SOLIDIFICATION OF WORLDVIEW, LIBERATION STRATEGY AND REVIVAL OF SUNNISM LEADING TO THE 12TH CENTURY A.D. / 6TH CENTURY A.H. MUSLIM LIBERATION OF JERUSALEM

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Abstract

This study examines the phenomena leading to the Muslim liberation of Jerusalem in 1187 A.D., namely: (1) solidification of Sunni worldview, (2) liberation strategy, and (3) revival of Sunnism. The study refers to the framework of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, a contemporary proponent of the Sunni-Sufi metaphysical system chiefly represented by metaphysicians of the focus milieu. The study uses textual analysis to explain the undermining of the Sunni worldview and its later solidification. The historiography method is used by adopting liberally the approaches of A. R. Azzam, Majid ʿIrsan al-Kaylani, and Ali M. Sallâbi to explain the phenomena of Sunni revival and liberation strategy, focusing on the rise of notable figures and operationalisation which contributed to the efforts through the establishment of important centres of learning acting as catalysts for intellectual and spiritual development in the milieu, all of which explain Muslim survival in the wake of Crusader invasion, recovery, and success of the 1187 counterattack.

Keywords: *ʿAqidah*; Sunni worldview; Liberation of Jerusalem; Crusade; Sufism.

Khulasah

Kajian ini menelusuri fenomena sekitar pembebasan oleh orang Islam atas Bayt al-Maqdis pada 1187 Masihi iaitu (1) pemantapan pandangan alam Sunni, (2) strategi pembebasan, dan (3) pemugaran kefahaman Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah. Kajian ini merujuk kepada kerangka oleh Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, pelopor masa kini sistem metafizik Sunni-Sufi yang didokongi oleh para ahli metafizik pada zaman dan persekitaran tumpuan. Kajian ini menggunakan perkaedahan kupasan tekstual untuk menjelaskan penggugatan pandangan alam Sunni dan pemantapan semulanya kemudian. Kaedah historiografi digunakan dengan merujuk pendekatan oleh A. R. Azzam Majid ʿIrsan al-Kaylani, dan Ali M. Sallâbi bagi menerangkan fenomena pemugaran kefahaman Sunni dan strategi pembebasan di samping menumpukan pada kebangkitan tokoh-tokoh ternama dan pengamal-laksanaan yang menyumbang kepada usaha pembebasan melalui penubuhan pusat-pusat pengajian yang bertindak sebagai pemangkin pembangunan keilmuan dan kerohanian di zaman itu, yang kesemuanya menjelaskan kelangsungan Kaum Muslimin di kala pencerobohan tentera Salib, pemulihan, dan kejayaan serangan balas pada tahun 1187.

Kata kunci: *'Aqidah*; pandangan alam Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah; pembebasan Bayt al-Maqdis; perang Salib; Tasawwuf.

Introduction

Beginning August 1096 A.D., tens of thousands of men-at-arms and mounted knights from Europe streamed in droves into Muslim lands in what is today called the Levant, the historical region in the Middle East encompassing Syria and Palestine. Intending to fight the first of many series of

religious Holy Wars called 'the Crusades,'[1] the invaders marched towards their ultimate prize: the city of Jerusalem in Palestine.

The 'Crusaders'[2] were initially answering a religious call from the titular head of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Urban II (c. 1035–1099 A.D.), to help the Greek Byzantines fend off harassment by Muslims—Turkic Saljūq tribesmen roaming the Anatolian countryside— upon Christian pilgrims traveling from Constantinople to the Holy Land.[3] On 15 July 1099, after 462 years of being under Muslim control, Bayt al-Maqdis finally fell into the hands of the Crusaders.

In the worldview of the Muslims,[4] Jerusalem is Bayt al-Maqdis (The Sanctified House), the third holiest city

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[1] Initially called in Latin as *passagium generale*, *iter*, *voyage*, or *reise* referring to the periodical pilgrimage undertaken by Christians to the Holy Land in Jerusalem, the name *crucesignatione* (crusade) would gradually replace the previous terms as the peregrinations began turning into military expeditions marked by the sign of the Cross (La. *crux*), the holy symbol of Christianity. See Geoffrey Hindley, *A Brief History of the Crusades: Islam and Christianity in the Struggle for World Supremacy*, hereinafter cited as *Brief History of the Crusades* (first published London: Constable, 2003; this ed. London: Robinson, 2004), 1–2.

[2] From the Latin *crucesignati*, "those marked with the sign of the Cross." Among the Franks, they were called *croisé*; Greek, *stavrofóroi*; Italians, *crociato* or *cruzeta*; and Germans, *kreuzfahrer*. See Hindley, *Brief History of the Crusades*, 3.

[3] Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History*, hereinafter cited as *The Crusades* (first published New York: Continuum Publishing, 1985; this 3rd ed. London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 21; Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, hereinafter cited as *Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (1st ed. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999; repr. 2012), 1.

[4] For the intents of purpose of this short essay, the worldview of the Muslims at that time shall refer to the framework proposed by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (1931–), a scholar and thinker of the Sunni intellectual tradition whose works particularly on Sunni-Sufi metaphysics are restatement of the creeds held by the classic forerunners of the tradition in the focus milieu chiefly represented by,

after Makkah and Madinah whose precincts of al-Masjid al-Aqsa (the Farthest Mosque) God has blessed.[5] In 621H, it bore witness to all the past Prophets and Messengers of God, from Adam to ʿIsa, gathering—by God's permission––in a congregational prayer led by the Prophet Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets (*Khatam al-Anbiya'*), on the miraculous Night Journey (*al-Isra' wa al-Miʿraj*).[6] At the heart of al-Aqsa al-Sharif (The Noble Precinct) rests al-Sakhrah al-Musharrafah (The Noble Rock), called as such for its being the spot from where Prophet Muhammad ascended (*ʿaraja*) unto the Heavens to be in the presence of God and receive the divine commandment of the five daily obligatory prayers.[7]

It took nearly a hundred years later after the initial Crusader invasion for the Muslim ruler and military leader

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among others, Junayd al-Baghdadi (830–910 A.D.), Abu Talib al-Makki (d. 996 A.D.), al-Juwayni (1028–1085 A.D.), and Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (c. 1058–1111 A.D.) thus making himself a representative of the tradition in contemporary times. According to al-Attas's framework, the salient fundamental elements of the worldview of Islam encompass, among others, "the nature of God; of Revelation (i.e. the Qur'an); of His creation; of man the psychology of the human soul; of knowledge; of religion; of freedom; of values and virtues; of happiness…" See Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islām*, hereinafter cited as *Prolegomena* (Kuala Lumpur: The International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1995), 148. As for positing al-Attas as a contemporary representative of the Sunni-Sufi tradition, please see Mohd Farid Mohd Shahran, "Primordial Covenant as the Basis of Religion: The Qur'anic Mithaq of Alastu according to Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas," *TAFHIM: IKIM Journal of Islam and the Contemporary World* 15(1) (June 2022), 6.

[5] *Al-Isra'* (17):1.

[6] Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Tabari* or *Tarikh al-Umam wa-al-Muluk*, hereinafter cited *Tarikh al-Tabari*, 6 vols. (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2012), 1:536–537.

[7] Ibid. See also Sayyid Muhammad ibn Alawi al-Maliki, *The Prophet's Night Journey & Heavenly Ascent*, trans. Gibril Fouad Haddad, 4th ed. (1st ed. London: Aqsa Publications, 2005; this ed. 2016), 30–34.

known as Yusuf ibn Ayyub (r. 1174–1193 A.D.), styled Al-Malik al-Sultan Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, to rise in prominence and consolidate both Egypt and Syria under his sovereign rule in 1183. In four years, he would raise a 40,000-strong army and orchestrate a military campaign against the Crusaders. The campaign culminated in the liberation of Jerusalem by the Muslims on 2 October 1187. Although Salah al-Din's resounding success is owed partly to the military reforms which he was majorly responsible in carrying out,[8] his coming and the realisation of his policies are ultimately predicated by three phenomena that occurred in his milieu, namely: (1) the solidification of Sunni worldview, (2) the emergence of liberation strategy,[9] in which the discussion focuses on the efforts of Sunni figures in drawing up and executing plans to defend Islam, its people and territories, in the manner that aligns religious aspirations and dictates of reality, and (3) the revival of Sunnism,[10] all of which preceded his era thus shaped it and so shall be discussed henceforth.

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[8] William J. Hamblin, "Saladin and Muslim Military Theory," *The Horns of Hattin: Proceedings from the Second Conference of the Society of the Crusades and the Latin East Jerusalem and Haifa, 2–6 July 1987*, ed. B. Z. Kedar (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi & Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 228.

[9] The word 'liberation' is used here instead of 'conquest' because Muslims see themselves first as inheritors of the Prophetic mission to propagate the religion of Islam, in conformity with the often-used *fataha* in the Islamic vocabulary whose meanings 'to open,' 'to introduce,' and 'to grant victory or success' correspond more suitably with the reality of Fathu Makkah of 630 A.D. and subsequent *futuh* campaigns launched by Muslim rulers and leaders alike throughout history which were actually missionary endeavours with the ultimate aim of peace, and in contrast with the Graeco-Roman idea of militaristic geopolitical expansion which historians such as Edward N. Luttwak, John Lewis Gaddis, Lawrence Freedman and others have captured in the term 'grand strategy.'

