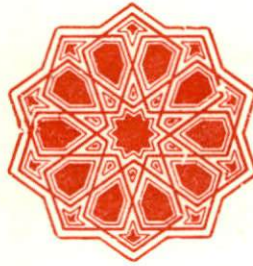


ANKARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ

İLÂHİYAT FAKÜLTESİ DERGİSİ

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Cilt : XXVI



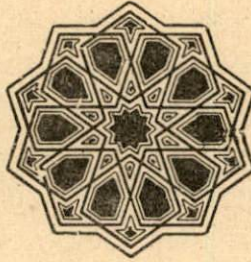
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AL-GHAZÂLÎ'S IDEA OF DEATH AND HIS CLASSIFICATION OF MEN IN THE WORLD-TO-COME*

Doç. Dr. Mehmet S. AYDIN

I. The Position of Man During Dying and in His Grave

1. The Concluding Stage of Life (*al-Khâtima*)

"A man dies according as he lives" is one of the statements which occurs in many places of al-Ghazâlî's famous work, *Ihyâ' Ulûm ad-Dîn*¹. To this al-Ghazâlî sometimes adds the sentence that "man will be raised on the Day of Judgment according as he died"². Like any other believing man, al-Ghazâlî believes that a good man does not fear dying, though he wishes to live long in order to multiply his good deeds. Thinking about death and remembering it, however, bring many advantages and effect man's purpose. To be mindful of death brings about a dislike of this world, which is the fountainhead of all goods, and that it leads to many ideas and reflections which eventually make a happy man³. To be unmindful of it, on the other hand, is absolute ignorance and it is due to long indulgence of hope (*tûl al-amal*)⁴.

* This article is largely based upon the material I used in my unpublished dissertation entitled "The Term *Sa'a-da* in the Selected Works of al-Farabi and al-Ghazali"

1 Five vols. Cairo, 1387/1967, V. iv, 625. From now onwards the following abbreviations will be employed in footnotes:

Ih. *Ihyâ.*

Arb. K. al-arba'in fi usûl ad-dîn, 2^e ed. Cairo, 1344/1925.

Md. K. al-maksad al-asnâ sharh asmâ Allah al-husnâ, Cairo, no date.

N.B. A. Nader, *An-nafs al-bashariyya* (inda Ibn Sinâ, Beirut, 1968.

J. *Jawâhir al-Qur'an*, 2. ed. Cairo, 1352/1933.

T. *Tahâfut al-falâsifa*, ed. S. Sunya, 2. ed. Cairo, no date.

Iq. K. al-iktisâd fi'l-i'tiqâd, Cairo, 1320 H.

F.B. *Fadâ'ih al-bâtmiyya*, ed. by A. Badawi, Cairo, 1969.

IS. *Islamic Studies*, (A Journal devoted to Islamic Studies)

2 *Ibid.*, 221 and 223.

3 *Arb.*, 275-6.; iv., 208.

4 *Arb.*, 277.

We know very little about the reality of death. The people of insight give us general information on the conditions of dying people, and mainly on people's being divided into many classes, but what will happen to individual cannot be determined.⁵

Al-Ghazâlî himself attaches a great deal of importance to the "concluding stage" of man's life (*al-khâtima*). It seems that man will be able to know whether he is *sa'id* or *shaqî* during the agony of death (*sakârât al-mawt*). When a man dies while the love of this world is still dominant in his heart, his condition will be very perilous, since "man dies according as he lives". To think that man's *ruh* will be snatched away while he is in this stage inspires fear and terror. This is because man knows that the condition of the heart does not change after death. The quality (*sifa*) of the heart is changed with the works of the physical organs. When these organs are nullified the work will be nullified too. He knows equally well that there is no chance of coming to this world again and of obtaining of what has already been missed. In such circumstances his grief will greatly increase. Only the basic faith and love of God which are established in the heart and strengthened with good actions can erase from the heart this state into which it has fallen during dying. This is only one of the two degrees of 'Bad Ending' (*su'-al-khâtima*)⁶.

The other degree which is greater than this consists in the condition of the heart which is overtaken by either doubt or denial during the agony of death. If the spirit is snatched away while the heart is in one of these conditions, there comes to be a veil between man and God which leads to eternal separation and endless punishment.⁷ 'Bad Ending' is the beginning of a miserable life which can be temporary (the first case) or eternal (the second case).

When death approaches and the forelock of the Angel of death becomes visible to man, he often knows that what he has believed through ignorance is false. This is because the state of death is that of the removing of a curtain. Some matters may be disclosed to man while he is in this state. The "innovator" (*mubtadi'*), for example, will know the true nature of his innovation (*bid'a*) by which al-Ghazâlî means the belief of a man in the essence of God, His attributes and His actions contrary

5 *Ih*, iv, 625; cf. also J, 31.

6 *Ih*, iv, 216.

