

Ghazali and the Conflict between Reason and Religion

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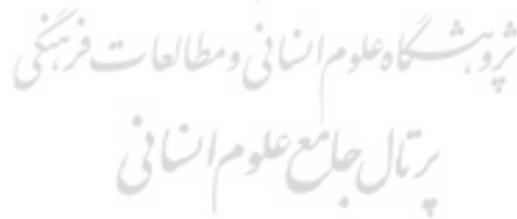
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Abstract

Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali is one of the most important thinkers of the Seljuk period in Iran. Ghazali's Thought, based on his works, is very wide-ranging in various fields of religious sciences. At the beginning of his scientific life, he wrote a book entitled "Maqasid al Falasifa" (The Aims of Philosophers), but in the final period of his research, he wrote the "Tahafut al-Falasifah" (The Incoherence of the Philosophers) and joined the opponents of philosophy, in which he expressed the contradictions of philosophers. Consequently, many thinkers believe that he is not only against philosophy but also against reason, and as a result reach the conflict between reason and religion or the sharia of religion. This article examines the question of whether there is a conflict between reason and sharia in Ghazali's thought? Does al-Ghazali mean the philosophical views of philosophers only those that are incompatible with the Shari'a? And what should be done if there seems to be a contradiction? This article tries to address these questions by referring to Ghazali's intellectual works.

Keywords

Al-Ghazali , Reason , Religion , Islamic Thought.



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Introduction

Do reason and revelation conflict with each other? What is the role of reason in religious matters? Should reason understand religious propositions, or can it also contribute to formulating religious statements? In other words, can reason issue religious rulings? Is reason the key to human entry into the realm of religion, or is it merely a guiding light that elucidates religious principles, thereby making the content of religion manifest to humans? Is reason the measure of religion, such that all religious propositions, including beliefs, laws, rituals, values, and ethics, are evaluated against it? Is reason the ultimate criterion and judge for accepting or rejecting these propositions, determining their correctness or falsehood? These questions have long been debated among scholars, including those critical of religion. Each scholar has attempted, in accordance with their understanding, to provide answers to these questions.

1. Conceptual Framework

In the epistemological dimension of religion, the question arises: how and by what means does humanity gain knowledge of the content of religion? How does one understand which beliefs are part of religion and which laws and rulings are included in its corpus? In this regard, reason is solely responsible for the perception and understanding of religious laws and plays no role in the ontological dimension of religion. That is, reason never creates a ruling to assume that rational rulings have a share in the domain of religious laws and rules. Reason is not a creator of religion, a source of Sharia, or its measure. Rather, it is like a mirror reflecting religion and a lamp illuminating its content (Javadi Amoli, 2014, p. 24).

The fundamental question here is whether, in the event of a conflict between a rational ruling and a definitive transmitted one, the rational argument still holds respect and is endorsed by Islam. Or, in such a conflict, is this inner messenger's message deemed satanic and unacceptable? In response, one must say that this possibility is entirely unfounded and can never occur, as it would result in a contradiction. The validity of religious appearances depends on rational proof. The necessity, truth, and infallibility of religion are all matters based on reason. It is reason that compels humans to follow religious directives. How, then, could this same reason provide evidence against what it initially proved as truth and then issue a ruling contrary to its previous content?

In this regard, Allameh Tabatabaei believes: When reason explicitly brings evidence for the truth and correctness of the Quran and definitive traditions, it is impossible for it to then present evidence against them.

Conflict between two rulings that have reached certainty is impossible. Two definitive rational or religious rulings can never be in conflict with each other, just as a definitive religious ruling cannot conflict with a definitive rational ruling. This is because a religious ruling reaches certainty only if it meets the following conditions: it is definitively and certainly issued by an infallible source, it has a clear indication that admits no other possibility, and it is issued with the intent of stating a divine ruling without the possibility of dissimulation or apparent concealment. After these stages, the knowledge derived from the reasoning of the religious ruling attains certainty. Now, if it is assumed that reason definitively opposes the content of such a ruling, it is natural that this definitive rational ruling will affect the manner of the religious ruling's indication, preventing its definitive and certain indication. The second condition would thus not be fulfilled. Therefore, conflict between a definitive religious ruling and a definitive rational ruling is impossible.

One situation where a conflict between reason and revelation might occur is where a definitive rational argument is incompatible with the apparent meaning of a religious ruling. What should be done in this case? Should reason be given precedence, or revelation? According to Allameh Tabatabaei, the ruling on this issue is obvious and clear. The inherent authority of certainty requires no proof for its necessity to follow. Wherever certainty is present, it cannot be exchanged for anything else, nor will anything be given precedence over it. The validity of religious appearances depends on the manifestation present in the wording, which is an uncertain argument, and uncertainty cannot withstand the knowledge and certainty derived from rational proof (Tabatabaei, 1981, p. 50).