[10] 'Revival of Sunnism' here as a historical phenomenon refers to the resurgence of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah in the spiritual, intellectual, political, social, and economic dimensions of the focus

Roots of Sunni Revival

The reign of the 'Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid (r. 786–809 A.D.) can be identified as one of the most significant periods in the history of Islam. The Muslim empire was expanding; its armies "on the frontiers of Spain" were invading territories of Byzantium.[11] Apart from that, the period also saw the establishment of notable libraries in several Persian cities.[12] The royal library formerly known as Khizanat al-Hikmah (The Storehouses of Wisdom) was transformed from just a centre for the translation of foreign texts into an institution for specialised scholarly study and investigation, taking the new name 'Bayt al-Hikmah' (The House of Wisdom).[13] It became the place where scholars, philosophers, and learned men in the likes of Abu Yusuf al-Kindi (c. 801– c. 873 A.D.) and Banu Musa (c. 803–873 A.D.) flocked to receive royal patronage.[14]

In the phase of literary development between the 9th and 10th centuries, scholars of the Muslim world were actively translating many Greek philosophical works into Arabic, and this was generally the way foreign sciences

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milieu as described and articulated by A. R. Azzam in his work *Saladin: The Triumph of the Sunni Revival*, hereinafter cited as *Saladin: The Triumph* (1st ed. London: Pearson Education Limited, 2009; this 2nd ed. Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2014).

[11] Henri Pirrene, *Mohammed and Charlemagne* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1954; repr. New York: Dover Publications, 2001), 158.

[12] Donald R. Hill, *Islamic Science and Engineering* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 11. See also D. Sourdel, "Bayt al-Ḥikma," *Encyclopedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., hereinafter cited as *EI2,* 12 vols. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), 1:1141.

[13] Ibn al-Nadim, *Fihrist*, ed. Ibrahim Ramadan (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 2013), 174 & 182. See also George Saliba, *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007), 48; Donald R. Hill, *Islamic Science and Engineering* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 11.

[14] Amjad M. Hussain, *A Social History of Education in the Muslim World: From the Prophetic Era to Ottoman Times*, hereinafter cited as *Social History of Education* (London: Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd., 2011), 83.

were transferred into the Islamic scientific tradition. [15] Natural sciences and mathematics were part of the philosophical works that were translated, as evident in various works done on the classification of knowledge in Islam.[16]

The post-Buwayhid era in the mid-11th century saw the increasing tension between the Saljuq sultans and the 'Abbasid Caliph, facilitated by the rise of the Saljuq *atābeg*s (the Turkish governing nobility, the word literally means "father-prince"). [17] The tension would eventually show in the strenuous relations between one of the powerful *atābeg*s, 'Imad al-Din Zangi (r. 1127–1146 A.D.), and the 'Abbasid caliph, al-Mustarshid (r. 1118–1135 A.D.). It seems that as Saljuq power peaked, ʿAbbasid influence waned, presenting the *ummah* with the possibility that the Caliphate as a dependable political institution might collapse entirely, along with its titular head whose charge has been to protect the interests of Islam and the Muslims.[18]

The growth in scientific and technological knowledge resultant of what A. I. Sabra calls the Translation Movement[19] under the patronage of the ʿAbbasid caliphs

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[15] Alparslan Açikgenç, *Islamic Scientific Tradition in History* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit IKIM, 2014), 429.

[16] In the scientific tradition of Islam there exist various works on classification of knowledge such as al-Khawarizmi's *Mafatih al-'Ulum*, Ikhwan al-Safa's *Rasa'il*, al-'Amiri's *al-I'lam bi Manaqib al-Islam* and al-Ghazali in his *Munqidh min al-Dalal*. See Osman Bakar, *Classification of Knowledge in Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC-IIUM, 2006), 1–2.

[17] Majid 'Irsan al-Kaylani, *Hakadha Zahara Jil Salah al-Din wa hakadha ʿAdat al-Quds*, hereinafter cited as *Hakadha Zahara Jil Salah al-Din* (UAE: Dar al-Qalam, 2002), 84.

[18] Sohaira Z. M. Siddiqui, *Law and Politics under the Abbasids: An Intellectual Portrait of al-Juwayni*, hereinafter cited as *Law and Politics* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 243–250.

[19] A. I. Sabra, "The Appropriation and Subsequent Naturalization of Greek Science in Medieval Islam: A Preliminary Statement," *History of Science* 25(3) (1987), 228.

lent an advantage in an imperialistic-like expansion of the Muslim territories, but the accompanying spread of philosophic ideas also meant that the salient fundamental elements in the worldview of the Muslims were being gradually undermined. Eventually, it led to a shift in paradigm, especially the political, which proved to be disastrous with regards to how Muslim rulers were facing the Crusader invasion and quite possibly a major contributing factor in Muslim losses on a number of fronts including the Crusader conquest of Jerusalem.

The summary of the philosophic ideas and how the Muslim theologians countered them shall be discussed in due course, but if Zangi were to be used as an example of the ideas having some political ramifications, it can be argued that even though the *atābeg* contributed to the war efforts in the early stage of the Muslim territorial defence he was embroiled in the confusion of priorities that afflicted the other leaders who were similarly preoccupied with fighting fellow Muslims, switching allegiances, and making alliances with the invaders for the sake of political expediency and self-preservation.[20]

Despite the Crusader occupation, Zangi was seemingly bent on carving for himself an empire out of Muslim lands, particularly in his conquest of Hama, Homs, and Baalbek in 1135, and his triple attempts to invade Damascus.[21] On top of that, he also clashed with the forces of Caliph al-Mustarshid while acting under the orders of Saljuq sultan Mahmud II (r. 1118–1131 A.D.) who wanted to curtail the young Caliph's desire for dominance.[22] If there is anything unanimously agreed upon by the ancient Greek philosophers—Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—on

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[20] A. R. Azzam, *Saladin: The Triumph*, 16–19.

[21] *Ibid*., 19.

[22] Birsel Küçüksipahioğlu, "Mosul & Aleppo governor Imad al-Din Zangi's fight against the Crusaders," *Marmara Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* 1(2) (2014), 81.

the secular aspect of politics, it is that self-interest rests at
the heart of what drives people and their affairs. [23]
Therefore, the aforementioned actions of the Muslim rulers
can be sourced in their political paradigms which upon
further inspection leads to the discovery a deeper problem
which can only described as a philosophical programme
working at the level of worldview.

Aware that above the heads of Muslim leaders hangs
the Damoclean sword of the precarious situations which
might lead to the collapse of political leadership, a
scholar—both a jurisconsult (*faqih*) of the Shafi'i school
(*madhhab*) of jurisprudence and a theologian (*mutakallim*)
in the Ashʿari *madhhab*—known as Imam al-Haramayn
Dhiya' al-Din 'Abd al-Malik ibn Yusuf al-Juwayni (1028–
1085 A.D.) was already labouring to solve this problem
based on a religious framework. In al-Juwayni's lifetime,
the group that advocated the primacy of reason and its
superiority over revelation known as the Mu'tazilah still
posed trouble to Muslim orthodoxy, despite being largely
disorganised. [24] Many of them were intellectuals who
contradicted one another but held onto the fundamental
principles that characterised them.[25]

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[23] According to Plato: "Wars and revolutions and battles are due simply
and solely to the body and its desires. All wars are undertaken for the
acquisition of wealth, and the reason why we have to acquire wealth
is the body, because we are slaves in its service." See Plato, "Phaedo,"
The Collected Works of Plato, trans. Hugh Tredennick, eds. Edith
Hamilton & Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University
Press, 1980), 41–67. See also Julian A. Davies, *A Philosophy of the
Human Being* (Maryland: University Press of America, 2009), 77–81.

[24] Peter Adamson, *Philosophy in the Islamic World* (Oxford: Oxford
University Press, 2016) 14–15.

[25] For an elucidation on the principles of the Muʿtazilites, see Wan Azhar
Wan Ahmad, *Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwayni on the Symbiosis
between Theology and Legal Theory*, hereinafter cited as *Symbiosis*
(Putrajaya & Abu Dhabi: Islamic and Strategic Studies Institute
(ISSI), 2017), 106–109.

The Saljuq vizier in Nishapur, Tughril Beg (990–1063 A.D.), favored the Mu'tazilites but banned the Ash'arites, particularly al-Juwayni, from teaching Sunni-Ashʿari creed.[26] The forerunner of the Ash'arite school of theology (*kalam*), al-Imam Abu al-Hasan al-Asa'ari (873/4 – 935/6 A.D.), had turned the tables the previous century against Mu'tazilism after exposing the fundamental weakness in its doctrine regarding theodicy and divine obligation during an exchange with his teacher, the renowned Mu'tazili scholar Abu 'Ali Muhammad al-Jubba'i (d. 915 A.D.). With the Mu'tazilites on the rout, al-Ash'ari worked to restore and uphold the traditional Sunni position on the symbiosis between reason and revelation.[27]

Tughril's ban had forced al-Juwayni to commute between Makkah and Madinah in order to teach, yet he still managed to attract many students and followers, for which reason he was given the title *Imam al-Haramayn* ([Spiritual and Religious] Leader of the Two Holy Sanctuaries).[28] Al-Juwayni's contributions were largely in the areas of *fiqh*, *usul al-fiqh*, and *kalam*, but it was his magnum opus *Nihayat al-Matlab fi Dirayat al-Madhhab* (*The Final Inquiry in the Knowledge of the School of Jurisprudence [of al-Shafiʿi]*) that received acclamation, with its erudition described as unprecedented by the historian Ibn 'Asakir (1106–1176 A.D.).[29]

Al-Juwayni's theological work *Kitab al-Irshad ila Qawatiʿ al-Adillah fi Usul al-Iʿtiqad* (*Guide to Conclusive*

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[26] Ann K. S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam*, hereinafter cited as *State and Government* (London & New York: Routledge, 1981), 104–105; Wan Ahmad, *Symbiosis*, 57.

