

AL-GHAZALI'S VIEWS ON THE HEART, THE SPIRIT AND THE SOUL: A COMPARISON BETWEEN IHYA' 'ULUM AL-DIN AND AL-RISALAH AL-LADUNIYYAH

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Abstract

Imam al-Ghazali expresses many ideas on heart (al-qalb), spirit (al-ruh) and soul (al-nafs), in his different works. This article tries to compare his views on these subjects between the doctrine contains in Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din and al-Risalah al-Laduniyyah to show their similarities and differences.

INTRODUCTION

The views on the heart, the spirit and the soul by Imam al-Ghazali is well-known especially in his popular work, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*. He, however in his *Ihya'*, mentions that he does not wish to enter further into the subject of heart (*qalb*), spirit (*ruh*) and soul (*nafs*). His opinion is based on two reasons:

- (i) the question belongs to speculative science rather than practical science. He says that the practice of life requires consideration of the qualities of the heart, not of its essence;
- (ii) it is connected with the question of the spirit on which the Prophet kept silent.¹

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'Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din, Vol. 3, Beirut, 1982, p. 3; *ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 5; cf. R. J. McCarthy, *Freedom and Fulfillment: An Annotated Translation of al-Ghazali's al-Munqidh min al-Dalal and Other Relevant Works of al-Ghazali*, Boston, 1980, "Appendix V, p. 365; D. B. MacDonald, "The Development of the Idea of Spirit in Islam", *Acta Orientalia*, Vol. 9, (1930-1932), p. 315; *Idem*, *The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam*, Chicago, 1909, p. 224.

Nevertheless, he devotes one book of the *Ihya'*, namely *Kitab Sharh 'Ajaib al-Qalb* to discussing the matters of the heart, the spirit, the soul and the intellect.² Al-Ghazali also devotes his *al-Risalah al-Laduniyyah*,³ *al-Miskat al-Anwar*⁴ and others to a discussion about the human soul. However, this study only examines a comparison between the *Ihya'* and the *Risalah*

DOCTRINE OF THE HEART, THE SPIRIT AND THE SOUL

In the *Ihya'*, al-Ghazali explains his doctrine of the heart (*al-qalb*) by explaining that it has two meanings. According to him, the first meaning of the heart is:

It is the special flesh, pinelike in shape, positioned in the left side of the breast and has within it a hollow cavity. In that cavity, there is black blood which is the source and origin of the spirit (*ruh*). This kind of heart is found in beasts, and it is even found in a dead body. It is the subject studied by medical doctors.⁵

Concerning the other two terms, spirit (*al-ruh*) and soul (*al-nafs*), he says that the spirit and the soul also have two meanings. The first meaning of the spirit is:

It is a subtle substance, the source of which is the cavity of the corporeal heart and it spreads by means of the arteries to the other parts of the body... Its coursing is in the body, and the flowing of the lights of life and the five senses from it to the limbs resembles the emanation of light from a lamp which is rotated in the corners of a house. It does not reach a part of the house but that is lit by it. Life is comparable to the light occurring on the walls, and the spirit is analogous to the lamp.⁶

²*Ihya'*, Vol. 3, pp. 2ff.

³Al-Ghazali, "*al-Risalah al-Laduniyyah*", in *Majmu'ah Rasa'il al-Imam al-Ghazali*, Vol. 4, Beirut, 1986/1406, pp. 87 - 111.

⁴W.H.T. Gairdner, *Mishkat al-Anwar*. (The Niche for Light), Lahore, 1954, pp. 143ff.

⁵*Ihya'*, Vol. 3, p. 3; cf. McCarthy, *op. cit.*, Appendix V, p. 365, sec. 8.

⁶*Ihya'*, Vol. 3, pp. 3 - 4; cf. McCarthy, *op. cit.*, Appendix V, p. 366, sec. 10.

The first meaning of the soul is:

It is the thing which unites power of anger and sensual desire in man... This usage prevails among the Sufis, for they mean by the soul the seat of the blameworthy characteristics [which man must fight against].⁷

While in the *Risalah*, al-Ghazali refers to the heart as a pine-cone shape in the breast. The *Risalah*'s account of the animal spirit corresponds closely to that of the *Ihya*'s first meaning of the heart, the spirit and the soul, when al-Ghazali in the *Ihya*' says:

The Sufis call the animal spirit, a soul... By this word they indicated only the faculty of sensual desire and anger.⁸

And both works use the same Tradition:

The greatest of your enemies is your soul.⁹

The *Risalah* also states:

The animal soul is a subtle body (*jism latif*).¹⁰ It is like a lamp which has been lit and placed in the glass of the heart. I [the author] mean that pine-cone shape which is suspended in the breast. And life is that which illuminates the lamp, ...This spirit is to be found in all animals... This soul is not rightly guided to knowledge and does not know the way of the creature and nor what is due to the Creator. It is merely a servant, a captive which dies with the death of the body.¹¹

⁷*Ihya*', Vol. 3, p. 4; cf. McCarthy, *op. cit.*, Appendix V, p. 366, sec. 12; al-Qushayri, *al-Risalah al-Qushayriyyah*, Cairo, 1959/1379, pp. 103ff; Ali b. 'Uthman al-Hujwiri, *Kashf al-Mahjub*, (tr.) R.A. Nicholson, *The Kashf al-Mahjub : The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism*, New Delhi, 1991, p. 196; see also E.E. Calverly, "Nafs", *Encyclopedia of Islam*, (New Edition), Vol. 7, p. 882; MacDonald, *Religious*, pp. 224, 229.

⁸*Ihya*', Vol. 3, p. 4; cf. McCarthy, *op. cit.*, p. 366, sec. 12.

⁹*Risalah*, p. 92; *Ihya*', Vol. 3, p. 4.

¹⁰The Sufis tend to identify the soul (*nafs*) as the animal soul and the heart as has been mentioned earlier as the one which perceives the truth and knowledge of God. That is why they assert that the soul is corporeal. Cf. al-Qushayri, *op. cit.*, p. 103; al-Hujwiri, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

¹¹*Risalah*, p. 92.

The *Risalah* also discusses the vegetative and animal souls:

I [the author] do not mean by the soul the faculty which seeks nourishment, nor the faculty which is aroused to lust and anger nor the faculty which resides in the heart, producing life, and making sensation, manifest and bringing about movement from the heart to all the limbs. For this faculty is called the animal soul, and sensation, movement, lust and anger are among its troops. And that faculty which seeks nourishment which resides in the liver (*kabd*) with its outflow is called natural soul and digestion and disposal are among its attributes.¹²

This kind of view is equivalent to the *Ihya*'s opinion, since it writes:

Man is in a rank between beasts and Angels, for man, in so far as he feeds and procreates, is a plant; and in so far as he senses and moves voluntarily, he is an animal.¹³

and:

The heart has two sorts of soldiers, one seen by the eyes, and one seen only by the inner eyes... The heart's soldiers visible to the eye are hand, foot, eye, ear, tongue and the other organs, exterior and interior. For they all serve the heart and are subject to it. They were created with a natural disposition for obeying the heart...In the heart are created lusts which it needs... anger, by which it repels destructive things and take revenge upon enemies.¹⁴

The second expression of the heart in the opinion of the *Ihya*' is:

It is subtle (*latifah*), divine (*rabbaniyyah*) and spiritual and it is the essence of a man. In man, it is what perceives, knows, is aware, is spoken to, punishes, blames and is responsible. It has a connection with the corporeal heart, and the minds of most men

¹²*Risalah*, p. 91.

¹³*Ihya'*, Vol. 3, p. 9; cf. McCarthy, *op. cit*, Appendix V, p. 375, sec. 36.

¹⁴*Ihya'*, Vol. 3, pp. 5 - 6; cf. McCarthy, *op. cit*, Appendix V, pp. 368 - 369, secs. 17 - 19.

have been baffled in trying to grasp the mode of the connection... It [the heart] is like a king and the soldiers are like servants and helpers.¹⁵

Concerning spirit and soul, al-Ghazali identifies the second meaning of them with this kind of heart.¹⁶ The heart, in the sense in which al-Ghazali and other Sufis use the term, really represents the whole human personality in relation to this world and world to come. Al-Ghazali writes:

It is the heart which enables man to attain to knowledge of God, to draw near Him, to work for Him and labour towards Him. It is the heart which rejoices in proximity to Him and prospers when man has purified it and it is the heart which is disappointed and miserable when man has defiled and corrupted it...¹⁷ The heart is the recipient of knowledge of God, given earlier to the prophets which does not come from revelation (*al-wahy*), and which is also given to the saints through the process of a direct enlightening (*ishraq al-nur*) of their hearts, who have been purified to receive it.¹⁸

The second meaning of spirit and soul by al-Ghazali in the *Ihya'*, apparently expresses much the same knowing and perceiving subtlety of the heart.¹⁹ Yet his commentator, al-Sayyid al-Zabidi, remarks that these meanings of heart, spirit and soul are called rational soul (*al-nafs al-natiqah*),²⁰ a term which has been used by the philosophers, and is also used by the *Risalah*.²¹

¹⁵*Ihya'*, Vol. 3, p. 3; cf. McCarthy, *op. cit.* Appendix V, p. 365, sec. 9; cf. also 'Abd Amr al-A'sam, *al-Faylasuf al-Ghazali*, Beirut, 1981, p. 110.