2. Allegorical Interpretation in the Thought of Ghazali

The discussion of allegorical interpretation (ta'wil) is one of the most important issues during the life of Ghazali. This issue was a major concern both before his spiritual transformation and inclination towards Sufism and after. Opinions about Ghazali are varied. Some say that Ghazali holds a prestigious place in the history of Islamic religious and philosophical thought and the numerous criticisms directed at him are seen as evidence of his significant influence on others. Some, like Ibn Rushd in his book "Tahafut al-Tahafah," have critiqued and refuted his theories.

Ghazali discusses this topic in his works "Faysal al-Tafriqa," "Risalah al-Qanun," "Iljam al-'Awam," and "al-Iqtisad fi al-I'tiqad." Each of these works elucidates different aspects of his viewpoint. Some researchers note that Ghazali's position in "Risalah al-Qanun" and "Faysal" differs from

what he presents in "Iljam." In "Qanun al-Ta'wil," he categorizes the allegorists into five groups. This categorization is based on their stance concerning Sharia (Islamic law) and reason:

The first group relies solely on transmitted knowledge (naql).

The second group, conversely, deems transmitted knowledge unimportant.

The third group prioritizes reason and pays less attention to transmitted knowledge, seeing no conflict between transmitted knowledge and reason.

The fourth group considers transmitted knowledge as primary and does not engage in allegorical interpretation of rational matters; Ghazali believes this group lacks a clear understanding of the necessity of allegorical interpretation.

The last group reconciles reason and transmitted knowledge, acknowledging the place of both, and this is the view that Ghazali himself adopts (Ghazali, 1994: 123-125).

From this categorization, one can infer Ghazali's belief in the necessity of allegorical interpretation in the realm of Quranic exegesis, as he takes a different approach in esoteric interpretation. He asserts that those who engage in allegorical interpretation should not be declared heretics as long as they adhere to the laws and conditions of ta'wil, because every Islamic sect has resorted to allegorical interpretation in certain instances out of necessity (Ghazali, 2002: 85). Firstly, Ghazali permits allegorical interpretation; secondly, he considers it necessary in some cases; and thirdly, he believes it should be regulated (Ghazali, 2002: 187).

According to him, ta'wil involves shifting the meaning of a word from its literal sense to a figurative one (Ghazali, 1989: 381). Ta'wil in Ghazali's view has two aspects: one is moving from the apparent meaning of the text to its figurative meaning based on definitive evidence, and the other is moving from the apparent meaning to its esoteric meaning while maintaining the literal sense, based on definitive evidence. This latter type of ta'wil is akin to dream interpretation, which can be termed mystical-gnostic ta'wil (Rahimian, 2009: 27).

In the first aspect, Ghazali's aim is to reach the closest figurative meaning. He bases his ontological theory of ta'wil on the hierarchy of existence, believing that ta'wil has different levels. To determine these levels, he divides existence into essential, sensory, imaginative, rational, and symbolic (Ghazali, 2002: 176). Ghazali's "law of ta'wil" means that if what appears in the text of revelation is impossible, then the text must be interpreted allegorically (Ghazali, 2002: 187). The primary understanding of

the text is the essential existence; if this is difficult to accept, then its imaginative or rational existence should be accepted, and if this is also difficult, its symbolic figurative existence should be acknowledged. One cannot move from one level to another except out of the necessity of proof. Thus, the stronger a person is in their existential dimension and the more stages they have traversed in the evolution of their soul, the more successful they will be in uncovering the esoteric meanings of religious texts, as it is not unlikely that the esoteric knowledge of divine truths corresponds to human existential levels.

Ghazali considers two aspects and epistemological bases for ta'wil: 1) the principle of abstraction, and 2) the principle of gradation. According to the first principle, one can derive a broader and more abstract meaning from any word by stripping it of its specific attributes, such that one can move from a sensory to an imaginative meaning, and then to a rational and universal one. This process involves moving from particularity to universality and from limitation to generality and inclusiveness (Ghazali, 2002: 84-85). According to the second principle, if the literal meaning of a word is impossible to accept, the levels of existence must be considered to attribute the word to an imaginative meaning before proceeding to a rational one (Rahimian, 2009: 29).

