusses every praiseworthy characteristic and desirable quality among the traits of the righteous and the truthful, which bring the servant closer to the Creator. It also includes ten books:

The Book of Repentance. The Book of Patience and Gratitude. The Book of Fear and Hope. The Book of Poverty and Asceticism. The Book of Divine Unity and Trust in God. The Book of Love, Longing, Intimacy, and Contentment. The Book of Intention,

²⁸ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, previously cited source, vol. 1, p. 8.

²⁹ Same source, p. 8

Truthfulness, and Sincerity. The Book of Vigilance and Self-Examination. The Book of Meditation. The Book of the Remembrance of Death³⁰

The Reasons Behind Al-Ghazali's Division of the Book into Four Quarters:

1. The knowledge that directs one towards the Hereafter is divided into two types: 'ilm al-mu'amala (knowledge of practice) and 'ilm al-mukashafa (knowledge of unveiling). The latter aims merely at uncovering truths, while the former not only involves unveiling but also requires practical implementation—this is the type of knowledge intended in this book. This practical knowledge itself is further divided into the outward knowledge (related to the actions of the body) and the inward knowledge (related to the actions of the heart). What pertains to the limbs is either a 'ibadah (act of worship) or an 'adah (custom), while the heart's actions are either praiseworthy (saving virtues) or blameworthy (destructive vices). Thus, the complete system comprises four sections: worship, customs, saving virtues, and destructive vices.³¹
2. The second reason is Al-Ghazali's awareness of the genuine desire among students of jurisprudence (fiqh). Thus, he shaped the book in a manner resembling jurisprudential texts as a gentle means of appealing to their hearts. Furthermore, his unique approach begins each discussion on customs or virtues by first citing their commendation in Qur'anic verses, then supporting them with prophetic traditions (hadith), followed by narrations and moral stories from historical reports.³²

³⁰ Al-Ghazali, same source, vol. 1, p. 8.

³¹ Same source, vol. 1, p. 9.

³² Same source, vol. 1, p. 9.

2.The Introduction of Ihya' to the Islamic Maghreb and the Incident of Its Burning

2.1The Introduction of the Book of Revival into the Islamic Maghreb

The book Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din by Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali entered the Islamic Maghreb for the first time through Abu Bakr ibn Al-'Arabi, according to the most reliable reports. However, the region was not limited to his copy alone; every Maghrebi scholar who had met Al-Ghazali in the East brought back their own copy after completing their scholarly journey. For example, Salih ibn Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Harazim, who had also met Al-Ghazali in Jerusalem, as previously mentioned, returned to his hometown of Fez after his journey and worked to spread the knowledge he had acquired from Hujjat al-Islam (Al-Ghazali). It is certain that Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din was among the works he taught³³.

Likewise, Abu Bakr ibn Al-'Arabi also taught Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din to a large group of students³⁴ after completing his journey in 495 AH / 1101 CE.³⁵

Thus, all those who brought Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din to the Maghreb after meeting Al-Ghazali in the East began teaching it to students of knowledge upon their return, which facilitated its spread within educational circles beyond Andalusia and the Far Maghreb, eventually reaching the Central Maghreb at the end of the 5th century AH (11th century CE) and the beginning of the 6th century AH (12th century CE), through two notable Sufi figures³⁶.

The first of these was Abu Al-Fadl Yusuf ibn Muhammad ibn Yusuf (d. 513 AH / 1115 CE), known as Ibn Al-Nahwi from Qal'at Bani Hammad³⁷, who was among those who paid great attention to and cared deeply for Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din³⁸.

³³ Ibn Al-Zayyat. Yusuf ibn Yahya Al-Tadili, *Al-Tashawwuf ila Rijal al-Tasawwuf wa Akhbar Abi Al-'Abbas Al-Subti*, edited by Ahmed Al-Tawfiq, 2nd ed., Rabat: Publications of the Faculty of Arts, 1997, Ibrahim Al-Qadiri Boutchich, Morocco and Andalusia in the Almoravid Era: Society, Mentalities, Saints, 1st ed., Beirut: Dar Al-Taliaa, 1993, p. 129

³⁴ Tahir Bounabi, *Sufism in Algeria during the 6th and 7th Hijri Centuries / 12th–13th CE: Its Origins, Currents, and its Social, Cultural, and Political Role*, Ain M'lila: Dar Al-Huda for Printing and Publishing, p. 63

³⁵ ʿĀlibī, 'Ammār. *The Theological Views of Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi and His Critique of Greek Philosophy*, Algeria: National Publishing and Distribution Company. p 290

³⁶ Tahir Bounabi, *Sufism in Algeria*, same reference, p. 63.