¹⁶*Ihya'*, Vol. 3, pp. 2 - 3; cf. McCarthy, *op. cit.* Appendix V, p. 365, sec. 9.

¹⁷See *Ihya'*, Vol. 3, p. 2; cf. McCarthy, *op. cit.* Appendix V, p. 364, sec. 3; al-Ghazali, *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*, (ed.) Muhammad Mustafa Abu al-'Ula and Muhammad Muhammad Jabir, Cairo, pp. 226 - 227.

¹⁸*Ihya'*, Vol. 3, pp. 2, 17; cf. al-Ghazali, *Jawahir al-Qur'an*, Cairo, 1984, p. 14; see also Margaret Smith, *An Early Mystic of Baghdad*, London, 1935, pp. 271 - 272; MacDonald, *Religious*, p. 222.

¹⁹*Ihya'*, Vol. 3, pp. 3 - 4; cf. also al-A'sam, *op. cit.* p. 110.

²⁰Al-Sayyid Muhammad Murtada al-Zabidi, *Ithaf al-Sadah al-Mutaqqin bi Sharh Asrar Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, Vol. 7, Cairo, 1887, p. 202.

²¹*Risalah*, pp. 91 - 92.

The concept of the rational soul of the *Risalah* also corresponds closely to the concept of the heart of the *Ihya'*. It says:

The soul (*al-nafs*) accepts all branches of knowledge and does not grow weary of receiving abstract images.., This jewel-like substance is the leader of the spirit and the commander of the faculties and all serve it and comply with its command..²² and it does not die with the death of a man's body.²³

The difference between the *Risalah* and al-Ghazali's other works in Sufism can be seen in the use of the terms "heart" and "rational soul"; for the latter follows the Sufis by using the word "heart" and the former follows the philosophers by using the word "rational soul" which has also been used regularly by al-Ghazali in his philosophical works such as the *Tahafut*.²⁴ However, al-Ghazali in the *Risalah* does not identify his rational soul with the intellect (*al-'aql*) as the philosophers do,²⁵ and according to him, "the heart, the spirit, the soul at rest (*al-nafs al-mutma'innah*) and the spirit of the command of God (*al-ruh al-amri*) are all names for the rational soul".²⁶

Al-Ghazali in the *Ihya'* also gives a similar meaning for the heart without mentioning the rational soul when he writes:

The second meaning of the spirit... is what is explained about the second meaning of the heart. It is also what God Most High meant by His utterance: "Say: The spirit [cometh] by command

²²*Risalah*, p. 91

²³*Risalah*, pp. 93, 94

²⁴Al-Ghazali, *Tahafut al-Falasifah*, (ed.) Sulayman Dunya, Cairo, n.d., p. 209; cf. also Sabih Ahmad Kamali, *Al-Ghazali's Tahafut al-Falasifah*, Lahore, 1963, p. 218.

²⁵Similarly, Ibn al-'Arabi whose *Risalah Ma'ani al-Nafs wa al-Ruh* contains several passages similar to those in *al-Risalah al-Laduniyyah*, does not also identify his rational soul with the intellect, as the rational soul, he says, is identical with neither the intellect nor the body, although intellect is one of its subordinate "powers" (*quwa*) and although, during its association with the body, it functions through it. (Cf. Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-'Arabi, *op. cit.*, appendice in M.A. Palacios, "La Psicologia Segun Mohidin Abenarabi", *The Acts of the Oriental Congress*, Algiers, 1905, p. 153).

²⁶See *Risalah*, pp. 91 - 92.

²⁷C. 17:86.

of my God (*al-ruh al-amri*)”²⁷... When the heart is tranquil under the command of God and free from agitation because of the opposition of the lusts, it is called the soul at rest.²⁸

Al-Ghazali asserts:

There is in the [human] soul a divine command (*amr*) - as God Most High has said: “Say: The spirit [cometh] by command of my God”. It claims for itself lordship (*al-rububiyah*) and loves mastery and superiority and being favored and monopolizing all matters and sole leadership and escape from the noose of servitude and lowliness and it desires familiarity with all [types of] knowledge - indeed it claims for itself knowledge (*ilm*) and gnosis (*ma'rifah*) and the comprehension of the essences of things: it rejoices when it is linked with learning and it grieves when it is linked with ignorance.²⁹

And he also says that “the heart’s mount is simply the body and its provisions knowledge”.³⁰