In the first aspect, Ghazali establishes several rules for ta'wil:

The necessity of proving the impossibility of the apparent meaning (Ghazali, 2002: 85-86).

The congruence of the word with its allegorical meaning through metaphor and similitude, etc. (Ibid, 56), which essentially means the necessity of having a linguistic basis for the allegorical meaning, rejecting arbitrary interpretation (Rahimian, 2009: 31).

The necessity of gradual progression in applying levels of existence and figurative interpretation based on the hierarchy of the five levels of existence (Ghazali, 2002: 85).

In the second aspect, Ghazali's ontological basis is the distinction between the worlds of the unseen (ghayb) and the witnessed (shahada), and the parallelism and correspondence between these two realms. The principle of balance plays a significant role in this aspect of his view. The balance between the sensory and the rational is a key issue for Ghazali. He believes that the relationship between the world of testimony and the kingdom (malakut) depends on the nature of the balance between the sensory and the rational. If this balance is well understood, it will facilitate ta'wil; otherwise, one is left with no choice but to remain on the surface of the words (Ghazali, al-Qistas al-Mustaqim: 1994: 86).

3. The Concept of Interpretation and Balance in Ghazali's Thought

The principle of balance (*muwazina*) is fundamental to many issues. Based on this principle, Ghazali views allegorical interpretation (*ta'wil*) as akin to interpretation (*ta'bir*). He believes that understanding the meanings of Quranic verses is only possible through balancing the rational with the sensory and uncovering the relationship between the earthly realm (*malak*) and the spiritual realm (*malakut*). He considers this principle essential for comprehending the Quran. According to this principle, nothing in this world comes into existence except as a manifestation and example of a truth from the spiritual realm. In his works "*Mishkat al-Anwar*" and "*Jawahir al-Qur'an*," he discusses the relationship between the earthly realm and the spiritual realm, or the sensory and the rational, stating: "There are two worlds: spiritual and physical, or sensory and rational, or higher and lower. The sensory world or the world of testimony is a ladder to ascend to the rational and spiritual world, so there is a correspondence between these two worlds; everything in this world is an example and representation of the spiritual realm" (Ghazali, 1964: 65-67). To explain this balance, he refers to dreams and true visions, emphasizing them as a part of prophethood. According to Ghazali, if someone understands the connection between the earthly realm and the spiritual realm, they will comprehend many truths and insights, including the truths of the Quran. He states: "There is no word except that it has a hidden meaning and an allusion to a concealed meaning that can only be understood by someone who knows the balance and relationship between the world of testimony and the spiritual realm, recognizing that everything in the sensory world is an example of the spiritual world, not in form but in meaning and essence. The truth in the sensory world is a ladder to the world of meaning and the spiritual world."

In his early period, Ghazali believed that only when a definitive rational judgment contradicted a verse could the verse be interpreted allegorically. However, in his later period, allegorical interpretation is not out of necessity but with the intention of uncovering more meanings and insights from the verses. Therefore, in addition to reason, intuition (*kashf*) and transmitted knowledge also assist in this matter (Rahimian, 2009: 27). Ghazali values reason and emphasizes the reconciliation of reason and Sharia. In his view, anyone lacking intellectual insight only grasps the outer shell of religion, not its essence and truth (Ghazali, 1986, vol. 1: 104). He adopts this stance in the discussion of the apparent conflict between reason and Sharia, which he considers a superficial conflict. As mentioned earlier, Ghazali believes in reconciling reason and transmitted knowledge, asserting that both are fundamental and denying any conflict between them. This was

the view he ultimately adopted. A key feature of Ghazali's thought in both periods is his effort to maintain moderation, including balancing reason and transmitted knowledge, and reconciling the exoteric and esoteric aspects (Rahimian, 2009: 27).

Given Ghazali's categorization of existence and the balance between the sensory and the rational, it can be inferred that he views existence as having different levels and acknowledges mental existence. Accepting this principle requires not seeing these levels as mutually exclusive but, as philosophers say, believing in the gradation of existence and recognizing a kind of kinship between the sensory and the rational and all levels of existence. Otherwise, the discussion of balance and relationship would be unfounded. It can be deduced that the foundation of his view is based on principles considered in philosophy.

Ghazali believes that no religious belief should be rejected as long as its acceptance is not rationally impossible. According to him, no religious beliefs are subject to rejection and doubt unless their acceptance is logically impossible. Therefore, the default position in religious beliefs is acceptance unless their logical impossibility is proven by reason. For example, regarding resurrection and bodily afterlife, Ghazali emphasizes that there is no rational evidence to invalidate these concepts (Ghazali, 2002: 190-191).