³⁷ Ibn Al-Zayyat, *Al-Tashawwuf*, previously cited source, p. 95.

³⁸ Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ahmad (Ibn Maryam), *Al-Bustan fi Dhikr Al-Awliya' wa Al-'Ulama' bi-Tlemcen*, reviewed by Muhammad ibn Abi Shanab, Algiers: Al-Thaalibiya Press, 1908, p. 299.

The second was Abu Muhammad 'Abd Al-Salam Al-Tunisi (d. 512 AH / 1114 CE), originally from Tunisia, who settled in Tlemcen where he established the well-known ribat, Ribat Al-Tunisi. There he encouraged the reading of *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* in the early 6th century AH / 12th century CE, thereby elevating the intellectual atmosphere of Tlemcen and emphasizing the importance and value of the book's Sufi ideas.³⁹

Moreover, the period of the 5th century AH (11th century CE) and the early 6th century AH (12th century CE) witnessed a migration of ascetics and Sufis from Tlemcen and Bejaia to Andalusia. Among them were the righteous scholar Yusuf ibn 'Ali ibn Ja'far Al-Tilmisani and the jurist and judge of Bejaia, Abu Muhammad 'Abdullah ibn Hajjaj ibn Yusuf⁴⁰, who traveled to Seville to study *Ihya'* under Abu Bakr ibn Al-'Arabi (d. 543 AH / 1148 CE)⁴¹.

2.2 The Incident of Burning Al-Ghazali's *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*:

As previously mentioned, the book *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* by Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali entered the Maghreb and Andalusia, where it was studied and taught. However, three years after the death of Yusuf ibn Tashfin, the ruler of the Almoravid state—during the reign of his son 'Ali in 503 AH / 1109 CE—the attitude towards the book shifted from acceptance and appreciation to confiscation and burning.

The motives behind this hostile stance toward *Ihya'* vary across sources. Some, like Ibn Al-Qattan and⁴² Ibn 'Adhari, recount the event without explaining its cause. The author of *Al-Hulal Al-Mawshiyya* attributes the burning to "matters they disapproved of in *Ihya'*," without detailing what these were⁴³. Conversely, Ibn Tumlus, in his *Madkhal ila Sina'at Al-Mantiq*, discusses the reasoning, stating:

"It contained the matters of the Sufis and other sects whom the people of Andalusia were

³⁹ Tahir Bounabi, *Sufism in Algeria*, previously cited reference, p. 65.

⁴⁰ Ahmad ibn Ahmad ibn 'Abdullah, Abu Al-'Abbas Al-Ghubrini, *'Unwan Al-Daraya fi man 'urifa min Al-'Ulama' fi Al-Mi'a Al-Sabi'a bi-Bijaya*, edited by 'Adil Nuwaihith, 2nd ed., Beirut: Dar Al-Afaq Al-Jadida Publications, 1979, p. 241

⁴¹ Tahir Bounabi, *Sufism in Algeria*, same source, p. 67.

⁴² Ibn al-Qattān, Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Malik al-Kattāmī. *The String of Pearls in the Arrangement of Past Events*, ed. Maḥmūd 'Alī Makkī, 1st ed., Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1990. p. 70.

⁴³ Anonymous, *Al-Hulal Al-Mawshiyya*, previously cited source, p. 104

unaccustomed to debate or converse with; their minds were far from accepting it, and they said: 'If there is any disbelief and heresy in the world, then it is what is found in Al-Ghazali's books.'⁴⁴

Al-Marrakushi links the incident to the jurists' general hatred of kalam (theological discourse) and their disdain for it⁴⁵, while the author of *Buyutat Fas* argues that upon its arrival in Cordoba, the jurists objected to the book because it contained fabricated hadiths with no authentic origin⁴⁶. Ibn Abi Dinar suggests that the scholars of the Lamtuna tribe rejected the book because of their lack of knowledge in *usul al-fiqh* (the principles of jurisprudence), and their rejection led them to the extreme of burning it⁴⁷.