This view from al-Ghazali of the *Ihya'* resembles his opinion of the *Risalah* which presents it with more explanation. The latter writes that this rational soul is a jewel-like substance belonging to the world of the command of God (*min 'amr Allah*),³¹ which is a Divine Force (*al-quwwah al-ilahiyyah*) like other simple jewel-like substances such as the First Intellect (*al-'aql al-awwal*), the Tablet (*al-lawh*) and the Pen (*al-qalam*). According to it, the soul is derived from this Divine Force which is not subject to change and death³² and when the body dies, it

²⁸*Ihya'*, Vol. 3, pp. 3 - 4; cf. McCarthy, *op. cit.*, Appendix V, p. 366, secs. 11 - 12.

²⁹*Ihya'*, Vol. 3, p. 10; cf. McCarthy, *op. cit.*, Appendix V, p. 377, sec. 41.

³⁰*Ihya'*, Vol. 3, p. 5; cf. McCarthy, *op. cit.*, Appendix V, p. 369, sec. 18.

³¹See the same Qur'anic verse (C. 17:85) which is cited by the *Risalah*, p. 93. It resembles Ibn al-'Arabi's view. See Ibn al-'Arabi, *op. cit.*, p. 154f, see also, H. S. Nyberg, *Kleinere Schriften des Ibn al-'Arabi*, Leiden, 1919, pp. 95 - 96; E.E. Calverley, *op. cit.*, p. 882.

³²The *Risalah*, p. 94, uses the Traditions as evidence that the soul is immortal, “The spirits are like troops assembled”. (*Sunan Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Adab*, no. 4834, Vol. 4, p. 359), and “The spirits of the martyrs are in the crops of green birds”, (*Ibid, Bab fi fadi al-shahadah*, (864), no. 2520, Vol. 3, p. 22).

will leave the body and then just wait to return to the body on the day of Resurrection.³³

By using the method of analogy, the *Risalah* gives a quite similar view and quotes the same Qur'anic verses with the *Ihya'*. It explains:

When God associated (*adaf*) the spirit with His command (*amr*) and sometimes with His loftiness (*'izzatih*)³⁴... God Most High is too Lofty to bring a body or an accident into association with Himself because of their lowliness and their liability to change and the rapidity of their cessation and corruption.³⁵ ...Since this soul is from the Command of Creator Most High, it is in the body like a stranger, and its direction is towards its source and its place of return... This substance...does not dwell in any locus, and the body is not the locus of the soul nor it is the abode of the heart. On the contrary, the body is the instrument of the spirit and the implement of the heart and the vehicle of the soul.³⁶

And the *Ihya'* writes:

...All created things stand in relation (*mansubah*) to God but the relation [of the heart] is nobler than that of any of the other organs. To God belong both the creation and the command, but the command is greater than the creation. This [is] the precious jewel like substance which carries the trust of God and which antedates the Heavens, the earth and the mountains, since [when it was offered to them] they refused its burden and feared to receive it because of the world of command (*'alam al-amr*). This should not be taken to mean that the spirits are eternal, as he who holds that the spirits are eternal is a blind fool who does not know what he says. Because this is beyond the scope of our subject, let us desist from its discussion. What is intended here is to show that this spiritual substance (*latifah*) is the driving forces

³³See C.89:28, which states: "Come back thou to thy Lord". See *Risalah*, p. 93.

³⁴*Risalah*, pp. 93 - 94, where he quotes three Qur'anic verses C.15:29, 17:85, 66:12.

³⁵*Risalah*, p. 94.

³⁶*Risalah*, p. 95.

which presses toward God, because it has proceeded from the command of the Lord. It came from God and to God it returns. As to the body it is only the vehicle which [that spiritual substance] occupies and through which it accomplishes its work. The body serves the same purpose for it on the path of God...³⁷

In the association of the soul with the body, the *Risalah* maintains that the only difference between the soul and the body as to corporeality is that the body is "a coarse body (*jism kathif*)" and the soul is "a subtle body (*jism latif*)" which is according to it, the general position of the scholastic theologians,³⁸ while it follows the philosophers and like the *Ihya'*, denies its corporeality and prefers to call it "a simple jewel-like substance (*jawhar mufrad*)".³⁹ On the other hand, the *Ihya'* prefers to call it "subtle (*al-latifah*)".⁴⁰

Al-Ghazali in the *Ihya'*, like other Sufis, believes in the inner sight, and he cites the Qur'anic verse:

Whatsoever mercy God opens to men, none can withhold. (35:2).