Ghazali acknowledges ethical goodness and evil based on Sharia and sees a limited role for reason and contemplation in this regard. He believes that Sharia rulings are not merely informational propositions to be addressed through reason or contemplation like any other propositions. Instead, they contain warnings and alerts that cannot be ignored, as any hesitation in these rulings and reports may lead to human destruction and ruin. In essence, morality is not solely derived from reason, and reason does not fundamentally and independently determine moral judgments since ethical goodness and evil are based on Sharia. However, morality cannot be achieved without reason, as reason must understand Sharia's teachings and derive other foundations and necessities. It is noteworthy that Ghazali has not consistently adhered to this principle and could not have done so in other contexts (Ghazali, 2002: 127). Ghazali also contributed to this endeavor in his way.

4. Ghazali and the Conflict Between Reason and Religion

Ghazali believed that reason and religion are not inherently in conflict, provided that the judgments of reason are recognized within their appropriate limits and the limitations of reason beyond these bounds are acknowledged. However, when reason is applied beyond its scope, as done

by some philosophers, it leads to a conflict with religion. Since this conflict arises from reason departing from its proper role, religion should be given precedence. In other words, the conflict is between corrupted reason and religion, and by prioritizing religion, this conflict is resolved.

Ghazali explains that a person whose intellectual insight is not sharp will perceive only the superficial aspects of religion, not its core and truth. He argues that religious sciences cannot be understood without the aid of intellectual sciences. Intellectual knowledge acts like medicine for health, while religious knowledge is akin to food; transmission (naql) stems from reason and should not be reversed (Ghazali, 1995, 133). He further elaborates that religious sciences cannot be comprehended without the assistance of intellectual sciences, and both complement each other like food and medicine. Those deprived of intellectual sciences will see contradictions in religion and be perplexed, but this confusion is due to their own lack of insight, not the religion itself (Ghazali, 1964, 338).

Ghazali, possessing a creative mind, employs numerous metaphors in his other works to illustrate the relationship between reason and religion, underscoring their interdependence: Reason guides a person to religion, and religion is illuminated by reason. Reason is the foundation, and religion is the structure built upon it. Reason is vision, and religion is the light. Reason is a lamp, and religion is the oil (Ghazali, 1409, 73). In his treatise "Qanun al-Ta'wil," Ghazali addresses the interdependence of reason and religion and considers the true sect among Muslims to be the one that does not reject reason. He does not accept the conflict between reason and religion, as rejecting reason means rejecting religion, because the truth of religion is recognized through reason. If rational evidence is not valid, distinguishing between a true prophet and a false one, or between truth and falsehood, is impossible. How can reason be denied by religion when religion itself is established through reason? (Ghazali, undated, 626).

Ghazali classifies subjects requiring knowledge into three categories: some matters are known solely through reason, others through religion, and some through both reason and religion. He believes that subjects known through rational judgment, such as the creation of the world, the necessity of a creator, and the attributes of the creator, are foundational for religion because religion is based on speech. These subjects are part of philosophy and require rational understanding. However, matters known through religion, such as resurrection and reward and punishment, are distinct. Issues known through both reason and religion include any topic accessible to reason and subsequent to establishing religious speech, such as the vision of God and His uniqueness in creation. If reason deems something

permissible, then it is obligatory to accept it, provided the transmitted evidence is definitive and without doubt. If it is probable, then probable acceptance is required (Ghazali, 2007, 178).

Ghazali firmly believes that there is no conflict between reason and religion, but he faces the question of why some within Islamic communities perceive a conflict. His response is that those who perceive a conflict do not have a proper understanding of religion. He categorizes Muslim thoughts into five groups to address this issue:

Those who focus solely on transmitted knowledge, leading to extremism.

Those who focus solely on rational knowledge, leading to the opposite extremism.

Those who take a middle path, attempting to reconcile the two.

This middle group is further divided into three subgroups, making a total of five:

Some prioritize reason over transmitted knowledge, neglecting the latter.

Some prioritize transmitted knowledge over reason, neglecting rational inquiry.

Some regard both reason and transmitted knowledge as fundamental and strive to harmonize them, which Ghazali considers the correct approach (Ghazali, undated, 625-626).

Ultimately, Ghazali believes that if religion is interpreted and explained through reason (divine light), there will be no conflict. Those guided by the light of certainty and faith realize that there is no conflict between reason and religion (Ghazali, 1964, 339; Ghazali, 1983, 3).