7 *Ibid.*, 215-6.

to what they really are. Whether he obtained his belief through his own speculation and reflection or through *taqlid* will not change this situation. The disclosure that he believed in some matters due to ignorance will be a cause of his making void of the rest of what he believed or of his having doubt in it. Now if his *rūḥ* is snatched away at this stage before he can stand firm and turn to the foundation of faith, he will finish his life with 'Bad Ending' and his *rūḥ* will leave him when he is in the state of polytheism (*shirk*).⁸

Another thing that may cause *shaqāwa* during the departure of *ruh*, that is to say during the agony of death, is the weakness of faith in the foundation, and the domination of the love of this world in the heart. When the agony of death comes, the love of God becomes even weaker, since the love of this world is dominant in the heart and the pain of separation from this world overtakes the heart. Man in this state hates death and God, since death is from Him. If the spirit is taken away while there is hatred, and not love, in the heart, the concluding act will be bad again⁹.

As for the one who dies as a lover of God, he will go towards God like a servant who yearns to meet his master¹⁰. This does not mean that they do not fear the 'Bad Ending'. As a matter of fact *'arīfūn* and even the prophets have always been perplexed by and feared the agony of death and the 'Bad Ending', since they know what these are all about¹¹.

The obedient man realizes during dying that he is *sa'id*. His *ruh* will be taken away probably without much difficulty. He may see the Angel of death in its most beautiful form, and he may even know what sort of place he is given in Paradise¹². The wretched people too will know something about their places in Hell. Dying and seeing the Angel of death will be a great punishment for them¹³. This is briefly the position of *sa'id* and *shaqī* during dying¹⁴.

2. The grave as a place of *sa'āda* or *shaqāwa*

As the Tradition states, "the grave is either a pit of the pits of fire or one of the meadows of Paradise". Whoever denies this is an innovator

⁸ *Ib.*, iv, 217; cf. also 628.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 219.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 578 and 574.

¹² Cf. *Ibid.*, 572 ff.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ For more information about the conditions of *sa'id* and *shaqī* during dying in general see J. Macdonald, "The Twilight of the Dead", *IS*, 4, (1965), pp. 55-102.

who is veiled from the light of God. To the grave of the person who has deserved punishment seventy doors of Hell will be opened¹⁵, although the ignorant man looks into the grave and says that he sees nothing. Such ignorance is due to the love of this world in his heart¹⁶. It seems that the interrogation of the angels *Munkar* and *Nakir* takes place first and then begins the punishment which may vary. *Shaqi* tastes all different kinds of punishment unless God shows His mercy¹⁷.

It must not be supposed that dust consumes the place of faith, i.e. *rûh*. Until the Book reaches its term dust will consume all the organs and disperses them but not *rûh*. When the term is completed, all the separate organs will be gathered together and *rûh* will be brought back. From the time of death until this return *ruh* will have been either in the crops of the green birds which are suspended beneath the Throne (*'arsh*), if *rûh* were *sa'id*, or in a state which is contrary to this one, if it were *shaqi*¹⁸.

It is not very easy to determine what is really meant by this Tradition about "*rûh*'s residence in the crops of the green birds"¹⁹. L. Gardet sees a connection between this Tradition and the theory of "celestial bodies" (*al-mawâd al-jismâniyya*) which seems to have been held by some Muslim writers according to Ibn Sînâ²⁰. We will come to this theory and its relevance to our subject when we deal with the souls of the "Weak" (*bulh*) later in this chapter.

What is clear is that before man eventually enters Paradise or Hell he has to go through many stages all of which are parts of a happy or miserable eternal life after death. *Sa'id* does not become *sa'id* after, as it were, the official declaration which seems to take place after the Scale (*mizân*). When man's good deeds weigh the heavier an angel will declare that "so and so has been blessed with *sa'âda* after which there is no *shaqâwa*" and the people will hear what the angel says. The declaration of *shaqâwa* will be made in the case of the *shaqi* too²¹. The *sa'id* will be treated as *sa'id* from the agony of death onwards and the *shaqi* will meet what they deserve. Every stage which takes place before Hellfire is a kind of punishment for the *shaqi*.

15 *Ih*, iv, 216; of. *Md*, 59.

16 *Arb*, 286.

17 *Ih*, iv, 216-7.

18 *Ibid.*, 217.

19 Cf. Gardet, *La pensee religieuse d'Avicenne*, Paris, 1951, 101ff.

20 *N.B.*, 100.

21 *Ih*, iv, 646. For this formal declaration see also pp. 635, 636, 638.

Al-Ghazālī finds it useful to repeat almost all the colourful descriptions of the punishment of grave then in vogue in Islamic eschatological literature²². Al-Ghazālī believes that punishment in the grave exists; we cannot see it because our eyes are not made to see what belongs to the world of *malakūt*²³. The pain of a *shaqī* in his grave is a double one: separation from what he loves and the meeting of the things that cause pain. Al-Ghazālī says that the pain which is caused by separation from what one loves will be greater than the biting of snakes and scorpions²⁴. The more one loves this world the greater one's punishment will be in the grave. According to al-Ghazālī the number of the snakes and scorpions will be multiplied in the grave of, for example, a rich man who loved this world more than he did God.