[27] Wan Ahmad, *Symbiosis*, 112–115. See also Siddiqui, *Law and Politics*, 96–108.

[28] Lambton, *State and Government*, 104.

[29] 'Ali ibn al-Hasan ibn 'Asakir, *Tabyin Kadhib al-Muftari fima Nusiba ila al-Imam Abi al-Hasan al-Ash'ari*, ed. al-Sayyid 'Abd al-Baqi al-Hasani al-Jaza'iri (1st ed. Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 1929; this 2nd ed. 1979), 281–282.

Proofs for the Principles of Belief) was written to underline matters which are and can be proven, along with the methods of demonstrating truth in the fundamental creed of the religion. An important chapter of the *Irshad* discusses the divinely ordainedy of Man as a being whom God created with a dual nature of animal and spiritual qualities.[30] In al-Juwayni's view, the *Shari'ah* is not merely a set of religious laws that concerned only the Muslims; it is the perfection of the divine of way of living promulgated and conveyed through the agency of prophets, the last of whom was the Prophet Muḥammad, as guidance for human beings to achieve the ultimate purpose of temporal life: to obtain God's pleasure (*rida*) through the performance of divinely-ordained religious duties.[31]

Al-Juwayni's theological framework is a restatement of divine omnipotence and attributes as revealed in the Qur'an. Contrasting the Greek philosophical notions of dualism and causality, he argues for the *primacy of existence* wherein Man is contained within *temporally contingent existence* and *continuity*, both of which God, Who is All-Knowing and All-Powerful, can overcome and suspend, producing what is commonly known as miracles through *al-khariq li al-'adah*: breaking the customary way of acting.[32] Contrasting also the positions of al-Jabariyyah (the Predestinarians) and al-Qadariyyah (the Free-willers), he posits in the manner explaining the Ashʿarite doctrine of capacity (*kasab*) that all events are Acts of God (*afʿal Allah*); human beings do not *create* their own acts but only *acquire* them from the Creator, Who either rewards or

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[30] Diya' al-Din 'Abd al-Malik ibn Yusuf al-Juwayni, *Kitab al-Irshad ila Qawatiʿ al-Adillah fi Usul al-I'tiqad*, hereinafter cited as *al-Irshad*, eds. Muhammad Yusuf Musa & 'Ali 'Abd al-Munʿim 'Abd al-Hamid (Egypt: Maktabah al-Khaniji, 1950), 302–307.

[31] *Ibid*.

[32] Al-Juwayni, *al-Irshad*, 18–27 & 229. See also Wan Ahmad, *Symbiosis*, 113–114.

punishes them individually, based on their intentions, for
acts they did out of the *acquired* capacity.[33]

Al-Juwayni's thought also departs from the Shi'i
conception of designated Imamate and its limitations,[34]
whose roots could be traced back to the philosophical
foundation of the Mu'tazili dichotomy between real and
ideal. Rather, al-Juwayni's position allows Rightly
Guidedious interpretation and independent reasoning
(*ijtihad*) on the question of leadership (*al-Imamah*).[35]
Selection and nomination to find the most suitable leader
(*Imam*) of the *ummah* are best decided (*ikhtiyar*) through
consultation (*shura*) by 'the people of binding authority'
(*ahl al-hall waʾl-ʿaqd*),[36] affirming the traditional practices
of the Pious Predecessors (*al-salaf al-salih*) and Rightly-
Guided Caliphs Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, and 'Ali.[37]

Al-Juwayni asserts that the *Imam*'s absence could
impede the implementation of religious stipulations and
render decisions by the members of both the administration
and the judiciary not only inoperable but also invalid.[38]
Therefore, the solution must be one of practical certainty;
for this reason, another work of his on *usul al-fiqh*
(principles of jurisprudence), titled *Ghiyath al-Umam fiʾl-
Tiyath al-Zulam* (Savior of the Nation during the Chaos of

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[33] Al-Juwayni, *al-Irshad*, 188–217. There are many instances of *kasb*
alluded in the Holy Qurʾān: *Al-Baqarah* (2):79, 81, and 286; *al-An'am*
(6):120; *al-Hijr* (15):84; *al-Nur* (24):11; *Ya-Sin* (36):65; *al-Saffat*
(37):96; *al-Jathiyah* (45):14; *al-Tur* (52):21; and *al-Masad* (111):2.

[34] Al-Juwayni, *al-Irshad*, 419–426.

[35] Lambton, *State and Government*, 105.

[36] *Ibid*.

[37] Al-Juwayni, *al-Irshad*, 419–433.

[38] *Ibid*., 250–251. This is explicated in detail by Ash'arite theologian
Saʿd al-Din Masʿud ibn 'Umar al-Taftazani (1322–1390 A.D.) in his
commentary upon the Maturidi text on the fundamental creed of the
religion *al-Aqa'id al-Nasafiyyah* by Imam Abu Hafs Najm al-Din al-
Nasafi (d. 1142 A.D. /537 A.H.). See Saʿd al-Din Masʿud ibn 'Umar
al-Taftazani, *Sharh al-'Aqa'id al-Nasafiyyah* (1st ed. Karachi:
Maktabah al-Madinah, 2009; this 3rd ed., 2012), 331–332.

Darkness)—known by its shorter title *al-Ghiyathi*—concentrates upon how Muslims should carry out their religious affairs in the absence of the *Imam* who is supposed to protect them.

Since Revelation projects a metaphysical vision of God Whose authority is absolute and highest, [39] in al-Juwayni's worldview political power and authority are not limited by any form of temporal government. Instead, he posits that the *Shari'ah* allows the *ummah* to continue carrying out their religious and worldly affairs, even in the collapse of political institutions. [40] Furthermore, such institutional collapse warrants the position of religious scholars (*al-'ulama'*) as the *ummah*'s source of guidance in religious matters, who would respond accordingly to the dynamic changes in political reality. [41]

Al-Juwayni's political thought is founded upon the theology which he summarises in *Irshad*, but he would elaborate it further in *Ghiyathi*. [42] In this work, several key concepts of statecraft, such as *ahl al-hall wa al-'aqd* (literally: people of loosening and binding), [43] *jihad* (struggle for the sake of the religion), [44] *najdah* (military leadership), [45] and *shawkah* (military power), comprise the fundamental elements of the solution to the problem of leadership al-Juwayni had grappled with earlier on, but the solidification in the worldview of the Sunni's and

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[39] *Ali 'Imran* (3):26.

[40] Siddiqui, *Law and Politics*, 236; Lambton, *State and Government*, 106.

[41] Lambton, *State and Government*, 241.

[42] Siddiqui, *Law and Politics*, 250.

[43] Diya' al-Din 'Abd al-Malik ibn Yusuf al-Juwayni, *al-Ghiyathi* or *Ghiyath al-Umam fi al-Tiyath al-Zulam*, ed. 'Abd al-'Azim al-Dib (Beirut: Dar al-Minhaj, 2011), 243–253.

[44] *Ibid*., 344–361.

[45] *Ibid*., 367–413.

realisation of those concepts as actionable policies would be achieved only sometime after his death.[46]

Solidification of Sunni Worldview

After al-Juwayni died in 1085, his brilliant student and protégé, Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali al-Tusi al-Shafi'i (c. 1058–1111 A.D.), the man who was to be known later as al-Imam al-Ghazali,[47] went to expand the key concepts of his teacher's political thought in several of his works, such as *Fada'ih al-Batiniyyah wa Fada'il al-Mustazhiriyyah* (*The Infamies of the Batinites and the Merits of the Mustazhirites*), also known by its shorter title *Kitab al-Mustazhiri* (*The Book of the Mustzzhirite*); *al-Tibr al-Masbuk fi Nasihat al-Muluk*; and *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal* (*Deliverance from Error*).

As a jurisconsult and theologian, al-Ghazali was one of the greatest scholars in Islam who contributed majorly to the twelfth-century revival of Sunnism.[48] An Ash'arite in the *Kalam* theological school of thought and Shafiʿite in jurisprudence, he earned the title *Hujjat al-Islam* (the Proof of Islam) through not only forceful arguments but also having stood out as living proof of certainty in the religion.[49]

A spiritual crisis at the height of al-Ghazali's academic career resulted in a journey of self-discovery whereupon, in

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[46] *Ibid*., 421–445.

[47] Abu Nasr Taj al-Din 'Abd al-Wahhab ibn 'Ali al-Subki, *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyah al-Kubra*, hereinafter cited as *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyah*, eds. 'Abd al-Fattah Muhammad al-Hilw & Mahmud Muhammad al-Tanahi, 10 vols. (Cairo: Dar al-Ihya al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, 1964), 6:196.