This divergence of opinion among medieval sources regarding the reasons and motives for the burning also appears in modern studies, which offer various interpretations:

1. The first opinion argues that the incident was due to the conflict between the image of the ascetic jurist portrayed in *Ihya'* and that of the Moroccan jurist of the time⁴⁸.
2. The second view sees the burning as part of the broader conflict that existed at the time between the Maliki jurists and their Shafi'i counterparts. However, those familiar with the period realize that the Shafi'i school posed no real threat in the Islamic West, except that the arrival of *Ihya'*—a book by a Shafi'i scholar—may have intensified this tension⁴⁹.
3. The third opinion holds that the defeatist spirit with which the book was written in the East did not suit the Islamic Maghreb, which was characterized by theological simplicity, doctrinal unity, and political stability, as well as its ongoing struggle against the Christians of Andalusia.⁵⁰
4. The fourth view contextualizes the content of *Ihya'* as a potential reform project directed against the Almoravid state under the reign of 'Ali ibn Yusuf (500 AH / 1106 CE) and his successors⁵¹. Social ills, such as the spread of alcohol⁵² consumption, had become

⁴⁴ Ibn Tamlūs, Abū al-Hajjāj Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad.

Introduction to the Science of Logic: The Book of Categories and the Book of Interpretation, Madrid: Al-Maṭba'ah al-Ibiriyya, 1916, vol. 1. pp. 11–12.

⁴⁵ Al-Marrakushi, *Al-Mu'jib*, Al-Marrakushi, 'Abd al-Wahid. The Admirable Summary of the History of the Maghrib, ed. Muhammad Sa'id al-'Aryan, Cairo: Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, pp. 236–237

⁴⁶ Isma'il ibn Al-Ahmar, *Buyutat Fas Al-Kubra*, Rabat: Dar Al-Mansur for Printing and Publishing, 1972, p. 33.

⁴⁷ Ibn Abi Dinar, *Al-Mu'nis*, previously cited source, pp. 106–107.

⁴⁸ Benmilh, 'Abd al-Ilah. Questions About the Burning of al-Ghazali's Book "Revival of Religious Sciences", in *Sectarian Conflict in the Medieval Maghrib*, 1st ed., Rabat: Faculty of Arts and Humanities Publications, 2009, p. 140.

⁴⁹ Abdullah Al-'Arwi, *A Summary of the History of Morocco*, 2nd ed., Beirut: Al-Markaz Al-Thaqafi Al-'Arabi, 2000, vol. 2, p. 129. Jamal 'Allal Al-Bakhti, *The Sufi Presence in Andalusia and the Maghreb up to the 7th Century AH*, 1st ed., Cairo: Maktabat Al-Thaqafa Al-Diniyya, 2005, p. 55.

⁵⁰ 'Ismat Dandash, *Al-Andalus at the End of the Almoravid Era*, previously cited source, p. 38

⁵¹ Ibrahim Al-Qadiri Boutchich, *The Impact of Al-Ghazali's Ihya' Discourse on the Society of the Islamic Maghreb*, in *Ida'at Hawla Turath Al-Gharb Al-Islami wa Tarikhihi Al-Iqtisadi wa Al-Ijtima'i*, 1st ed., Beirut: Dar Al-Taliaa, 2004, p. 132.

⁵² Al-Marrakushi, *Al-Mu'jib*, previously cited source, p. 245.

common in the Maghreb and Andalusia, despite the clear religious ruling, as Al-Ghazali stated:

"If asked about wine, we say it is prohibited⁵³. Whoever drinks wine should not be attended, and it is impermissible to sit with a sinner when he is committing sin."⁵⁴

One of the criticisms directed at the Almoravids was the dominance of jurists over state affairs; no decision was made without their approval. As a result, their influence grew⁵⁵, and their wealth increased, along with their control over public matters. Al-Ghazali criticized this class of jurists repeatedly in *Ihya'*, stating:

"Jurists, who were once sought after, became seekers themselves; those who used to be noble by shunning rulers became humiliated by approaching them."⁵⁶

Thus, *Ihya'* was seen as a reformist discourse containing social content that reflected the condition of 'Ali ibn Yusuf's state—a mirror of the jurists of his time, whether Seljuk or Maghrebi. The book's broad applicability made jurists who read it see themselves unmasked by its descriptions, which was not in their favor. They feared that it could ignite public discontent against them and the state's policies. Therefore, they unanimously decided to burn it after convincing Prince 'Ali ibn Yusuf of the necessity of doing so.