In respect of the acceptance of the existence of the snakes and scorpions and the pain they cause, al-Ghazālī mentions three stages. Firstly the acceptance of their existence and the pain which is caused by their biting. Secondly the acceptance of the pain without trying to prove whether we can see or imagine the snake, since this will not change the fact that pain is there. This situation resembles the case of a man who sees a snake and feels the pain caused by its biting in his dream. Neither he nor we can see it in the physical sense, but pain and snake are there. And thirdly the acceptance of the fact that a snake itself does not cause pain. It is its poison which gives pain. In fact it is not even the poison *per se* but its effect on man that causes pain. If it were possible to produce such an effect without poison, the suffering would be there. It is not possible, however, to define that sort of punishment as pain without relating it to the cause which habitually produces that pain. The important thing is the effect and not the cause, since the latter is desired for the former and not for its own sake²⁵.

From this al-Ghazālī advances to the idea that the destructive qualities (*aṣ-ṣifāt al-muhlikāt*) turn out to be the pain givers in the soul during dying; their pain is like the pain which is caused by the biting of a snake, although there exists no snake. In other words, it is evil deeds that cause a pain which resembles the pain which is produced by the snake²⁶. Some people accept the first and reject the other two and some accept the last

22 Cf. *Ibid.*, 618ff.

23 *Ibid.*, 621.

24 *Ibid.*, 623.

25 *Ibid.*, 622.

26 *Ibid.*

and reject the others. Al-Ghazālī is of the opinion that all of these are possible and a believer should believe so.

With the last point al-Ghazālī gives the snakes and scorpions an ontological status. It appears that this idea has led As-Suhrawardī to think of the existence of a new realm between the spiritual and the physical²⁷. The last alternative that al-Ghazālī mentions was held by al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā though al-Fārābī does not say anything about the punishment of the grave and other eschatological matters. He simply believes that it is evils that cause pain and lead man to *shaqāwa*. In the analysis of the third alternative al-Ghazālī might have borrowed some materials from al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā²⁸.

To go in detail into the accounts of *sa'īd* and *shaqī* and to give all the colourful eschatological descriptions of these two classes are neither possible nor indeed relevant here. Although al-Ghazālī believes every word he says, his primary object in his description of these eschatological scenes is the improvement of the life of Muslims here. Think of the moment, says al-Ghazālī, when you will be declared as *sa'īd*. This will be your time of joy and happiness. Your face will be illuminated like the moon on the day of Badr, and people will look at you and envy your goodness and beauty. The angels will walk around you and announce that there will be no *shaqāwa* for you after that moment. After this al-Ghazālī turns to the case of *shaqī* which is even more descriptive²⁹. These descriptions have had an enormous influence on the life of common folk and on that of the learned alike throughout Islamic history, and in all these the Qur'ān is the source of inspiration.

In his analysis of the 'Ending' (*khatm*), the agony of death, interrogation, the punishment of the grave and what happens on the Day of Judgement, al-Ghazālī concentrates on two major classes of people, namely *sa'īd* and *shaqī*. The matter, however, is more complicated than this. In order to understand the real nature of the otherworldly *sa'āda* and *shaqāwa*, a close examination of all classes in the world to come is necessary, since different classes of people correspond to varying degrees of *sa'āda* and *shaqāwa*.

II. The Classification of People in the World to Come.

Al-Ghazālī, like al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, believes that the quality of life in the world to come depends on the quality of life on earth. "We

27 F. Rahman, "Dream, imagination and (*ālām al-mithāl*)", *IS.*, 3 (1964), 164.

28 Cf. *Ih.*, iv, 622-3;

29 *Ih.*, iv, 650.

say", writes al-Ghazālī, "that people in the world to come are divided into different classes and their degrees and ranks in *sa'āda* and *shaqāwa* vary so much that they cannot come under any definite classification as they differ in *sa'āda* and *shaqāwa* in this world. The other world does not certainly differ in this respect..... we say that people in the world to come are necessarily divided into four classes: The perished or the doomed (*hālikûn*), the punished (*mu'adhhabun*), the saved (*nājīn*) and the rewarded (*fā'izun*)"³⁰. Al-Ghazālī illustrates this division with the example of the conquest of a king: when the king brings a country under his domination his treatment of the different classes of people in this newly conquered land varies. He kills some of them (*hālikûn*) and tortures some others (*mu'adhhabun*). He frees some and lets them go (*nājīn*) and he rewards some others (*fā'izun*). All of these classes vary within themselves. Not everybody deserves the same punishment or reward³¹.