He holds:

This mercy is freely given by virtue of goodness and generosity on the part of God Most High - Praised be He - and is not withheld from anyone. But it appears only in hearts putting themselves in the way of the gusts of God Most High's mercy⁴¹... As that man sees two things with his two eyes at one events, likewise the heart might be a channel (*majran*) for two things as the Prophet P.B.U.H. said: "There is not a servant but that he has four eyes, two eyes in his head for seeing his worldly matters, two eyes in his heart for seeing his religious matters."⁴²

³⁷*Ihya'*, Vol. 1, pp. 54 - 55; cf. Nabih Amin Faris, *The Book of Knowledge*, Lahore, 1966, p. 142.

³⁸*Risalah*, p. 92.

³⁹*Risalah*, pp. 91, 92; Cf. *Ihya'*, Vol. 3, pp. 3f; Al-Ghazali, *Kimiya-e Sa'adat*, Tehran, 1334, pp. 33f.

⁴⁰*Ihya'*, Vol. 3, pp. 3 - 4.

⁴¹*Ihya'*, Vol. 3, p. 9; cf. McCarthy, *op. cit.*, Appendix V, p. 374, sec. 34.

⁴²*Ihya'*, Vol. 3, p. 44; cf. *Mishkat*, p. 12.

In the *Risalah*, al-Ghazali also writes of the eye of the heart. He believes that the inward eye alone can see that which is beyond thought when it is closed to all other outward eyes. When God unveils what is hidden from the outward eyes, the inward eye can comprehend the unseen world and receive knowledge of reality from God which the *Risalah* called the knowledge of spiritual inspiration (*al-'ilm al-laduni*).⁴³

Both works, the *Ihya'* and the *Risalah* regard that human soul as the Tablet (*al-lawh*) for knowledge.⁴⁴ The latter also holds that the soul has its original purity as it writes:

That knowledge is embedded firmly in all human souls and all of them are receptive to all types of knowledge... The rational soul...is prepared to receive intelligible images from it, by the force of its original purity.⁴⁵

And the former also writes:

Otherwise each heart has a sound natural disposition (*fitrah salihah*) to know the truths (*li ma'rifat al-haqa'iq*) because it is a noble divine command (*amr rabbani sharif*) which, through this peculiarity and nobility, is different from any other worldly jewel-like substances (*jawahir*)... Those responsibilities [to know the truth] are *ma'rifah* and *tawhid* and the heart of each man is ready to bear responsibility and naturally it has ability for that.⁴⁶

The *Risalah*, however, is quite different from the *Ihya'* when the former, like Plotinus, who is followed by al-Junayd, holds that the soul "is qualified for enlightenment by the Universal Soul (*al-nafs al-kulliyah*)" as it comes from this Universal Soul.⁴⁷ It is prepared to receive what it has learned in its original natu-

⁴³*Risalah*, p. 94; cf. al-Muhasibi, *al-Ri'ayah li Huquq Allah*, (ed.), 'Abd al-Qadir Ahmad 'Ata, Cairo, 1970, p. 91.

⁴⁴*Risalah*, pp. 90, 106; cf. *Ihya'*, Vol. 1, p. 13.

⁴⁵*Risalah*, pp. 107 - 108.

⁴⁶*Ihya'*, Vol. 3, p. 14.

⁴⁷*Risalah*, p. 108. Plotinus writes:

The soul running away like a naughty child, it descends to the material world" and "embraces matter" and "soul is from mind and shares in reason with him and thus has virtue.

cf. F. Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam, Philosophy and Orthodoxy*, London, 1958, p. 19.

ral disposition and what it has understood in its primary purity (*bad' al-taharah*). However, this soul sometimes forgets its eternal knowledge during its temporary association with the lower world and when it experiences sickness. Nevertheless, he claims that some souls, like those of prophets, never forget their knowledge and never experience that sickness which befalls other souls.⁴⁸

CONDITIONS OF THE SOUL

On the subject of the condition of the soul, the *Risalah* also has a different view from the *Ihya'*, and its view corresponds with that of Plotinus. It mentions that the soul has two groups: the first group are sound souls (*al-nufus al-sahihah*) which remain in their original health and receive revelation (*wahy*) and inspiration (*ilham*), manifest miracles and are never influenced by the lower world. They are the "prophetic souls" which become the physicians of souls.⁴⁹

The second group are sick souls (*al-nufus al-maridah*) which have different degrees:

- a. Sick souls because of illness due to this lower world, but they can achieve their original health through study and a little recollection.
- b. Sick souls because of eagerness for and absorption in the world and they find only a little light. They learn throughout their life in order to restore the original abundant knowledge and to eliminate the unexpected arrival of sickness.⁵⁰
- c. Sick souls because of the corruption of their natural disposition, which are unable to receive remedy and learning and rectification cannot be used to correct them.⁵¹

⁴⁸*Risalah*, p. 108.