[48] Azzam, *Saladin: The Triumph*, 46.

[49] See translator's biographical notes in *Reliance of the Traveler: A Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law* 'Umdat al-Salik *by Ahmad ibn Naqib al-Misri*, hereinafter cited as *Reliance of the Traveler*, trans. Nuh Ha Mim Keller (Beltsville: Amana Publications, 1994), 1046; Frank Griffel, *Al-Ghazali's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 34.

a period of convalescence, he then decided to write the 40-book *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* (*The Revival of the Religious Sciences*) with the aim of restoring the original meaning of *fiqh* (religious understanding) that had become obscure due to the constriction of the term and reviving the religious sciences through beneficial learning by clarifying important and fundamental key concepts in religious thought.[50] *Ihya'* is considered to be his magnum opus and one of the greatest masterpieces ever produced in the history of Islam.[51]

A rising star among Sunni-Ashʿarite scholarly circles,[52] al-Ghazali received accolades for his defence of the orthodoxy and his refutation of the philosophers' (*al-Falasifah*) claim on their ability to arrive to the truth.[53] Having gained considerable insight into philosophy after spending two years studying it,[54] al-Ghazali identified a number of erroneous beliefs that not only contradict the tenets of the religion but also have surreptitiously infiltrated the undercurrents of Muslim thought and brought about the lapse into immorality and irreligiousness among their proponents.[55] The beliefs include the Greek idea of what they conceive to be the human soul,[56] which al-Ghazali attributes the fundamental understanding of its emergence

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[50] Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, hereinafter cited as *Ihya'*, 1st ed., 10 vols. (Jeddah: Dar al-Minhaj, 2011), 1: 8–9.

[51] Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology*, 48.

[52] *Ibid*., 31–35.

[53] See his work: Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali, *al-Tahafut al-Falasifah*, hereinafter cited as *al-Tahafut*, ed. Sulayman Dunya (1st ed. Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1955; this 4th ed. 1966).

[54] Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali, "Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal," *Majmu'ah Rasa'il al-Imam al-Ghazali fi al-Fiqh wa al-'Aqidah wa al-Usul wa al-Tasawwuf*, hereinafter cited as *Majmu'ah Rasa'il*, 1st ed. (Cairo: Dar al-Imam al-Shatibi, 2010), 14.

[55] Al-Ghazali, *al-Tahafut*, 73–77.

[56] *Ibid*., 252–272 [Al-Ghazālī, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, trans. & ed. Michael E. Marmura (Provo: Bringham Young University Press, 2000), 178–198].

and cessation with the physical body[57] as the basis of the argument used by the followers of philosophy to repudiate the Afterlife (*al-Akhirah*), along with its consequences, and justify their wilful loss of self-restraint and self-abandonment to beastly passions,[58] thus identifiable as the aforementioned philosophical programme affecting the political actions and behaviours of the Muslim governing elites.

Demonstrating in his work *Tahafut al-Falasifah* (*The Incoherence of the Philosophers*) what the philosophers believe about the soul and its nature to be logically inconsistent therefore rationally untenable,[59] al-Ghazali would restate in his post-*Tahafut* works a position on the dual nature of Man which understandably bears the imprints of al-Juwayni's thought. In al-Ghazzli's view, the human being is a merging between the body (*al-jism*), whose qualities are coarse, degenerating, and mortal, and the soul that is simple and jewel-like (*al-nafs al-jawhari al-mufrad*), jewel-like due to its qualities of being luminous, rational, acting, moving, and completive to instruments and bodies (*al-munir al-mudrik al-fa'il al-muharrik al-mutammim li al-alat wa al-ajsam*)[60] in the manner a tool is complete with the hand that wields or uses it, and additionally: persistent, incorruptible, and immortal

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[57] This concept identifies with what Aristotle calls as *entelécheia*. See Aristotle, "De Anima," *Basic Works of Aristotle*, 554–556. See also Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy* (1st ed. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1926; this 2nd ed. 2005), 58–59.

[58] Al-Ghazali, "Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal," 15.

[59] See al-Ghazali, *al-Tahafut*, 252–273.

[60] Al-Ghazali, "Al-Risalah al-Laduniyyah," *Majmu'ah Rasa'il*, 457. See also Che Zarrina Sa'ari, *Al-Ghazali and Intuition: An Analysis, Translation and Text of al-Risalah al-Laduniyyah*, hereinafter cited as *Al-Ghazālī and Intuition* (Kuala Lumpur: Department of Aqidah and Islamic Thought, Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya, 2007), 39.

(*la yuqbalu al-fasad wa-la yadhmahilu wa-la yafna wa-la yamutu*).[61]

Mentioning it elsewhere in his other works as "spiritual subtlety" (*al-latifah al-ruhaniyyah*) [62] and "rational soul" (*al-ruh al-natiqah*),[63] al-Ghazali states that the soul is capable of receiving and comprehending knowledge, rules over its other spiritual faculties, and does not in itself suffer corruption or ceases with the death of the physical body but rather survives and awaits to return to it on the Day of Resurrection (*Yawm al-Qiyamah*).[64] More importantly, however, al-Ghazali's theory affirms the Qur'anic statement regarding the divine origin of the human soul, [65] which the philosophers fundamentally lacked due to their inability to prove the existence of a divine Creator and,[66] by extension, the metaphysical basis for their ethics and morality.

Yet, al-Ghazali's holistic approach—embodied in his composition of *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*—in treating the soul's tendencies towards the destructive vices (*muhlikat*) of its lower animal desires such as greed, envy, and wrath would only emerge together with his return from a temporary retirement, which took place between 1106 and 1109, following an episode of profound spiritual realisation.[67] For certainly, the political theories developed by al-Ghazali were the intellectual responses of a religious scholar to the

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[61] Al-Ghazali, "Al-Risalah al-Laduniyyah," 458 [*Al-Ghazali and Intuition*, 43].

[62] Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Ma'arij al-Quds fi Ma'rifat al-Nafs*, hereinafter cited as *Ma'arij* (1st ed. Beirut: Dar al-Afaq al-Jadidah, 1927; this 2nd ed. 1975), 6. See also al-Attas, *Prolegomena*, 148.

[63] Al-Ghazali, "Al-Risalah al-Laduniyyah," 458.

[64] *Ibid*.

[65] The Qur'anic verse which al-Ghazali cites regarding this is *al-Isra'* (17):85. See al-Ghazali, "Al-Risalah al-Laduniyyah," 458; *Ma'arij*, 6.

[66] Al-Ghazali, *al-Tahafut*, 155–158.

[67] George F. Hourani, "A Revised Chronology of Ghazali's Writings," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104(2) (1984), 291.

challenges of his time. When al-Mustazhir (r. 1094–1118
A.D.) ascended the caliphal throne in 1094, he
commissioned the scholar—by then, a renowned
jurisconsult and theologian—to compose a book exposing
and refuting the erroneous belief of the Batini sect (*al-
Batiniyyah*) within Isma'ilism, a branch of Shi'ism
dedicated to overthrowing the Sunni 'Abbasids in
anticipation of their hidden *Imam*'s return.[68]

For al-Ghazali, the *Imam* is the source of legitimacy in
matters of politics and religion encompassed by the
Shari'ah, whose political power facilitates the institutional
implementation of religious duties.[69] Bringing the analogy
of the twin brothers (*taw'amani*), al-Ghazali establishes the
relationship between religion (*al-din*) and temporal power
or reign (*al-dawlah*), the corollary of which is an
incumbency upon temporal rulers to look after the affairs
of the religion by ensuring its stipulations are carried out.
These include protecting the religion from reprehensible
innovations by restraining or punishing those who manifest
or act out vain desires, defending the frontiers of Muslim
territories, and striving for the glory of the religion.[70]

A similar endeavour to counter aberrant sectarianism
of the Shiʿites was undertaken by al-Ghazali's patron, the
vizier of the Saljuq Empire known as Nizam al-Mulk
(1018–1092 A.D.), who dedicated several chapters to the
issue in his book *Siyasat-nameh* as part of psychological
warfare and intellectual assault against the Qarmatians (*al-
Qaramitah*), another Ismaʿili sect inciting unrest and
rebellion in the areas of, among others, Iraq, Khurasan, and

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[68] Amira K. Bennison, *The Great Caliphs: Great Caliphs*, 40.

[69] Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Fada'ih al-
Batiniyyah wa Fada'il al-Mustazhiriyyah*, hereinafter cited as *al-
Mustazhiri*, ed. Muhammad ʿAli Qutb (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-
ʿAsriyyah, 2005), 153–154.