In the same manner the four classes in the world to come vary within themselves. Some of the *fā'izûn*, for instance, will dwell in the garden of *'adn*, some in the garden of *ma'wā* and some in the garden of *firdaws*. The ones who are punished are also divided into those who are punished for a short period and those who are punished for from one thousand to seven thousand years³². Now let us take each of these four classes separately.

1) The Destroyed (*hālikûn*)

Al-Ghazālī uses quite a variety of words to describe this class: the veiled (*mahjubun*), the hopeless (*āyisun*), the ignorant (*jāhilun*), the weak (*qāsirûn*), the disobedient, the deniers (*jāhidun*) to mention only a few. Al-Ghazālī defines *hālikûn* as the people who deny God, His prophets and His Messengers. We know that "the otherworldly *sa'āda* consists in closeness to God and gazing on His face and so it cannot be attained except through *ma'rifa* which is interpreted as faith and acceptance. Those who reject are the disbelievers and those who deny the truth are the ones who deprive themselves of the mercy of God for ever". These people are veiled from God and forever there is between God and them a veil. They will be burnt with the fire of separation which is worse than the fire that burns physical objects³³. These people are not only ignorant but unbelievers as well.

³⁰ *Ib.*, iv, 30.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 30-1.

³² *Ibid.*, 31.

Halāk, according to al-Ghazālī, is not a destruction in the ontological sense "It is the lack of pleasure and of the qualities of perfection"³⁴. Therefore the term can be used for the state of those who lack all qualities of perfection, as in the state of the unbeliever, or for those who lack some qualities of perfection as in the case of a sinful believer. In the first case *halāk* refers to a permanent condition, whereas in the second it refers to a temporary one. However, since we have only one class of the people who are punished (*mu'adhabūn*) here in a division, the term *hālikūn* is used for people for whom there is no hope of happiness. The same thing can be said about the term *mahjubūn* or the veiled which is usually used as an opposite of the term *wāsilūn*³⁵. Eternal *shaqāwa* is only for this class of people.

It is unbelief which brings about eternal destruction. It is a poison, the Prophet tells us, and it leads to destruction, whereas belief is a cure and the cause of happiness (*mus'id*). In this respect the terms *halāk* and *sa'āda* are opposites³⁶. In a general sense what leads to destruction is explained in the third volume, i.e. *rub' al-muhlikāt*, of the *Ihyā*.

Al-Ghazālī's class of *muhlikun* corresponds to the "imperfect and impure" class of *falāsifa*. As a matter of fact he uses the term *hālik* when he gives the *falāsifa*'s definition of the imperfect and impure character in *Tahāfurt al-falāsifa*. "Hālik is the one who laces in moral character and in knowledge". The one who combines these two perfections is 'arif and *sa'id*³⁷. So here again the terms *hālik* and *sa'id* are opposites.

2) Those Who Are Punished (*Mu'adhabūn*)

This class of people believe in God and His Messengers but they lack the fulfilment of the requirements of this faith. They are imperfect in respect of the degrees of *qurb* and every imperfection is accompanied by two kinds of fire: the fire of separation and the hell-fire as described by the Qur'ān. Anyone who deviates from the right path will be punished by both kinds of fire, though the degree of such punishment varies in accordance with the strength or weakness of faith as well as in accordance with the involvement with desire³⁸.

³³ *Ih*, iv, 31.

³⁴ *Ih*, iii, 352.

³⁵ *J*, 14.

³⁶ *Iq*, 87; cf. *Ih*, iv, 388-9.

³⁷ *T*, 272.

³⁸ *Ih*, iv, 33.

There are many sorts of punishment in the world to come, the lowest degree being the punishment which is caused by discussion over man's sins during Counting³⁹. The one who has the basic faith, however, will eventually be freed from punishment, since, as the Prophet narrated, God said "My mercy surpasses My anger"⁴⁰.

The difference between this class and the people who are destroyed is obvious. In the case of the unbeliever the non-existence of faith darkens the heart to the core. The heart of the believer, however weak his faith may be, is not so corrupted, though it is tarnished through the performance of evil deeds. There is still a place for purification. For this reason it will be plunged into the fire, but when the purification is completed it will become worthy of Paradise which is promised by the Law⁴¹.

In connection with the people who will be subjected to transient pain, there are two points which must be taken into consideration: Grave sin (*fisq*) and Intercession (*shafā'a*).

a) *Fāsiq*

According to *falāsifa*, writes al-Ghazālī "one who combines moral and intellectual greatness is the devout sage; and his reward will be absolute bliss. He who has intellectual, but not moral greatness is an irreligious scholar; the punishment awarded to him will last a long time. But it will not be perpetual, for after all his soul had been perfected by knowledge..... He who has virtue but not knowledge will yet be saved and will experience no pain. But he will not attain perfect bliss"⁴².