⁴⁹*Risalah*, p. 108. Al-Jilani names this type of soul as the "perfect man (*al-insan al-kamil*)". See 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, *al-Insan al-Kamil*, Cairo, 1334, p. 96, 131f.

⁵⁰*Risalah*, pp. 108 - 109.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 108

In the *Ihya'*, al-Ghazali's discussion on the sickness of the soul has different views compared to the *Risalah*. According to the former, the heart has five obstacles in gaining the truth, as below:⁵²

- a. A natural defect of the heart as the heart of a child.
- b. Impurities of sins owing to lusts (*shahawat*).
- c. When the heart is diverted to worldly matters, the brightness of truth is not reflected in it owing to the object of enquiry not being directed towards it although it is pure and clean.
- d. When the heart is veiled by its lusts so that it cannot gain the truth.
- e. When the heart is full of ignorance (*jahl*).

However, al-Ghazali in these two works asserts that, when all these sicknesses are cured, the soul will acknowledge the existence of the knowledge of spiritual intuition (*al-'ilm al-laduni*) and will be aware that they were cognizant in their original natural disposition and were pure at the beginning of creation.⁵³

COSMOLOGY

A careful study of the *Risalah* shows that philosophical terms are found scattered throughout it to elaborate al-Ghazali's fundamental ideas, especially in his explanation of the relationship between God, intellect and soul.

The order of creations begins with the Creator.⁵⁴ It seems that al-Ghazali accepts the doctrine of creation in terms of a modified form of the emanation

⁵²*Ihya'*, Vol. 3, pp. 13 - 14.

⁵³*Risalah*, p. 108; *Ihya'*, Vol. 3, p. 14 - 15.

⁵⁴Muslim philosophers use the word *al-Bari*, the Maker, the One, the Unique and One in every respect which has no partner and no peer. Cf. Ikhwan al-Safa, *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa*, Vol. 1, p. 189, Vol. 2, pp. 107, 108ff; O. A. Farrukh, "Ikhwan al-Safa", in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, (ed.) M.M. Sherif, Vol. 1, Wiesbaden, 1963, p. 294; M.M. Sherif, "Greek Thought", in *A History of Muslim Philosophy, op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 12.

theory of philosophers like al-Farabi.⁵⁵ Although this is not stated specifically, he emphasises that the communication of knowledge to the soul is by “emanation” (*fayd*) [or its derivative “*ifadah*”] and “radiation” (*ishraq*).⁵⁶

In his cosmological structure, the next being seems to be the First Intellect (*al-'aql al-awwal*). This is a term used by al-Farabi in his philosophy.⁵⁷ However, he only uses this philosophical term twice in the *Risalah*. Instead, he frequently refers to the Universal Intellect (*al-'aql al-kulli*) and this term is certainly synonymous with the First Intellect.⁵⁸

He then refers to the Prime Universal Soul (*al-nafs al-kulliyah al-ula*) which he describes as “[present] in the incorporeal, prime, pure substances in relation to the First Intellect like the relationship of Eve to Adam”.⁵⁹ He goes on to say: “The Universal Intellect is more noble, more perfect, stronger and nearer to the Creator Most High than the Universal Soul (*al-nafs al-kulliyah*)”.⁶⁰ He describes the Universal Soul as being “more powerful, more subtle and nobler than the rest of creation”.⁶¹ Then, the Universal Soul is followed by the soul (*al-*

⁵⁵In Islamic philosophical tradition itself, al-Farabi seems to have been the first to present a systematic treatment of the hierarchy of beings in terms of a hierarchy of intelligences and souls and their emanation (*fayd*) from the Creator. (Cf. S.H. Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, Cambridge, 1964, see chapters 12 - 14; Osman Bakar, *Classification of Knowledge in Islam*, Kuala Lumpur, p. 95.

⁵⁶*Risalah*, pp. 104, 105.

⁵⁷Al-Farabi, *Fusul al-Madani (Aphorisms of the Statesman)*, (ed. and tr.) D.M. Dunlop, Cambridge, 1961, p. 42, sec. 31; *idem*, *al-Thamarat al-Mardiyyah fi ba'd al-Risalat al-Farabiyyah*, Leiden, 1890, p. 54; *idem*, *Risalah fi Ara' Ahl al-Madinah al-Fadilah*, Leiden, 1895, p. 52; Ibrahim Madkour, “*al-Farabi*”, in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 460 - 463; S.H. Nasr, *Sufi Essays*, Albany, 1972, p. 54.