Interestingly, historian Al-Qadiri Boutchich uncovered new evidence suggesting that this prince used to seek blessings through *Ihya'* before ordering its burning⁵⁷. This indicates that when state interests required an action, the ruler was obliged to comply, regardless of his personal feelings.

This reveals that under 'Ali and his successors, the state often separated religion from politics, managing its affairs according to man-made laws rather than religious principles—as seen in issues like unlawful taxation and the excessive influence of women in politics. A state of this nature would naturally suppress any voice of reform or criticism, especially if that state was the Almoravid dynasty, originally established on religious grounds. As Malik Bennabi points out, such a principle subjugates human instincts within a functional relationship to religious ideals, liberating man partially from his innate nature and submitting him to spiritual principles shaped

⁵³ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya'* 'Ulum al-Din, previously cited source, vol. 2, p. 245

⁵⁴ Same source, vol. 2, pp. 293–294

⁵⁵ Al-Marrakushi, *Al-Mu'jib*, previously cited source, p. 235

⁵⁶ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya'* 'Ulum al-Din, same source, vol. 1, p. 44.

⁵⁷ Ibrahim Al-Qadiri Boutchich mentions finding this information in the manuscript *Nuzhat Al-Akhbar Al-Mardhiyyin* by 'Abd Al-Wadud 'Umar, held at the General Manuscripts Library in Rabat, manuscript no. 1264; see Ibrahim Al-Qadiri Boutchich, *The Impact of the Discourse*, previously cited source, p. 137.

by religious thought⁵⁸. A society born of such principles advances steadily, as seen in Yusuf ibn Tashfin's strictly religious state. However, as the religious foundation weakened during 'Ali's reign, natural instincts resurfaced, influencing behavior and governance, ultimately leading to the state's decline—due to the growing number of opponents and public dissatisfaction triggered by the behavior of its jurist-politicians, including the burning of Ihya'

3-The Impact of Al-Ghazali's Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din in the Islamic West

After 'Abd al-Mu'min ibn 'Ali⁵⁹ assumed leadership of the Almohads, succeeding al-Mahdi Ibn Tumart, he pursued policies that reflect, in some respects, his

familiarity with Al-Ghazali's Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din (d. 505 AH/1111 CE). This is evident in the educational systems he implemented for the Almohad youth, which included teaching physical activities as part of their studies⁶⁰

"One day they would learn horseback riding, another day archery, another day swimming in a lake he built outside his garden, and yet another day he would take them sailing in boats he had made for them."⁶¹

In Ihya', Al-Ghazali writes:

"...He should engage in walking, movement, and exercise during part of the day, lest laziness overcome him; he should also learn not to uncover his limbs, nor to walk hastily, nor to let his arms hang loosely, but rather to keep them close to his chest..."⁶²

As for the Almohad regime's position towards the Sufis during this period, it was shaped by Sufi-led uprisings, most notably the revolt of⁶³ Ibn Qasi, previously discussed, who rose against the Almoravid rule. His movement also reflected the Almohad stance on the Sufi current. Initially, the Almohad ruler sought to contain this rebellion. Ibn Qasi, being a student of Ihya' and teaching it to Andalusian youth, was influenced by Al-Ghazali's thought. However, as events developed, Ibn Qasi's claim of being the Mahdi posed a threat to the nascent Almohad state, leading the regime to have him eliminated by one of their agents in 546 AH/1151 CE⁶⁴.

⁵⁸Musa Lahrach, *The Strategy for Resuming the Civilizational Construction of the Islamic World in the Thought of Malik Bennabi*, Algeria: Laboratory for Education, Deviation, and Crime in Society, 2006, pp. 151–157.