Here, as in many parts of his account of *falāsifa*, al-Ghazālī's source is not al-Fārābī but Ibn Sīnā, who gives his four-fold classification of men in *ma'rifat-an-nafs* and in *najāt*⁴³. These four classes are: The people who are perfect in knowledge and in action; the people who lack both; the people who have knowledge but lack good deeds; and lastly the people who are perfect in action but not in knowledge⁴⁴. In *ma'rifat-an-nafs* Ibn Sīnā combines the third and the fourth classes and brings the number down to three. He also says that his division is based on the division made by the Qur'ān in Sura lvi, 7-11.

39 *Ibid.*

40 *Ibid.*, 34.

41 *Ibid.*, 389.

42 *T.*, 272-3; English trns., 234.

43 *N.B.*, p. 94.

44 *Ibid.*

When we look at al-Fārābī's account of *fāsiq*, we see that *fāsiqūn* constitute al-Fārābī's class of *shaqāwa*. We are not told that these people will one day join the people of *sa'āda*. Al-Ghazālī seems to have missed this point. In the passage of *Tahāfut* which has just been quoted, his description of *fāsiq*, i.e. *fāsiq* learned, does not differ from the generally accepted view, including his own, of *fāsiq*. In the *Maqāṣid* al-Ghazālī says that according to *falāsifa*, when the soul gains knowledge, the rational part of the soul gains perfection. If a man with this perfection follows his appetite, he will find himself in a very painful condition. On the one hand he will be drawn towards heavenly and perfect beings thanks to the perfection of the rational part of the soul and on the other hand he will be drawn towards lowest nature because his appetite will not leave him⁴⁵. This is indeed the opinion of al-Fārābī which is also adopted by al-Ghazālī himself. The difficulty arises when we follow al-Ghazālī's argument a little further. He says that again according to *al-falāsifa* this pain is not eternal. After this what al-Ghazālī ascribes to *falāsifa* seems to be in close agreement with the generally held orthodox view. We are told that the position of *fāsiq* will be worse than that of *jāhil*, according to *falāsifa*. Supposing that a king is killed, writes al-Ghazālī, leaving two children behind. One of the children is an infant who knows nothing about wealth, property and such like, and the other is old enough to know all about these goods. It is quite obvious that the last knows what he has missed and suffers intensely, whereas the infant will not suffer. That is why the Prophet says that those who do not act according to what they know, in other words the learned men who lack moral perfection, will receive the most painful punishment⁴⁶. In the *Tahāfut* he takes up the same idea and here again he says that according to *falāsifa* "whoever has the theoretical virtues but not the moral ones is called a dissolute learned (*‘ālim al-fāsiq*)" whose punishment will not be for ever⁴⁷.

It is quite clear from what we are told in the *Maqāṣid* and in *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* that the term *fāsiq* reminds us of *fāsiq* in Ibn Sīnā and not in al-Fārābī. The harsh treatment of *fāsiq* by al-Fārābī does not appear in either of these two works.

As for the treatment of *fāsiq* in al-Ghazālī's *iḥyā', arba'in* and other works, he agrees entirely with the generally accepted Sunnite point of

45 *Maqāṣid*, p. 375.

46 *Ibid.*, 375; cf. also *Ih*, iv, 10.

47 *T*, 273.

view. The term *fisq* is usually linked with the term "disobedience" (*'iṣyān*)⁴⁸; it leads to the abandonment of otherworldly actions for the sake of this world⁴⁹. Freedom from *fisq* leads to the lower degree of piety (*wara'*) and to moral justice or equilibrium. After this stage it is possible to move towards the piety of the righteous (*ṣāliḥūn*), then to that of *muttaqūn* and then to *ṣiddiqūn*⁵⁰. *Fisq* is a deviation from the right path or the Golden Mean. To define *fisq* in terms of deviation from the Golden Mean is accepted by Ibn Miskawayh as well⁵¹.

It appears that *fāsiq* not only performs evil actions but also takes pride in his ability to perform them. *Fāsiq* thinks that perfection consists in possessing wealth and having a sinful and immoral relationship with women and lads⁵² – an idea of perfection which is also defended by the people of the "*fāsiq* cities" of al-Fārābī. Talking of the improvement of the character of different classes of people, al-Ghazālī says that it is very difficult and rare to improve the character of a person who not only performs evil actions but enjoys doing so. His case however is better than the case of the *sharīr* who, in addition to performing evil actions and enjoying what he does, misleads other people as well⁵³.

In al-Fārābī's account of *fāsiq* these two qualities are combined. It is very strange indeed that al-Ghazālī says very clearly that according to the Mu'tazilites *fāsiq* will eternally remain outside the people of *sa'āda*⁵⁴; but he seems to favour the idea that *falāsife* did not believe that *fāsiq* would not join the people of happiness. Al-Ghazālī accuses the Mu'tazilites of failure to understand the Qur'ānic verses on which they based their argument. Repeating one of his favourite analogies, al-Ghazālī says that the case of *fāsiq* is like that of a man who loses his legs or arms. Though he is not a *complete* man, nevertheless he is still a man. It is true that *fāsiq* is not perfect believer, but he has faith all the same⁵⁵.