[70] Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Tibr al-Masbuk
fi Nasihat al-Muluk*, hereinafter cited as *Nasihat al-Muluk*, ed. Ahmad
Shams al-Din (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1988), 50.

al-Sham (Syria). [71] Concerned that the spread of Batini ideology could potentially disrupt social cohesion within the Saljuq Empire therefore cause its disintegration, Nizam al-Mulk raised the alarm on the perils posed by the sect and so expounded in his book the similarities between Qaramitah teachings and Mazdakism, tracing the origin of the former rebel heresy to ancient proto-socialistic teachings of the false prophet Mazdak that nearly crippled the Sasanian Empire during the reign of Kavad I (r. 488–531 A.D.).[72]

Emergence of Liberation Strategy

What does al-Ghazali's metaphysics and political-legal thought altogether got to do with the emergence of a liberation strategy? It is interesting to note that al-Ghazali was present at Nizam al-Mulk's military camp (*muʿaskar*) when the vizier first met him in 1091.[73] As a *faqih*, he has already elaborated the Shafiʿite rules of *jihad* in a major work of his on jurisprudence, *al-Wasit fi al-Madhhab* (*The Medium [Digest] in Jurisprudence*), covering topics including: conduct and collective responsibility of military expeditions (*siyar*),[74] the permissibility of deploying siege weapons against the unbeliever enemy,[75] treatment of non-

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[71] Abu ʿAli al-Hasan Nizam al-Mulk, *Siyar al-Muluk*, trans. Yusuf Bakkar, 2nd ed. (Jordan: Wuzarah al-Thaqafah, 2007), 247–268 [*Book of Government*, 208–227]. See also Mohd. Amin, "The Dominion of the Scholars," 97.

[72] Nizam al-Mulk, *Siyar al-Muluk*, 229–244 [*Book of Government*, 187–205].

[73] Al-Subki, *Tabaqat al-Shafiʿiyyah*, 6:196. As mentioned in the translator's introduction, *Deliverance from Error: An Annotated Translation of Munqidh min al-Dalal and Other Relevant Works of al-Ghazali*, hereinafter cited as *Deliverance from Error*, trans. R. J. McCarthy (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2001), 14–18.

[74] Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali, *al-Wasit fi al-Madhhab*, hereinafter cited as *al-Wasit*, eds. Ahmad Mahmud Ibrahim & Muhammad Muhammad Tamir, 3rd ed., 7 vols. (Cairo: Dar al-Salam, 2012), 7:3–15.

[75] *Ibid*., 7:21.

combatants and bystanders during warfare,[76] prohibition against killing the enemy upon conversion to Islam,[77] spoils of war,[78] armistice,[79] tribute and truce,[80] and agreement with non-Muslims under protection (*'aqd al-dhimmah*),[81] and authorities and permissions.[82]

Another of al-Ghazali's credentials worth considering is his personal acquaintance with Nizam al-Mulk, who—by virtue of his long service as vizier to the Saljuq sultans and experience in many of their military campaigns—was also the commander of their armies.[83] Several chapters of *Siyasat-nameh* are particularly instructive on the administration of armies and the management of warfare.[84] Therefore, not only is it not inconceivable through these details that al-Ghazali was well-informed in matters of warfare and international politics, but it is also now clear from the rationalisations above that there was an immense, enduring strategic value in al-Ghazali's intellectual outputs, especially those concerning political and military affairs.

Expressing his hope in fulfilling his obligation to serve the Caliph and countering the deviant teachings surreptitiously undermining the foundations of the mainstream Sunni epistemic framework, al-Ghazali set out in the *Mustazhiri* to refute the doctrine of the Batiniyyah by systematically attacking the inconsistencies of the doctrine's logic.[85] Al-Ghazali would reiterate some key

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[76] *Ibid*., 7:21–23.

[77] *Ibid*., 7:25.

[78] *Ibid*., 7:32.

[79] *Ibid*., 7:43.

[80] *Ibid*., 7:53.

[81] *Ibid*., 7:55–58.

[82] *Ibid*., 7:89.

[83] C. E. Bosworth, "The Political and Dynastic History of the Iranian World (A.D. 1000–1217)," *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. Richard N. Frye, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 5:57–65.

[84] See chapter listing in *Book of Government*, 3–4.

[85] Al-Ghazali, *al-Mustazhiri*, 12–15.

points in the *Mustazhiri*, such as the *ummah*'s obligation in appointing a leader, in his future works such as *Qistas al-Mustaqim* (*The Just Balance*), *Faysal al-Tafriqah bayn al-Islam waʾl-Zandaqah* (*The Clear Criterion distinguishing between Islam and godlessness*), and *al-Iqtisad fi al-Iʿtiqad* (*The Just Balance in Belief*).[86]

In what could be construed as a strategic move, the two works mentioned earlier of al-Ghazali's effectively endorsed *Mustazhiri* the position of the Caliph al-Mustazhir, whom he viewed as the legitimate *Imam* of the Muslims at the time,[87] based on the incumbency of the Imamate as argued in both the *Mustazhiri* and the *Iqtisad*.[88] Interpreting a *Hadith* related to the matter of incumbent leadership and explaining the symbiosis between worldly and religious matters, al-Ghazali states that: "The religion and sultan are twin brothers (*tawʿamani*). The religion is the foundation while the sultan is the guardian (*haris*): what has no foundation will be ruined (*fa-mahdum*); what has no guardian, will be lost (*fa-daʾiʿ*)."[89]

Consequently, this position of al-Ghazali's entails the *Imam*'s appointment as a crucial point in the strategy for the survival of a nation's identity, culture and religion.[90] Any disruption in the balance of power requires the Muslims to expend their best efforts in choosing (*ikhtiyar*) a leader who not only possesses military power (*shawkah*), but also the ability to compel the people to follow his will

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[86] See Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali, *al-Iqtisad fi al-Iʿtiqad*, hereinafter cited as *al-Iqtisad*, ed. Anas Muhammad ʿAdnan al-Sharfawi, 2nd ed. (Jeddah: Dar al-Minhaj, 2012), 291–297. For a chronology of al-Ghazali's writings, see Hourani, "A Revised Chronology of Ghazali's Writings," 289–302.

[87] Lambton, *State and Government*, 110.

[88] Al-Ghazali, *al-Mustazhiri*, 153–154; Al-Ghazali, *al-Iqtisad*, 291–293.

[89] Al-Ghazali, *al-Iqtisad*, 292–293.

[90] Lambton, *State and Government*, 108 and 111–112.

with military leadership (*najdah*) by which he brings to bear his military power against enemies.[91]

Furthermore, al-Ghazali conceives *najdah* as a leader's ability to manifest military power whose source is the support of followers.[92] Through *najdah*, the leader is able to equip armies with a great number of armaments (*mawfur al-'uddah*), empowering him to defend himself and protect his people against enemies in the manner that shall be described next. Firstly, it allows the leader to fasten the standards of victory and unity among his people. Secondly, with military support the leader is able to: (1) suppress rebels and transgressors (*qam' al-bughah wa al-tughah*), (2) fight disbelievers and unruliness (*mujahadat al-kafarah wa al-'utah*), and (3) alleviate socio-political tensions. Third and finally, by virtue of *najdah* the leader is able to stem the flood of trials and tribulations, arresting in the process the manifestation of corruption (*fasad*) and the spread of harm (*mudarrah*) in his dominion.[93]

According to al-Ghazali, the faculty of the human soul called the intellect (*'aqal*) is capable of conceiving strategies (*idrak al-hiyal*)[94] through which the human being can entrap, capture, subdue, and gain mastery over other animals larger in terms of size and more vicious in terms of savagery.[95] Furthermore, the terms *hawl* and *hiyal* used in

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[91] Al-Ghazali, *al-Mustazhiri*, 161–165.

[92] *Ibid*., 163.

[93] *Ibid*.

[94] Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali, "Kitab al-'Ilm," *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, hereinafter cited as *Ihya'*, 1st ed., 10 vols. (Jeddah: Dar al-Minhaj, 2011), 1:305.

[95] The proponents of the Sunni-Ash'arite metaphysical system—chiefly represented by al-Ghazali and his teacher, Imam al-Haramayn Diya'ul-Din 'Abd al-Malik ibn Yusuf al-Juwayni (1028–1085 A.D.) —hold that God created Man as a noble being composed of physical body (*jasad*) and subtle spirit (*ruh*), a proposition which both al-Juwayni and al-Ghazali refer to *al-Hijr* (15):28–29 as the basis. Al-Ghazali states that the intellect is the: (1) noble and unique attribute which separates the human being from animals, allowing scientific

the Holy Qur'an are used in the positive context to denote the ingenuity and ability to overcome obstacles,[96] but al-Ghazali himself would demonstrate what he understood to be the meaning of *hiyal* in at least two separate literary occasions, namely in his autobiography of sorts *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal wa al-Mufsih bi al-Ahwal* (Deliverance from Error and Illumination of Spiritual States) which was written in 1106, and his 'mirrors for princes' work *al-Tibr al-Masbuk fi Nasihat al-Muluk* (Melted Ingot in the Counsel for Rulers) which was written "before 1106 or soon after 1109."[97]

In *Munqidh*, al-Ghazali describes his own experience acting "with the subtleties of stratagems" (*bi-lata'if al-hiyal*) after an episode of introspection and spiritual awakening encouraged him to retire from his stellar academic career in order to escape the attention of the caliph, his associates, and the religious leaders of Iraq, all of whom could not allow him to give up his prestigious position and critically acclaimed career thus presented an obstacle for him to pursue his intended life of anonymity,

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understanding and organisation of disciplines; (2) science based on evidence which discerns possibilities and impossibilities; (3) science based on study of empirical evidence and conditions from which they originated; and (4) faculty of the soul which discerns the consequences of actions. See Diya' al-Din ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Yusuf al-Juwayni, *Kitab al-Irshad ila Qawatiʿ al-Adillah fi Usul al-Iʿtiqad*, hereinafter cited as *al-Irshad*, eds. Muhammad Yusuf Musa & 'Ali 'Abd al-Mun'im 'Abd al-Hamid (Egypt: Maktabah al-Khaniji, 1950), 302–307; Al-Ghazali, "Kitab al-ʿIlm," *Ihyaʾ*, 5:26–27. See also Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam*, hereinafter cited as *Prolegomena* (Kuala Lumpur: The International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1995), 143–150.