⁵⁹Abd al-Mu'min (d. 558 AH/1163 CE): "He is 'Abd al-Mu'min ibn 'Ali ibn 'Alawi ibn Ya'la... ibn Qays 'Aylan ibn Mada; his title was Abu Muhammad. He had around seventy male offspring. Authority was established for him after the death of al-Mahdi in 524 AH," Al-Baydaq, *Al-Muqtabas*, previously cited source, p. 14; Ibn Khaldūn, 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Muḥammad. The Book of Lessons and the Register of Beginnings and Events Concerning the Arabs, Persians, and Berbers and Their Contemporaries of the Greatest Authority, Beirut: Al-Ālimī Foundation for Publications, 1971.

vol. 6, p. 127; Anonymous, *Al-Hulal Al-Mawsiyya*, previously cited source, pp. 142–143.

⁶⁰Manūnī, Muhammad, *The Civilization of the Almohads*, 1st ed., Morocco: Dar Toubkal, 1989, p. 198.

⁶¹Ibn al-Khatib, *Al-Hulal Al-Muwashiyya* (The Embroidered Ornaments), previously cited source, p. 114.

⁶²Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences), previously cited source, vol. 3, p. 65.

⁶³Al-Tamimi, *Al-Mustafad* (The Beneficial), previously cited source, part 1, p. 41.

⁶⁴hIsmat Dandash, *Al-Andalus fi Nihayat al-Murabitin* (Al-Andalus at the End of the Almoravid Period), previously cited source, p. 117.

To better understand the Almohad stance towards the Ghazalian Sufi current, one must refer to biographical sources that mention figures associated with this path, such as 'Amur al-Battat, known for his piety and devotion. He was familiar with Sufism, read the *Ihya'*, and spoke of it in Sufi terms, offering sermons that were heeded in the assemblies he led⁶⁵.

Also noteworthy is Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad al-Ansari of Granada, known as Ibn al-Saqr, distinguished for his excellent calligraphy and transcription of *Ihya'*⁶⁶.

Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Sa'dan, known as al-Shantrini, was a preacher who traveled throughout al-Andalus offering sermons and reminders. Many narrated from him, and various works, including those of Al-Ghazali, were studied under him around 603 AH⁶⁷.

Earlier than him was Abu 'Ali Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Misili (d. c. 580 AH/1185 CE), renowned for his knowledge and piety. He was nicknamed "the Little Abu Hamid"⁶⁸ because he wrote a book on admonition titled *Al-Tafkir*, closely following Al-Ghazali's methodology in *Ihya'*, which earned him this title.

Similarly, Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Abi al-Qasim al-Sijilmasi, the Sufi sheikh, sought to comment on Al-Ghazali's works, such as *Al-Maqsad al-Asna fi Sharh Asma' Allah al-Husna*, which he learned from his teacher Salih al-Majri (d. 631 AH/1234 CE)⁶⁹.

Another distinct Sufi was Abu Zakariyya al-Marjani, who held classes at the renowned mosque in Humat al-Lu'lu'a, propagating Al-Ghazali's Sufi teachings⁷⁰. On one occasion, he helped a laundress find her lost bundle. When the sultan's minister asked how he knew its location, he replied:

⁶⁵ Al-Tamimi, *Al-Mustafad* (The Beneficial), previously cited source, part 2, p. 117.

⁶⁶ Ibn al-Abbar, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Qudā'ī al-Balansī. Supplement to the Book of the Link (*Al-Ṣilah*), ed. 'Abd al-Salām al-Harrās, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr, 1995., vol. 2, p. 85

⁶⁷ Same source, vol. 1, p. 86.

⁶⁸ Abu al-'Abbas al-Ghubrini Ahmad ibn Ahmad ibn 'Abdullah, *'Unwan al-Diraya fi man 'urifa min al-'Ulama' fi al-Mi'a al-Sabi'a bi-Bijaya* (The Title of Knowledge Regarding the Scholars Known in the Seventh Century in Bejaia), edited by 'Adil Nuwaihidi, 2nd ed., Beirut: Dar al-Afaq al-Jadida, 1979, p. 33. Ahmad Baba al-Tinbukti, *Nayl al-Ibtihaj* (The Attainment of Joy), previously cited source, p. 156.