Al-Ghazālī never fails to agree with the Mu'tazilites that there is a relationship between evil deeds and the weakness of faith⁵⁶. *Fisq* is a

48 *Ih*, i, 343.

49 *Arb*, 205.

50 *Ibid.*, 63-4.

51 *Tahdhīb al-akhlāk*, Cairo, 1329 H., 207.

52 *Ih*, iii, 437.

53 *Ih*, iv, 73.

54 *Ibid.*, i, 160.

55 *Ibid.*, 162.

56 *Ibid.*, iv, 10.

consciously disobedient act which makes *fāsiq* a more dangerous person not only from the point of view of otherworldly *sa'āda* but from the point of view of the socio-political stability of the Islamic community. The Bāṭinites were very successful, for example, among those who were fallen into *fisq*⁵⁷. Unlike the Mu'tazilites, however, he asserted that one day *fāsiq* will be forgiven and accepted into the community of the happy. It is to this the Prophet referred when he said that whoever possesses an atom of faith in his heart, and whoever confesses the Unity of God will eventually enter Paradise.

The idea that *fāsiq* or *shaqī* will eventually become *sa'id* cannot however be defended without accepting the idea that man, or to use al-Ghazālī's own term, the heart, will gain some new qualities. To say that fire will clean the heart and make it worthy of the Divine Presence is nothing more than stating this fact.

In the *Book of Fear and Hope*, al-Ghazālī states that man dies according as he has lived, and it is not possible for the heart to gain another quality after death which opposes the quality which was dominant over him, since one can only bring changes in his heart through the actions of the organs. When the organs are nullified the actions are nullified too. In this case grief becomes great unless the roots of faith and the love of God have been firmly established in his heart for a long period and strengthened with good deeds. This will erase from his heart this state in which it fell during death. Thus if the strength of his faith were up to the amount of a *mithqāl*, he would be taken out of the Fire. If it were less than this, then his staying in Fire would be longer, but if it were not more than a *mithqāl* of a seed, he would still come out of the Fire even if it were after a thousand years⁵⁸.

It is here that the concept of 'intercession' (*shafā'a*) comes in and has a far-reaching importance especially when *sa'āda* is viewed from the standpoint of Divine Grace and Mercy.

b) Intercession: the transformation of *shaqī* into *sa'id*

In the *Arba'in* al-Ghazālī repeats the idea that anyone who has an atom's weight of faith will come out of the Fire. Some people come out before they complete the punishment which they deserve because of their sins. This happens through the intercession of the prophets, the martyrs, the learned and whoever is given such a role⁵⁹.

57 *F.B.*, 36.

58 *Ih.* iv, 216; *Arb.* 21-2.

59 *Arb.* 21.

Here we are not interested in the whole idea of *shafā'a*. Our interest lies in the fact that through Intercession it is possible to put an end to the punishment of a *shaqī* and make him *sa'id*. The one who believes that the character of the heart does not and cannot change after death, cannot defend the doctrine of Intercession. In a system like that of al-Fārābī, for instance, Intercession cannot have a place, unless an obvious inconsistency is tolerated. Both al-Fārābī and al-Ghazālī agree that after death man, or the Intellect, or the heart, cannot gain a character which is the opposite of the character which was dominant during dying. Al-Fārābī goes no further here, but al-Ghazālī brings divine intervention onto the scene and, therefore, makes *sa'āda* as a divine gift. In fact this is what the Muslims have always believed. The Divine Grace may act directly without any intercessor and release man from Hell, or it may act through Prophets or martyrs thanks to the power of intercession given to them by God⁶⁰.

In *Madnūn bihi 'alā ghayr ahlihi*, al-Ghazālī states that Intercession is embodied in the light which shines from the Divine Presence on to the substance of prophethood and from here it illuminates all other substances which have fortified their relation with the substance of prophethood through their love for, and their perseverance in, *Sunna*. The proceeding of this light from the Divine Presence resembles that of the light of the sun which reflects from water and hence reflects on a special part of wall and not just on any part. If Unity (*tawhīd*) is dominant in the heart of the believer, the light from the Divine Presence may come directly, but if the heart finds its way only through following prophecy, then the light reflects on it through an intermediary, e.g. the prophets.