[96] Abu al-Qasim Raghib al-Isfahani, *Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an*, ed. Muhammad Sayyid Kaylani (Lebanon: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 2008), 137–138.

[97] George F. Hourani, "A Revised Chronology of Ghazali's Writings," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104(2) (1984), 301.

seclusion, and self-realisation.[98] Yet, the other occasion in *Nasihat al-Muluk* where al-Ghazali demonstrated his understanding of *hiyal* must be properly contextualised and seen in the light of the internecine conflict of the Turks and the looming Crusader threat which he witnessed during his brief retirement.

Analysing the era's politically turbulent situation and the approaching Frankish threat that precipitated the Crusader invasion of Jerusalem in 1099, al-Ghazali decided that the *shawkah* of the time belonged to the Turks, whom God uplifted with His succor and love that they became closer to Him by His Providence. Therefore, the divine favor they received was by virtue of their support in suppressing the enemies of al-Mustazhir's sovereign State (*qam' a'dā' dawlatihi*) and their acknowledgment of his vicegerency and leadership and the obligation to obey him (*yatadinun bi-iʿtiqad khilafatihi wa imamatihi wa-wujub taʿatihi*), following God's commandment in assent of His Revelation.[99]

Al-Ghazali's justification of his support for the shift of military responsibility in the defence of Islam and the Muslims was rooted in his observation of the shifting military power from Arab armies to that of the Turks, which by his time have grown significantly powerful. In this regard, three situations can be marshalled in support of this view: (1) al-Mu'tazz's coup against al-Musta'in in 866 and the revolt against al-Muhtadi in 870, demonstrating Saljuq influence in 'Abbasid politics; (2) the installation of al-Mustakfi (r. 944–946 A.D.) as caliph by the Turkish general Tüzün in 944 after his overthrow of al-Muttaqi (r. 940–944

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[98] Al-Ghazali, *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal wa al-Mufsih bi al-Ahwal*, 3rd ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Minhaj, 2021), 92. See also *Al-Ghazali's Path to Sufism: His Deliverance from Error (Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal)*, trans. R. J. McCarthy (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 199; this 3rd imprint 2006), 55.

[99] *Ibid.*, 163–164.

A.D.), which shows the pervasiveness of Saljuq influence and the depth of their entrenchment in 'Abbasid political and military structure;[100] and (3) Ṭughril's wresting power from the Shi'i Buwayhids in 1055 and his restoration of Caliph al-Qa'im as the titular head of the *ummah*.[101] All these instances prove the shift of *shawkah* that by the time al-Mustazhir ascended as caliph, the ʿAbbasids have found themselves effectively surrounded, holding only asemblance of the power that their predecessors once had.[102]

Al-Ghazali's statement in the support of the formidable Saljuq Turks, whose military power could be brought to bear against the implacable might of the Crusaders, can be presented as evidence of what al-Ghazali conceives as a liberation strategy for the defence of the religion. Since he already conceives war—in the traditional sense of *fath* and *jihad*—as the political State's instrument for liberating a land or a people from tyranny and oppression, creating peaceful conditions for the expansion of Islam, and defending of Muslim territories, therefore it is more fitting now to call what Nizam al-Mulk and al-Ghazali had in mind as 'liberation strategy' rather than mere 'grand strategy' as a Western import. However, before al-Ghazali's solution could be accepted by the Caliph, his foresight of the oncoming threat and evidence of the enemy's propensity for violence must first be realised.

In 1097, al-Ghazali was in between Jerusalem and Damascus when the Crusader armies were in transit therefore must have heard the news of their approach, their

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[100] Hugh Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs: Military and Society in the Early Islamic State*, hereinafter cited as *Armies of the Caliphs* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 138–150.

[101] Bennison, *Great Caliphs*, 43–44.

[102] Amin Maalouf, *The Crusades through Arab eyes*, hereinafter cited as *Crusades through Arab eyes*, trans. Jon Rothschild (New York: Schocken Books, 1984), 54.

engagement with Saljuq forces, and their conquest of territories such as in the Siege of Antioch in 1098.[103] Based on these facts and the arguments of the *Mustazhiri*, it can be inferred that the military power of the Crusaders, manifested as ferocity in warfare, demanded a response with equal, if not greater, ferocity. According to Latin sources, "[T]he Franks had the greatest fear and admiration" for Turkish military qualities and the tactics they employed in battle.[104] Therefore, it can be posited that in al-Ghazali's rational estimation, what more reasonable candidate could be as militarily capable as the Turks, whose reputation as conquerors, fearsome warriors, and resilient masters in the art of warfare and mounted combat was not only well-established but also superior to their enemies.

In retrospect, it was to the credit of al-Ghazali's liberation strategy that the Muslims were able to prevent total occupation of their lands, buying the time to realign themselves morally and religiously, gather strength, and prepare for a counterattack. As discussed earlier, the chronology of events shows that the Muslims had suffered initial losses in the first wave of the Crusades not because they lacked military power; rather, their defeat was due to disunity and infighting.

Between the internecine conflict of rival Turkish factions and the devastation the Crusaders brought in their conquest of Jerusalem, al-Ghazali saw that, apart from disrupting the orderliness of worldly and religious affairs, wars also presented a mortal danger to the person of the *Imam*. Addressing the Saljuq rulers with a pacifistic undertone, [105] al-Ghazali counsels against deliberately

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[103] Hourani, "A Revised Chronology of Ghazali's Writings," 295–296. See also Griffel, *Al-Ghazali's Philosophical Theology*, 48.

[104] R. C. Smail, *Crusading Warfare, 1097–1193*, hereinafter cited as *Crusading Warfare* (first published Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956; this 2nd ed. 1995), 85.

[105] Based on the date Lambton argues to be the date *Nasihat al-Muluk* was authored, it can be postulated that among the Saljuq rulers

providing *casus belli*, reasoning that: "a man still alive can
be killed, whereas a man once killed cannot be made alive
(*li annahu yumkinu qutila al-ahya wa la yumkinu ihya' al-
qutla*)."[106] In a similar message to viziers and government
functionaries, he warns against inciting the ruler's desire
for war. [107] Instead, when faced with the possibility of
armed conflict, it is incumbent upon the vizier to conduct
affairs through correspondence and diplomacy (*bi al-
kutub*), resorting to military policy and management of
warfare (*bi al-ihtiyal wa al-tadbir*) only after having
exhausted all other options.[108]

These pieces of advice paralleled the endeavours of
Nizam al-Mulk who was at the same time seeking to
combat the ideologies and propaganda of deviant sects such
as the Qarmatians (*al-Qaramitah*), which were threatening
to unravel the fabric of Sunni unity. Imperial resources at
his disposal, he endeavoured for the rapid dissemination of
information and education by establishing colleges
(*madrasah*, pl. *madaris*) and centres of learning (*zawiyah*,
pl. *zawaya*), collectively known as the Nizamiyyah,[109] that

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addressed was Ahmad Sanjar who at the time was the ruler of
Khurasan (1097–1118 A.D.) and later the *sultan* of the Great Saljuq
Empire. See Hourani, "A Revised Chronology of Ghazali's Writings,"
301.

[106] Al-Ghazali, *Nasihat al-Muluk*, 87 [*Counsel for Kings*, 110–111].

[107] *Ibid.*

[108] *Ibid.*

[109] Mohamed Abu Bakr A. Al-Musleh, *Al-Ghazali the Islamic Reformer:
An Evaluative Study of the Attempts of Imam al-Ghazali at Islamic
Reform (Islah)*, hereinafter cited as *Al-Ghazali the Islamic Reformer*
(Selangor: Islamic Book Trust, 2012), 41. See also translator's
introduction*, Book of Government*, ix–x; C. E. Bosworth, "The
Political and Dynastic History of the Iranian World (A.D. 1000–
1217),", *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. Richard N. Frye, 7 vols.
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 5:71; Farouk Mitha,
*Al-Ghazali and the Ismailis: A Debate on Reason and Authority in
Medieval Islam*, hereinafter cited as *Al-Ghazali and the Ismailis* (New
York: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 7–8.

focused on scholarship and teaching religious sciences with an emphasis of the Shafi'i *madhhab*.[110]

Although Nizam al-Mulk's assassination ultimately prevented the vizier from carrying out all his reforms, his recruitment of al-Ghazali as the head of the Nizamiyyah could also be construed as part of a liberation strategy to foster greater Muslim unity, therefore, address the weaknesses caused by infighting and disunity. It was only after al-Ghazali met with Nizam al-Mulk in 1091 and upon the vizier's invitation that the great scholar agreed to take up the position as head of the Nizamiyyah, dividing his time in a routine between teaching religious sciences to hundreds of students and writing his works.[111]

Revival of Sunnism leading to Muslim Liberation of Jerusalem

As an astute observer of unfolding current events, al-Ghazali saw that the collapse of Sunni-Muslim political and social orders has its seeds in the confused purposes of education.[112] In his view, religion was being reduced to external formalities and rigid legalism through endless debates and disputations perpetrated by religious scholars,[113] which al-Ghazali regarded as reprehensible diametrical contradictions to the moral teachings of the religion, therefore, censured as the vain pursuit of fame and prestige—though those came after an episode of eye-opening personal experience and realisation.[114]

Explaining the futility of theory-practice dichotomy, al-Ghazali would emphasise in his works the need and

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[110] Hussain, *Social History of Education*, 108; Mitha, *Al-Ghazali and the Ismailis*, 8–9.