⁵⁸For the First Intellect, cf. *Risalah*, pp. 93, 105. And for the Universal Intellect, cf. *Risalah*, pp. 104, 105, 106.

⁵⁹*Risalah*, p. 105.

⁶⁰*Risalah*, p. 105; cf. al-Farabi, *al-Thamarah al-Mardiyyah*, pp. 42 - 43, 54; Ibrahim Madkour, *op. cit.*, p. 461; *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa*, Vol. 1, p. 189; Farrukh, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 294 - 295; Margaret Smith, “*al-Risalah al-Laduniyya by Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali*”, *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, Part II, (April, 1938), p. 196.

⁶¹*Risalah*, p. 105; cf. Plotinus, *Enneads*, iv.8.4, p. 360; Sherif, *op. cit.*, p. 121; *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa*, Vol. 1, p. 28; Vol. 2, pp. 55f, 112f; Farrukh, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

nafs) which is different from the body (*al-jism*). The soul is "jewel-like, simple (*al-nafs al-jawhar al-mufrud*), illuminating, rational, acting, moving and completing instruments and bodies".⁶²

As has been mentioned earlier,⁶³ al-Ghazali in the *Risalah* also follows the philosophers by using the term *al-nafs al-natiqah* (rational soul) regularly⁶⁴ as being similar to the spiritual meaning of the term *al-qalb* (heart) which is popular among the Sufis⁶⁵ and is also found in the *Ihya'*, the *Arba'in*, the *Kimiya* and other works of his.⁶⁶ In the *Risalah* itself, he says:

By the rational soul I mean that substance (*jawhar*) which has a special name among every group of people (*qawm*). The philosophers call this substance the rational soul (*al-nafs al-natiqah*). The Qur'an calls it the soul at rest (*al-nafs al-mutma'innah*) and the spirit which is the command of God (*al-ruh al-amri*). And the Sufis call it the heart.⁶⁷

The relationship described by al-Ghazali between the Creator, the First or Universal Intellect, the Universal Soul and the soul, which he sometimes refers to as the particular soul (*al-nafs al-juz'iyyah*) in contrast to the Universal Soul (*al-nafs al-kulliyah*), seems to be one of communication. Only once does he refer to direct communication between the Creator and the soul⁶⁸ and this is probably not intended literally. Communication comes to the soul from the First

⁶²*Risalah*, p. 91.

⁶³See Doctrine of the Heart, the Spirit and the Soul.

⁶⁴See for example al-Farabi, *Kitab Ara' Ahl al-Madinah al-Fadilah*, (ed.) A.N. Nadir, Beirut, 1968, p. 87; *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa*, Vol. 3, pp. 270 - 271; Mace, "Psychology", *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Vol. 7, pp. 2f; F. Rahman, *op. cit.*, p. 19; O. Bakar, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

⁶⁵See for example al-Muhasibi, *op. cit.*, pp. 91; Abu Talib Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Makki, *Qut al-Qulub*, Vol. 1, Cairo, 1960, p. 231; al-Qushayri, *op. cit.*, p. 103; Abu Nasr al-Sarraj, *al-Luma'*, (eds.), 'Abd al-Halim Mahmud and Taha 'Abd al-Baqi Surur, Cairo, 1960, p. 544. See also M.I. Waley, "Contemplative Disciplines in Early Persian Sufism," *Classical Persian Sufism: From its Origin to Rumi*", (ed.) L. Lewisohn, London, 1993, p. 528.

⁶⁶*Ihya'*, Vol. 3, pp. 3ff; al-Ghazali, "*Kitab Sharh 'Aja'ib al-Qalb*", Tr. McCarthy, *op. cit.*, p. 365, secs. 8, 9, Cf. *idem*, *al-Arba'in fi Usul al-Din*, Cairo, 1344, p. 94; *Kimiya*, pp. 7f.

⁶⁷*Risalah*, p. 91.