To be forgiven by God in the world to come does not essentially differ from His forgiving the sins of a believer in this world. There may be many hidden reasons which bring about God's forgiveness and salvation and which we may not know. It must be accepted as a possibility that a disobedient person can be forgiven despite his many apparent evil deeds, and an obedient one may face God's anger, despite his apparent obedience. The people of insight inform us that a man is not forgiven except for a good reason, though this reason may not be known to us, and a man is not driven to face God's anger again except for an apparent or an unknown reason. If this were not so, there would be no

60. Cf. *Ih*, I, p. 10 and iv, 653 ff.

place for justice⁶¹. In other words to transform a *shaqī* into a *sa'id* without any reason is not compatible with divine justice. This was the idea of the Mu'tazilites. Al-Ghazālī accepts that everyone will get what he deserves but we cannot say that God does injustice if He forgives a sinner. In order to say this, we have to know everything about the sinner, which is impossible. By the idea of "hidden reason" (*as-sabab al-bātin*) al-Ghazālī tries to overcome this difficulty.

3) Those who Are Saved (*Nājīn*)

Generally speaking, *najāt* is the name of the doctrine of salvation and in this sense it can be applied to anyone who is saved from *shaqāwa* irrespective of one's degrees of *sa'āda*. In this particular classification, however, by *najāt* al-Ghazālī means "just safety (*salāma*) and not *sa'āda* or *fawz*"⁶². Those who are called *nājīn* are the people who deserve neither reward nor punishment, like the insane and the children of the unbelievers and those who inhabit the extremities of the inhabited world where they have not received any invitation to accept the right faith. This class of people have a very meagre intellect (*balah*) and no knowledge at all. There is neither obedience nor disobedience on their part; and they are neither of the people of Paradise nor of those of Hell. Rather, they stay in a place between the two (*al-manzila bayn al-manzilatayn*) which is interpreted as *a'rāf* by the Law⁶³.

In the *Arba'in* al-Ghazālī defines *najāt* in the same way, namely "freedom from punishment" and there too he makes the same clear distinction between *najāt*, *fawz* and *sa'āda* without making any reference however to *balah* and *a'rāf*⁶⁴.

It seems that the class of *nājīn* roughly corresponds to al-Fārābī's class of the "ignorant people". Unlike al-Ghazālī, al-Fārābī does not think that they will remain in *a'rāf*, but they will be destroyed. An immortal soul is either *sa'id* or *shaqī* and there is no third possibility.

Ibn Sīnā, on the other hand, accepts that the souls of *bulh* are immortal, since the soul as an existent is immortal. In the second section of *ilāhiyāt* in the *Najāt* he divides these meagre souls into those that are morally wicked and those that are not. The former will be punished

⁶¹ *Ih*, iv, 38.

⁶² *Ih*, iv, 38.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁶⁴ *Arb*, 23-4. For Tūsī's idea of the weak souls' cf. *Risālā qawā'id-al-aqā'id* (Şahid Ali Paşa, 2721/1) fol, 28b.

after death, because they will lose the body which is the only means for their satisfaction. As for the latter, they will be met by the great mercy of God and have "some kind of ease (*rāḥa*)"⁶⁵ We are not given enough information about the nature of this "ease", but it is not *sa'āda*, since *sa'āda* in Ibn Sīnā too is only for intellectually and morally perfect souls. It is quite plausible to suggest that this "ease" is what al-Ghazālī means by the term *a'rāf* or rather the condition of life that takes place in *a'rāf*.

We have not come across a division of these weak souls into good and bad in al-Ghazālī. Nor does he say anything about whether there will be any improvement in the condition of these souls. Ibn Sīnā, on the other hand, seems to accept some kind of improvement⁶⁶. He talks about the idea of the "celestial bodies" or "something similar" which, he says, were accepted by "some *ulamā*". With the help of these "celestial bodies" these souls will *imagine* what otherworldly pleasure or pain is. F. Rahman believes that according to Ibn Sīnā "some underdeveloped souls are also said to become good and bad demons after death, thanks to their power of imagination"⁶⁷.

Ibn Sīnā likens the pleasure or pain which is perceived after death to the pleasure which is experienced in dreams. No one can say this experience is less powerful than the sensual one. As a matter of fact, after death the imaginative experience can be stronger than our present sensual experience, because there will no longer be the body and bodily occupations⁶⁸.

Our mentioning of Ibn Sīnā's ideas here is not out of place, since they had a considerable influence on al-Ghazālī. In al-Fārābī we have intellectual or spiritual otherworldly pain and pleasure. Ibn Sīnā accepts spiritual and imaginative pain and pleasure. He does not deny the possibility of sensual experience of pain and pleasure after death in the *shifā'*, though he rejects it in his *risāla adhawiyya fī-amr-al-ma'ād*⁶⁹. And al-Ghazālī accepted the possibility of intellectual, imaginative and sensual experiences of otherworldly *sa'āda* and *shaqāwa*. We will return to this very important relationship a little later on.

65 N.B., p. 110.

66 Cf. Gardet, *La pensee religieuse d'Avicenne*, p. 102.

67 "Dream, imagination and *ʿālam al-mithāl*", p. 169.

68 N.B., 110-1.

69 Cf. S. Dunya's introduction to his edition of *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, pp. 16-20. Cf. also *Ib*, iv, 621ff.