⁶⁹ Al-Tinbukti, Baba ibn Ahmad. *taining Delight by Embroidering the Brocade*, ed. 'Abd al-Hamid al-Harras, 1st ed., Tripoli: Islamic Da'wah College Publications, 1989, p. 156

.Al-Ghubrini, same source, p. 123. Al-Tahir Bounabi, *Al-Tasawwuf fi al-Jaza'ir khilal al-Qarnayn 6 wa 7 H/12 wa 13 M: Nash'atuhi, Tayarathuhu, Dawruhu al-Ijtima'i wa al-Thaqafi wa al-Fikri wa al-Siyasi* (Sufism in Algeria during the 6th and 7th Centuries AH/12th and 13th Centuries CE: Its Origins, Currents, Social, Cultural, Intellectual and Political Role), 'Ain M'lila: Dar al-Huda li-Tiba'a wa al-Nashr, p. 67

⁷⁰ Same reference, p. 70

"You are his minister; if there was a secret between you and the king, would you disclose it to me?"

The minister replied: "No."

He responded: "Then tell the king that this is a secret between the servant and his Lord that none may know but Him."

This angered the sultan, who ordered him to return to Mosul, fearing his influence⁷¹.

The Almohad period abounded with such figures, and biographical dictionaries continue to reveal their stories.

Foremost among these was the Andalusian qutb (pole) Abu Madyan al-Ghawth, Shu‘ayb ibn al-Husayn al-Ansari al-Ishbili (d. 594 AH/1198 CE), a leader of the ascetics and devotees of his time. A veritable school due to his vast knowledge, he trained a thousand saintly sheikhs. He diligently⁷² studied *Ihya’* in Bejaia starting 559 AH/1163 CE, and people from every direction gathered to hear him⁷³. Abu Madyan reportedly said:

"I have never seen a book like Al-Ghazali’s *Ihya’*."⁷⁴

Ibn al-Zayyat recounts a dream underscoring Abu Madyan’s deep connection to Al-Ghazali:

"A righteous man told me that he saw a vast gathering of Sufis in a dream, among them Al-Ghazali on a high pulpit. Someone asked Al-Ghazali about the sciences that Abu Madyan imparted in the world. Al-Ghazali replied: 'He is to your right; ask him.'⁷⁵"

This suggests Abu Madyan viewed himself as following in the footsteps of early Sufis like Al-Ghazali, who recognized his knowledge and merit—even in a dream.

Abu Madyan did not merely follow Al-Ghazali; he integrated Andalusian and Maghrebi Sufism, creating a distinctive "Madyani" approach. He learned *Ihya’* in Fez, studied under Ibn al-Hasan ‘Ali ibn Harazim, who purified *Ihya’* of its criticized content, and benefited from Abu al-‘Abbas ibn al-‘Arif’s teachings⁷⁶. Later, he traveled east and studied under ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani⁷⁷,

⁷¹ Al-Ghubrini, *‘Unwan al-Diraya*, previously cited source, pp. 178–179.

⁷² Al-Tamimi, *Al-Mustafad* (The Beneficial), previously cited source, part 2, p. 41. Ibn al-Zayyat, *Al-Tashawwuf* (The Desire), previously cited source, p. 319. Ibn al-Abbar, Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Qudā’ī al-Balansī.

Supplement to the Book of the Link (Al-Ṣilah), ed. ‘Abd al-Salām al-Harrās, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr, 1995., vol. 4, pp. 137–138. Ibn Sa‘d, Muhammad ibn Abi al-Fadl. The Piercing Star in the Merits of the Saints of God, Codex of Sidi Ibn ‘Azzuz al-Barji, No. 1915 .folio 317. Ibn al-Qadi. The Flame of Insight on Notables Who Resided in Fez, Rabat: Dar al-Muqarrar, 1973, p 530

.Ahmad Baba al-Tinbukti, *Nayl al-Ibtihaj* (The Attainment of Joy), previously cited source, p. 193

⁷³ Al-Maqari, *Nafh al-Tib* (The Breath of Musk), previously cited source, vol. 7, p. 137. Ibn Maryam, previously cited source, p. 108.