⁶⁸*Risalah*, p. 105.

or Universal Intellect (*al-'aql al-kulli*) and the Universal Soul (*al-nafs al-kulliyah*). He uses the image of the Pen (*al-qalam*) and the Tablet (*al-lawh*) and says:

He [God] looks upon it [soul] with His Divine Sight (*nazaran ilahiyyan*) and He makes of it a Tablet and from the Universal Soul a Pen.⁶⁹

However, while the First or Universal Intellect has the same function as al-Farabi's Active Intellect in communicating with prophets,⁷⁰ it is restricted in its communication to prophets. It is the function of the Universal Soul to communicate with other souls. The soul, which descended from its Source, can also ascend towards its Source again through the process of purification, and al-Ghazali says: "that the soul itself is facing toward its Creator".⁷¹ In contrast, the body is "dark, coarse, coming into existence and degenerating (*al-kawn wa al-fasad*), complex, made up of parts, earthy whose nature is not perfected except by something other than it".⁷²

Throughout the *Risalah*, al-Ghazali only mentions the Angels twice and both times they appear as citations from Qur'anic verses. They do not have any relevance to communication in terms of revelation (*wahy*) or inspiration (*ilham*).⁷³ However, it should also be remembered that al-Ghazali in the *Ihya'* insists on the view that communication in terms of revelation (*wahy*) and inspiration (*ilham*) always takes place through the mediation of angels.⁷⁴

⁶⁹*Risalah*, p. 104.

⁷⁰Al-Farabi identifies the active intellect with the holy spirit (*Ruh al-Quds*) or Gabriel, the archangel of divine revelation. The active intellect is a cosmic entity which acts as a transcendent intermediary between God and man. Al-Farabi says: "Since the active intellect emanates from the being of the First Cause (*al-sabab al-awwal*), it can be said that it is the First Cause that brings about revelation to this person through the mediation of the active intellect". (*al-Farabi, al-Fusul al-Madani*, p. 173; *idem, Ihsa' al-'Ulum*, (ed.) U. Amin, Cairo, 1949, p. 100; *idem, Kitab al-Siyasah al-Madaniyyah (al-Farabi's Political Regime)*, (ed.) F. Najjar, Beirut, 1964, p. 31; *idem, 'Uyun al-Masa'il*, in *al-Farabi's Philosophische Abhandlungen*, (ed.) F. Dieterici, Leiden, p. 1890, p. 63.

⁷¹*Risalah*, p. 104. The Creator i.e. the Maker, the Truth, the One, the Perfect, the Perfector and the Benefactor. *Risalah*, pp. 89, 91.

⁷²*Risalah*, p. 91.

⁷³*Risalah*, pp. 89, 104.

⁷⁴*Ihya'*, Vol. 1, pp. 88; Vol. 3, p. 18.

All terms such as First Intellect, Universal Intellect, Universal Soul and particular soul are absent from the *Ihya*'⁷⁵ However, these terms occur in those works of his which deal with the explanation or refutation of philosophical doctrines and which he only uses in quotations from the philosophers in order to refute them.⁷⁶ Moreover, in addition to the *Risalah*, there are a large number of books which contain all these philosophical terms. Among these works are *al-Madnun al-Saghir*, *Mi'raj al-Salikin*, *Rawdat al-Talibin* and *Ma'arij al-Quds*.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it can be deduced that the doctrine of the heart, the spirit and the soul by Imam al-Ghazali in these two works have both the similarities and the differences. Regarding these differences, modern scholars such as W. M. Watt, M. A. Palacios, A. R. Badawi and many others reject the *Risalah* as written by al-Ghazali. However, some scholars still accept it as belong to al-Ghazali because of many similarities can be found between the *Risalah* and the *Ihya*'.

⁷⁵For example *Kitab al-Iqtisad fi al-I'tiqad*, *Ihya'*, *al-Maqсад al-Asna*, *Bidayat al-Hidayah*, *al-Jawahir al-Qur'an*, *Kitab al-Arba'in*, *Mishkat al-Anwar*, *Munqidh*.

⁷⁶For example *Maqasid*, *Tahafut*, *Mihakk al-Nazar*, *Mi'yar al-'ilm* and *Mizan al-'Amal* whose authenticity is doubted by Watt, but is accepted by Hourani, etc. See W.M. Watt, "The Authenticity of the Works Attributed to al-Ghazali", *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, (1952), p. 30; G.F. Hourani, "A Revised Chronology of Ghazali's Writings", *Journal of American Society*, Vol. 104, (1984), pp. 294 - 295; I. Goldziher, *Die Richtungen der Islamischen Koranauslegung*, Leiden, 1920, 1952, p. 205; M. Bouyges, *Essai De Chronologie Des Oeuvres De al-Ghazali*, Beirut, 1959, pp. 28 - 30; 'Abd al-Rahman Badawi, *Mu'allafat al-Ghazali*, Kuwait, 1977, pp. 79 - 81; M. A. Sherif, *Ghazali's Theory of Virtue*, Albany, 1975, pp. 6, 171; H.L. Yafeh, *Studies in al-Ghazali*, Jerusalem, 1975, pp. 211, 259, 300; M. Abul Quasem, *The Ethics of al-Ghazali: A Composite Ethics in Islam*, Selangor, 1975, p. 37.