[111] See translator's introduction, *Deliverance from Error*, 14–18.

[112] Hussain, *Social History of Education*, 111.

[113] Azzam, *Saladin: The Triumph*, 6–8.

[114] Al-Ghazali, "Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal," 26–27.

method of putting knowledge into action.[115] *Shari'ah* is to be applied in the realisation of justice, which would then provide a conducive environment for human beings to live by the teachings of Islam according to their respective situations.[116]

In 1109, al-Ghazali was coming out from a retreat of spiritual convalescence during which time he finished writing his magnum opus, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*. Upon the insistence of Fakhr al-Mulk (1043–1107 A.D.), [117] al-Ghazali returned from retirement to serve once again at the Nizamiyyah, this time intending to discharge a personal duty of bringing into effect the spiritual and moral refinement in himself as well as others (*wa ana abghi an aslaha nafsi wa ghayri*).[118]

The education program al-Ghazali instituted in the *Ihya'* was the result of his genuine experience following the ways of the *sufi*s, described as the union of knowledge and activity aimed at removing hindrances to spiritual growth and ridding the soul "of its reprehensible habits and vicious qualities in order to attain thereby a heart empty of all save God and adorned with the constant remembrance of God." [119] As argued by Majid 'Irsan al-Kaylani, al-Ghazali's initiative soon became partly the cause for the rise of a new generation of scholars and leaders united in worldview, in addition to the removal of what he views as sources of Muslim weakness in facing the Crusaders: inner

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[115] Al-Ghazali, "Ayyuha al-Walad," *Majmu'ah Rasa'il al-Imam al-Ghazali*, 291[*Al-Ghazali Letter to a Disciple:* Ayyuha'l-Walad, trans. Tobias Mayer (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 2005), 16]. See also A. R. Azzam, *Saladin: The Triumph*, 12.

[116] Hussain, *Social History of Education*, 111.

[117] He was the vizier of Saljuqid Sultan Barkyaruq (r. 1092–1105 CE) who also happened to be the son of Nizam al-Mulk. See Hourani, "A Revised Chronology of al-Ghazali's Writings," 291.

[118] Al-Ghazali, "al-Munqidh min al-Dalal," 36.

[119] *Ibid.*, 25–26 [*Deliverance from Error*, 2].

spiritual diseases of the *ummah* manifesting as symptoms
of inaction, indecisiveness, and immorality.[120]

The carefully planned educational endeavour, which
can be called as *ta'dib* due to the universal and proliferate
use by al-Ghazali of the term *adab* in the *Ihya'*, soon
revived Sunnism in the Levant. Carried on by a succession
of scholars and *sufi* masters, this revival entailed a true
understanding of the religion and its mystical dimension of
Tasawwuf—that is, the spiritual practice of invoking God,
performing religious duties to the level of excellence
(*ihsan*) which invites Divine Pleasure,[121] and exercising
virtuous conduct towards fellow creatures through which a
Muslim might suppress blameworthy tendencies of the
soul, thereby opening the pathway to illuminative
knowledge (*ma'rifah*) of higher divine realities.[122]

The effectiveness of the Sunni revival could also be
measured in the reduction of self-interest as a factor in
Muslim political and military equations and the increase in
religious imperative that owed its impetus to the restoration
of divine agency in causality as a substratum of motive and
action. This restoration drew upon what is called today the
concept of occasionalism—divinely established is the
primary and direct Cause of things and events—
demonstrated in al-Ghazali's argument that fire is not the
cause of the burning cotton; rather it is God Who creates
the cotton, the fire, and the concomitant burning of the
cotton according to the divinely-established habitual nature
of things.[123]

A resurgent Ashʿarism in the mid-twelfth century,
whose main proponents included the celebrated *faqih-
mufassir-mutakallim* al-Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (1149
or 1150 – 1209 A.D.), manifested changes in the Sunni

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[120] Al-Kaylani, *Hakadha Zahara Jil Salah al-Din*, 101–108.

[121] *Al-Ma'idah* (5):93.

[122] Al-Kaylani, *Hakadha Zahara Jil Salah al-Din*, 133–221.

[123] Al-Ghazali, *al-Iqtisad*, 161–163.

general outlook on life which essentially indicated the solidification of Sunni worldview. This entailed bringing back the traditional understanding of sovereignty (*al-dawlah*), whose root *dawala* the Holy Qur'an imbues with the meaning of temporality to the governments of mankind according to the time that God appoints for each of them (*nudawiluha bayna al-nas*). [124] Eradicating any self-defeating fatalism the Muslims might have had in light of their plight and vanquishment at the hands of the Crusaders, al-Razi's bringing into attention to the verse[125] where the term is mentioned and subsequent exegesis of it restored the belief that the nature of the world is transient and that their losses to the unbelievers were mere trials by God upon the believers in order to determine the truthfulness of their faith, as shall be touched upon briefly in the next paragraph.

According to al-Razi, temporality is the transition or change in the state of affairs: power, influence, and wealth.[126] The worldly life is seen as *duwal*: the plurality of transient sovereignties among mankind (*duwal bayn al-nas*),[127] but alternating fortunes do not mean that at one time God succours the believers and at another, He aids the unbelievers[128] because they are not fit to receive Divine Providence (*nusrah*) due to their unbelief, whereas Providence is exalted (*sharif*) and sublime (*'azim*).[129] Al-Razi further explains that instead of granting self-evident knowledge (*idtirari*) to all mankind which would essentially remove the notion of personal accountability and consequently, the notions of divine reward and punishment, God purposefully creates alternation of

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[124] *Ali 'Imran* (3):140.

[125] *Al-'Ankabut* (29):2–3.

[126] Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, *al-Tafsir al-Kabir aw Mafatih al-Ghayb*, hereinafter cited as *al-Tafsir al-Kabir*, ed. Sayad ʿImran, 16 vols. (Cairo: Dar al-Hadith, 2012), 5:17.

[127] *Ibid.*, 5:18.

[128] *Ibid.*

[129] *Ibid.*

fortunes (*al-mudawalah*) in order to preserve ambiguity so that those who are rationally accountable (*mukallaf*) would defend the religion through the study of signs demonstrating its truth.[130] The transient nature of the world means that happiness and misery in it do not endure or persist, but eternal bliss (or torment) exists only in the Afterlife.[131]

Conclusion

The intellectual impact of the Muslim thinkers had far-reaching consequences in the society, but the solidification of Sunni worldview also imprinted upon the ways the political and military leaders of the Muslims thought and acted, which ultimately manifested in their intellectual discourses and public policies. For example, one of Salah al-Din's commanders, Usamah ibn Munqidh (1095–1188 A.D.), recounts asking his paternal uncle 'Izz al-Din Abu al-'Asakir Sultan (r. 1094–1154 A.D.), the *amir* of Shayzar, on how to conduct oneself in battle, only to be answered that warfare has a self-governing nature (*al-harb tudabbiru nafsaha*) which counteracts human intervention.[132]

Sultan had been an accomplished military man and war veteran with vast experience fighting against the Franks, therefore rather than taking a statement in the fatalistic manner of the Jabariyyah, Usamah immediately understood it to be an emphasis on divine agency, giving appropriate and immediate commentary on Sultan's statement that ultimately it is God Who grants victory in battles despite the causal and concatenating factors of organisation, planning, and number of troops and

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[130] Ibid. See Mohd Farid Mohd Shahran, "The Priority of Rational Proof in Islam: The View of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi", *TAFHIM: IKIM Journal of Islam and the Contemporary World* 8 (2015): 9–111.

[131] Al-Razi, *al-Tafsir al-Kabir*, 5:18.

[132] Usamah ibn Munqidh, *Kitab al-I'tibar*, hereinafter cited as *al-I'tibar*, ed. 'Abd al-Karim al-Ashtar, 2nd ed. (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami, 2003), 239.

supporters (*al-nasr fi al-harb min Allah tabaraka wa ta'ala la bi tartib wa tadbir wa la bi kathrati al-nafir wa la nasir*).[133]

As for the aforementioned military reforms carried out by Salah al-Din, similar worldview imprints can be seen in at least one of the military treatises whose preparation he had commissioned, namely *Kitab al-Tadhkirah al-Harawiyyah fi al-Hiyal al-Harbiyyah* (*Al-Harawi's Book of Counsel on Military Stratagems*) [134] written by the venerable *Shaykh* (gentleman and master) Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Abi Bakr al-Harawi al-Mawsili (c. 1145–1215 A.D.). A unique treatise on statecraft and warfare, al-Harawi composed it in the style of 'Mirror for princes' genre typical of works by Muslim authors before him such as Nizam al-Mulk's *Siyasat-nameh*, al-Ghazali's *Nasihat al-Muluk*, and Abu Bakr al-Turtushi's[135] *Siraj al-Muluk*, summarily restating in it the salient fundamental elements of the worldview such as the nature of God,[136] the spiritual nature of Man,[137] justice,[138] et cetera, several of which shall be briefly touched in the next few paragraphs.