⁷⁴ Al-Ghubrini, *‘Unwan al-Diraya* (The Title of Knowledge), previously cited source, p. 23.

⁷⁵ Ibn al-Zayyat, *Al-Tashawwuf*, previously cited source, pp. 325–326.

⁷⁶ Al-Tahir Bounabi, *Al-Tasawwuf fi al-Jaza’ir* (Sufism in Algeria), previously cited source, pp. 119–120.

⁷⁷ ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (471 AH – 561 AH): Muhyi al-Din Abu Muhammad ‘Abd al-Qadir ibn Abi Salih ‘Abd Allah ibn Janki Dust al-Jilani, Sheikh of Baghdad, studied under Abu Sa‘id al-Mukhzumi al-Hanbali, and taught at a school in Baghdad. Known for his Sufi inclinations, he authored many books, including *Al-Ghunya*, *Futuh al-Ghayb*, and others; al-Dhahabi, *Siyar A‘lam al-Nubala’*, previously cited source, vol. 20, p. 439; Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya*, previously cited source, vol. 12, p. 313.

whose book *Al-Ghunya* bears resemblance to *Ihya'*. Al-Jilani simplified and refined Al-Ghazali's teachings, forming a cohesive Islamic school⁷⁸.

Through such synthesis, Abu Madyan enriched Maghrebi Sufism, simplifying its theories according to Al-Ghazali's framework. Thus, he exemplified the continuity of Al-Ghazali's influence in the Islamic West during the Almohad era, surpassing all before him in fame. The Almohad caliphs summoned him from Bejaia, but fearing political interference, his followers worried. Abu Madyan journeyed to Tlemcen, where he remarked upon arrival:

"A fine place for rest,"⁷⁹

and he passed away there in 594 AH/1198 CE, buried near the tomb of Abu Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam al-Tunisi⁸⁰.

The list of Sufis influenced by Al-Ghazali and his *Ihya'* in the Almohad period does not end with Abu Madyan Shu'ayb; many others followed the same path.

Translation

After 'Abd al-Mu'min ibn 'Ali assumed leadership of the Almohads, succeeding al-Mahdi Ibn Tumart, he pursued policies that reflect, in some respects, his familiarity with Al-Ghazali's *Ihya'* 'Ulum al-Din (d. 505 AH/1111 CE). This is evident in the educational systems he implemented for the Almohad youth, which included teaching physical activities as part of their studies:

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⁷⁸ Sa'id ibn Misfar ibn Mufrih al-Qahtani, *Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani and His Doctrinal and Sufi Views*, 1st ed., Riyadh: King Fahd National Library, 1997, p. 518; 'Ali Muhammad al-Sallabi, *The Era of the Zengid State and the Success of the Islamic Project Led by Nur al-Din Mahmud in Resisting Batini Penetration and Crusader Invasion*, 1st ed., Cairo: Iqra' Foundation for Publishing, Distribution, and Translation, 2007, p. 382.

⁷⁹ Ibn Qunfudh, Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad al-Khatib al-Qusantini. Uns al-Faqir wa 'Izz al-Haqir [The Solace of the Poor and the Honor of the Humble], Rabat: University Center for Scientific Research., pp. 102–103

Abd al-Hamid Hajiyat, *Studies on the Political and Civilizational History of Tlemcen, the Maghreb, and al-Andalus*, special edition, Algeria: 'Alam al-Ma'rifa, 2001, vol. 1, pp. 184–185.

⁸⁰ Ibn al-Zayyat, *Al-Tashawwuf*, previously cited source, p. 319; Ibn al-Abbar, *Al-Takmila*, previously cited source, vol. 4, p. 138.

As for the Almohad regime's position towards the Sufis during this period, it was shaped by Sufi-led uprisings, most notably the revolt of Ibn Qasi, previously discussed, who rose against the Almoravid rule. His movement also reflected the Almohad stance on the Sufi current. Initially, the Almohad ruler sought to contain this rebellion. Ibn Qasi, being a student of Ihya' and teaching it to Andalusian youth, was influenced by Al-Ghazali's thought. However, as events developed, Ibn Qasi's claim of being the Mahdi posed a threat to the nascent Almohad state, leading the regime to have him eliminated by one of their agents in 546 AH/1151 CE.