Al-Ghazālī did not have the difficulties with which al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā had dealt before him. His acceptance of the resurrection of the body saved him from such ideas as thinking of some celestial bodies for the souls which are not perfect enough to experience spiritual pleasure. This does not mean, however, that al-Ghazālī's idea of the "weak souls" is not complicated.

It appears that al-Ghazālī uses the Arabic term *bulh* in two different senses. Firstly it is used for the people who are not mindful of the matters of this world because of their involvement with the matters of the world to come. This is why the Prophet has said that "most of the people of Paradise are *bulh*"⁷⁰. The description of *bulh* in this sense comes very near to al-Ghazālī's description of the "People of Right" – a term which is used as a name of the people who enter Paradise but do not attain the highest degree which is reserved for *muqarrabūn*. Talking about the danger of investigation into the matters which are essential for salvation, al-Ghazālī says that whoever believes God, His attributes and His actions to be other than what they actually are either through *taqlid* or speculation is in a perilous condition, and asceticism and good deeds are not enough to repel this peril. "*Bulh*, however, are free from this peril. I mean those people who believe in God, His Messengers and the Last Day with a firmly established belief such as the bedouin and the negroes and other people who have not indulged in research and speculation... That is why the Prophet has said, most of the people of Paradise are *bulh*"⁷¹.

Now it is clear from this passage that *bulh* in this technical sense is nothing but another name for the people who accept religious matters on authority.

Secondly al-Ghazālī uses *bulh* in a non-technical sense. Here it implies weakness of intellectual power. The relation between the two meanings of the term is obvious. One does not become *muqallid*, if one is not intellectually weak. These two different meanings, however, must be kept apart, since the class of *muqallidūn* and the class of people with "weak intellect" namely the insane and so on, to which the first and the second meaning of the term *bulh* refers respectively, are two separate classes. So are their degrees in the world to come: *muqallidūn* will be in Paradise, whereas *bulh* in the second sense will be in *a'rāf*. The former have their

70 *Ih*, iii, 23; cf. also iv, 35 and , , 49.

71 *Ih*, iv, 217-8.

share in *sa'āda*, though not in its highest degree, the latter, on the other hand, do not attain any *sa'āda*, but just mere salvation (*najāt*) from *shaqāwa*.

Despite this illuminating explanation about the class of *nājīn*, or the people of *a'rāf*, al-Ghazālī usually ignores this class when he mentions his general classification of men in the world to come in many other places of his works. He says, for instance, that people will be divided into three groups after the major interrogation (*su'āl*): those who will attain eternal *sa'āda*, those who will attain eternal *shaqāwa* and those whose good deeds are mixed with their bad deeds. Though the last group will be punished, they will eventually enter Paradise⁷². Here there is no mention of the class of *bulh*. This may be due to the fact that these people will not even be brought to the scene of Interrogation, since they have nothing to say or to answer.

Al-Ghazālī's not mentioning the class of *bulh* or *nājīn* may also be due to the fact that the Qur'ān itself says very little about them. We have already pointed out the obscurity of the Qur'ānic term *a'rāf* and the difficulty of finding an intermediary place between Paradise and Hell. Al-Ghazālī is aware that because of this lack of information, it is not easy to talk about this rank, namely the rank of mere salvation⁷³.

4) Those Who Are Saved and Rewarded (*Fā'izūn*)

These people constitute the highest rank in al-Ghazālī's classification of men after death, and this class corresponds to the perfect and pure class of *falāsifa*. These people are called *'ārifūn* and not *muqallidūn*; they are the "outsrippers": the people who are brought near to God (*as-sābiqūn al-muqarrabūn*)⁷⁴.

Muqallid is from the 'People of Right' who have some kind of place in Paradise, *muqarrabūn* on the other hand, attain a degree whose height can hardly be described. The Qur'ān refers to this fact when it says that "no soul knows what comfort is laid up for them secretly, as recompense for that they were doing". (XXXII, 17). Of this degree the Prophet has said that "no eye has seen, no ear has heard and no heart of man has ever conceived"⁷⁵. What *'ārifūn* desire cannot be attained in

72 *Ih*, iv, 646.

73 *Ibid.*, 39.

74 *Ibid.*, 39; of. The Qur'ān, LVI, 10-35.

75 *Ih*, iv, 39. For the verse and the Tradition which al-Ghazālī cites when he criticises the philosophers' concept of *sa'āda* see *T*, 275-6.

this world. As for *hûr*, castles, fruits, milk, honey and so on, '*ârifûn* are not keen on them; they would not be contented even if they were given to them. "They desire nothing save the pleasure of gazing on God's face; this is the end of all kinds of happiness and the end of all pleasures".

Here there is no need to go into a detailed description of the class of *fâ'izûn*. We have already given enough information about the nature of the classes of *arifûn* and *muqallidûn* which constitute the only two classes of *fâ'izûn*.