By enjoining the ruler to acknowledge that his authority is a divine bestowal of immense blessing,[139] al-Harawi emphasises that it is God, not the political State, that possesses the highest ontological status in the order of beings, and whatever privileges the ruler enjoys are blessings from God, Who Holds ultimate and absolute authority, in accordance with the Qur'anic verse: "*Say: "O*

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[133] *Ibid.*

[134] Janine Sourdel-Thomine, "Les Conseils du Šayh al-Harawī a un Prince Ayyūbide," hereinafter cited as "Les Conseils," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 17 (1961–1962), 205–268.

[135] Andalusian political thinker born 1059 in Tortosa, Spain and died 1127 in Alexandria, Egypt.

[136] Sourdel-Thomine, "Les Conseils," 266.

[137] *Ibid.*, 258–259.

[138] *Ibid.*, 263.

[139] *Ibid.*, 264.

Allāh! Lord of Power (And Rule), You give power to whom You please, and You strip off power from whom You please."[140]

Al-Harawi brings attention to the spiritual nature of human beings in the person of the ruler who is made analogous to a 'shepherd' who governs and manages his 'flock' - in reality, the worshipful servants (*'ibad*) of God. Special attention is given to the ruler because he represents the aggregate totality of his people and as the central figure of the government, the *sultan* is analogous to the *qalb*, a person's core and locus of intentions that is also the spiritual counterpart of the physical human heart.[141] This is in accordance with al-Ghazali's metaphysics, which states that the spiritual heart is "the root to which [all are] subordinate" which is comparable to "the ruler or the shepherd" who rules the limbs, the equivalent of "the servants, the flock or the subordinates." As 'servants' to the heart, the limbs act as 'instruments' that carry out actions,

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[140] *Ali ʿImran* (3):26. Translation is from Abdullah Yusuf Ali with modifications.

[141] As discussed in the previous sections, the proponents of the Ashʿarite metaphysical system—chiefly represented by al-Juwayni and al-Ghazali—hold that God created Man as a noble being composed of physical body (*jasad*) and subtle spirit (*ruh*), based on the verses from *Surah al-Hijr* (15):28–29. The spirit exists in four modes (*quwwat*) according to the activitity it engages: (i) *ruh*, the human spirit as a whole when it is breathed into the fetus in the womb, giving it the characteristics of a living human being, (ii) *nafs*, the faculty called the soul or the self commonly understood as the life force that drives the biological processes of the physical body, (iii) *'aql*, the faculty called the intellect which performs reasoning and estimation, and (iv) *qalb*, the faculty called the heart which perceives the unseen spiritual world. In a relationship that is analogous between a rider and his horse, Man's physical body serves as the vehicle for the soul and the body's organs serve as instruments with which the soul perceives the physical world. Corresponding to the physical organs are their spiritual counterparts that serve as instruments for the soul to perceive the spiritual world. See al-Ghazali, "Kitab 'Aja'ib al-Qalb," *Ihya'*, 5:9–10. See also al-Attas, *Prolegomena*, 143–150.

following the commands issued to them by the heart in fulfilment of its goals.[142]

In al-Harawi's conceptual scheme, justice numbers among the virtuous acts of worship such as showing gratitude to God, carrying out acts of kindness towards others, and upholding the *Shari'ah*, in addition to the performance of prescribed ritual acts, all of which are compensated with divine favours.[143] Al-Harawi's message on the figural centrality of the *sultan* in the dispensation of fairness and justice resonates with the panegyric of Andalusian writer Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (860–940 A.D.), in which it states that as one who holds the reins of power, the Muslim ruler regulates of rights and claims according to the stipulations of the religious laws, therefore "the axis around which all religious and worldly affairs turn." The ruler is not regarded as a supreme authority but rather "God's protection" and "shade" that extend over the ruler's lands and subjects who "forbids the impermissible, aids the oppressed, restrains the wicked, and protects the meek."[144]

From the above, it can be surmised that the pinnacle of this revival was the new generation of Muslims who not only possessed a greater consciousness for *jihad* but also a better understanding of its two aspects as mentioned in the Prophetic Tradition.[145] These are the lesser struggle (*jihad al-asghar*), which military action in defense of the religion falls under, and the greater struggle (*jihad al-akbar*), of which the believer is to apply diligence (*mujahadah*) in restraining and fighting evil impulses (*hawa*) of the human soul, whose rational control over the soul's animal aspect

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[142] Al-Ghazali, "Kitab al-Niyyah wa al-Ikhlas wa al-Sidq," *Ihya'*, 9:28.

[143] Sourdel-Thomine, "Les Conseils," 263.

[144] Ahmad ibn Muhammad ʿAbd Rabbih al-Andalusi, *al-ʿIqd al-Farid*, ed. Mufid Muhammad Qumayhah, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1983), 1:9.

[145] *Hadith* narrated by Imam al-Bayhaqi (994–1066 A.D.). See Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Husayn al-Bayhaqi, *Kitab al-Zuhd al-Kabir*, ed. ʿAmir Ahmad Haydar, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Jinan, 1987), 165.

frees it to pursue issues of priority at hand based on the
ontological level of each individual and the specific role the
individual is expected to perform according to his
respective abilities.[146]

Case studies on the educational aspect of the Sunni
revival can be made on strong personalities such as Nur al-
Din, Muzaffar al-Din Gökbüri (1153–1232 A.D.), and
Salah al-Din, epitomes of the new generation not only due
to their exemplary leadership but also their powerful
influence in expanding and promoting the culture of
learning.[147] With regards to Nur al-Din, he "maintained a
very close relationship with the religious classes of Syria,"
who then "not only supported him actively but also played
their part in his military campaigns."[148] Additionally, he
also commissioned the building of no less than twenty
madaris in support of education.[149] Nur al-Din's reputation
was widely known that even the Western medieval
chronicler, William of Tyre (c. 1130 – 1186 A.D.),
acclaimed him as "a just prince, valiant and wise, and
according to the traditions of his race, a religious man."[150]

Following Nur al-Din's exemplary attitude towards
scholars, Salah al-Din kept company and studied under "the
leading men of religious learning and eminent jurisconsults
(*mashayikh ahl al-ʿilm wa akabir ahl al-fuqahaʾ*)." [151]
Similarly, one of his generals and ruler of Erbil (Irbil),
Muzaffar al-Din Gökbüri (1154–1233 A.D.), bestowed
patronage upon scholars and writers, among whom was Ibn

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[146] Azzam, *Saladin: The Triumph*, 110.

[147] *Ibid*., 28.

[148] *Ibid*., 31.

[149] *Ibid.*

[150] William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, trans.
Emily Atwater Babcock and A. C. Krey, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia
University Press, 1943), 2:394.

[151] Baha' al-Din ibn Yusuf ibn Shaddad, *al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah wa
al-Mahasin al-Yusufiyyah*, ed. Jamal al-Din Shayyal (1ˢᵗ ed. Cairo: al-
Maktabah al-Khanaji, 1964; this 2ⁿᵈ ed. 1994), 33.

Khallikan. Besides having a *madrasah* named after him, the Muzaffariyyah, he was also the first to institute impressive public celebration to commemorate the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (*Mawlid al-Nabi*).[152]

In retrospect, the effectiveness of the Muslim dynasties could be attributed to forward-thinking caliphs and leaders who understood the prime importance of public support in legitimising their position and dedicated the resources at their disposal in order to attract scholars and their followers into their fold.[153] Based on the establishment and function of the Nizamiyyah, the same could be said about the efforts of those who spearheaded the revival of Sunnism. History shows that sympathetic patrons of learning institutions can develop resources while being sensitive to changes in interests in science and knowledge through a modest show of commitment.

From the above arguments, it can be surmised that virtuous figures who were conscious of the struggle and made serious effort to revise their priorities could not have arisen from the dangerous political games of the rulers and the seekers of political power. Rather, it is more reasonable to posit that the single-mindedness in the cause of Islam showed by personalities such as Nur al-Din, Salah al-Din, as well as others including Muzaffar al-Din Gökbüri, Usamah ibn Munqidh, and ʿAli ibn Abi Bakr al-Harawi, was by virtue of the fact that they all had been children of the Sunni revival.

The discussion above has shown how the important figures of the Muslim world were born and made in such a

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[152] İbrahim Kafesoğlu, *A Short History of Turkish-Islamic States (Excluding the Ottoman State)*, trans. Ahmet Edip Uysal, eds. Erdoğan Merçil & Hidayet Yavuz Nuhoğlu et al. (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society Printing House, 1994), 184.

[153] George Makdisi, "On the Origin and Development of the College in Islam and the West," *Islam and the Medieval West: Aspects of Intercultural Relations*, ed. Khalil I. Semaan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1980), 37.

tumultuous era, far from being the fanciful archetype the Western mind would often imagine in terms of its own narrative of tragedy and heroism. Instead, their coming and actions were part of the Muslims' proper response, both in their full preparedness and accordance with the sacred laws laid down by the religion.

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