To better understand the Almohad stance towards the Ghazalian Sufi current, one must refer to biographical sources that mention figures associated with this path, such as 'Amur al-Battat, known for his piety and devotion. He was familiar with Sufism, read the Ihya', and spoke of it in Sufi terms, offering sermons that were heeded in the assemblies he led. Also noteworthy is Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad al-Ansari of Granada, known as Ibn al-Saqr, distinguished for his excellent calligraphy and transcription of Ihya'. Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Sa'dan, known as al-Shantrini, was a preacher who traveled throughout al-Andalus offering sermons and reminders. Many narrated from him, and various works, including those of Al-Ghazali, were studied under him around 603 AH

Earlier than him was Abu 'Ali Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Misili (d. c. 580 AH/1185 CE), renowned for his knowledge and piety. He was nicknamed "the Little Abu Hamid" because he wrote a book on admonition titled Al-Tafkir, closely following Al-Ghazali's methodology in Ihya', which earned him this title.

Similarly, Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Abi al-Qasim al-Sijilmasi, the Sufi sheikh, sought to comment on Al-Ghazali's works, such as Al-Maqsad al-Asna fi Sharh Asma' Allah al-Husna, which he learned from his teacher Salih al-Majri (d. 631 AH/1234 CE).

Another distinct Sufi was Abu Zakariyya al-Marjani, who held classes at the renowned mosque in Humat al-Lu'lu'a, propagating Al-Ghazali's Sufi teachings. On one occasion, he helped a laundress find her lost bundle. When the sultan's minister asked how he knew its location, he replied:

"You are his minister; if there was a secret between you and the king, would you disclose it to me?"

The minister replied: "No."

He responded: "Then tell the king that this is a secret between the servant and his Lord that none may know but Him."

This angered the sultan, who ordered him to return to Mosul, fearing his influence.

The Almohad period abounded with such figures, and biographical dictionaries continue to reveal their stories.

Foremost among these was the Andalusian qutb (pole) Abu Madyan al-Ghawth, Shu'ayb ibn al-Husayn al-Ansari al-Ishbili (d. 594 AH/1198 CE), a leader of the ascetics and devotees of his time. A veritable school due to his vast knowledge, he trained a thousand saintly sheikhs. He diligently studied Ihya' in Bejaia starting 559 AH/1163 CE, and people from every direction gathered to hear him. Abu Madyan reportedly said: "I have never seen a book like Al-Ghazali's Ihya'."

Ibn al-Zayyat recounts a dream underscoring Abu Madyan's deep connection to Al-Ghazali: "A righteous man told me that he saw a vast gathering of Sufis in a dream, among them Al-Ghazali on a high pulpit. Someone asked Al-Ghazali about the sciences that Abu Madyan imparted in the world. Al-Ghazali replied: 'He is to your right; ask him.'"

This suggests Abu Madyan viewed himself as following in the footsteps of early Sufis like Al-Ghazali, who recognized his knowledge and merit—even in a dream.

Abu Madyan did not merely follow Al-Ghazali; he integrated Andalusian and Maghrebi Sufism, creating a distinctive "Madyani" approach. He learned *Ihya'* in Fez, studied under Ibn al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Harazim, who purified *Ihya'* of its criticized content, and benefited from Abu al-'Abbas ibn al-'Arif's teachings. Later, he traveled east and studied under 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, whose book *Al-Ghunya* bears resemblance to *Ihya'*. Al-Jilani simplified and refined Al-Ghazali's teachings, forming a cohesive Islamic school.

Through such synthesis, Abu Madyan enriched Maghrebi Sufism, simplifying its theories according to Al-Ghazali's framework. Thus, he exemplified the continuity of Al-Ghazali's influence in the Islamic West during the Almohad era, surpassing all before him in fame. The Almohad caliphs summoned him from Bejaia, but fearing political interference, his followers worried. Abu Madyan journeyed to Tlemcen, where he remarked upon arrival: "A fine place for rest," and he passed away there in 594 AH/1198 CE, buried near the tomb of Abu Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam al-Tunisi.

The list of Sufis influenced by Al-Ghazali and his *Ihya'* in the Almohad period does not end with Abu Madyan Shu'ayb; many others followed the same path.

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