Ghazali emphasizes the importance of intellectual matters, stating that the truth is not revealed to someone who merely imitates traditions (transmitted knowledge) and denies the paths of thought and reasoning. He asserts that the validity of prophetic teachings is based on rational evidence. Conversely, those who rely solely on reason without benefiting from religious teachings do not find the correct path (Ghazali, 1409, 4-5). Thus, in his works, Ghazali attempts to dispel the conflict between reason and religion. In "Iqtisad fi al-I'tiqad" and "Ma'arij al-Quds," he asserts that there is no conflict between transmitted religion and rational truth (Ghazali, 2003, 3; Ghazali, 1409, 73).

However, what is attributed to Ghazali's late life as opposition to reason pertains to partial reason, not universal and intuitive reason. He emphasizes this distinction in his works (Ghazali, undated, 598). In other words, Ghazali's opposition in some cases is against the reliance on rational

arguments to reach all religious beliefs, acknowledging that rational arguments are not accessible to everyone and are not always conclusive. He clarifies this in "Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal," stating that the truth and knowledge can be attained through rational argument, but only a few can achieve this, and it may take a long time for someone to reach a level of rational strength to discern the truth through reason (Ghazali, undated, 353). Based on this principle, in "Qawa'id al-'Aqa'id," he considers both rational and transmitted evidence to prove God's existence (Ghazali, 2005, 145).

While Ghazali places great value on religious knowledge, he regards reason as the most important tool for understanding religious texts and considers it the highest tool for comprehending religion (Ghazali, 1409, 73). Therefore, religion becomes the product of reason, and in the establishment phase, reason takes precedence over religion. Without reason, there would be no religion (Ghazali, 2003, 134; Ghazali, undated, 559, 601, 627). Once reason establishes religion, it must operate within the framework of religion (Ghazali, undated, 599). However, he differentiates between reason and religion in another context, stating that he follows rational arguments in intellectual matters and the Quran in religious matters (Ghazali, 1983, 12).

5. Types of Intellect and Its Relationship with Religion

Intellect, alongside tradition, holds significance and validity, ensuring the epistemological domain of religion under the sovereignty of revelation. However, a fundamental question arises: some traditions seemingly criticize intellect while honoring tradition. In response, it should be noted that the critique in some traditions pertains to the results derived from analogical reasoning and logical analogy, not to the demonstrative and reliable intellect. Legal analogy was discredited in logic before it lost its credibility in jurisprudence and principles, and demonstrative intellect highlighted the invalidity of analogical reasoning. Traditions also support intellect and logic in this regard. Therefore, demonstrative intellect is not criticized in traditions; rather, it is emphasized as an internal proof alongside the external proof (valid tradition). Sheikh Sadouq quotes Imam Reza (AS) stating that intellect is God's proof for people (Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 1, p. 105).

Another question is whether intellect can be divided into various types: pure abstract intellect, semi-abstract intellect, empirical intellect, and pure intellect. Pure abstract intellect is discussed in philosophy and theology through theoretical arguments. Semi-abstract intellect pertains to mathematical sciences, empirical intellect appears in empirical and human sciences, and pure intellect deals with theoretical mysticism. Which type of intellect is meant here? The intended intellect is broadly defined, not limited

to pure abstract intellect, which manifests through philosophical and theological arguments. Therefore, practical intellect, considered as a comprehensive notion, is referred to as practical wisdom.

Thus, the intellect, recognized as a proof alongside valid tradition, is common intellect, paying attention to practical wisdom and rational foundations. In jurisprudence and principles, common intellect is used to solve issues. The criterion for accepting intellect in these matters is achieving certainty or rational assurance. Common intellect often reaches rational assurance. Therefore, the intellect that stands alongside valid tradition as a religious proof is the broadly defined rational and common intellect. For instance, jurists and principles scholars rely on the tradition "Do not negate certainty with doubt" and the hadith of removal (al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 463) in discussions of *istishab* and *bara'at* (presumption of continuity and exemption). The reliance on valid tradition in these matters is minimal, and in many transactional jurisprudence cases, jurists use rational foundations and common understandings. Thus, logical certainty, pure abstract intellect, and demonstrative intellect are not the basis for jurists and principles scholars. In the epistemological domain of religion, understanding religion, particularly Islam, requires considering all epistemological sources together. Therefore, no one is allowed to claim what Islam says merely by referring to the whole Quran, let alone by selecting one or two verses to express Islam's view on a matter.

6. Resolving the Apparent Conflict between Intellect and Religion

A question arises: how should we express Islam's view and engage in Islamic studies? The answer is that we must first examine the entire Quran, as some verses explain others. General and specific, absolute and conditional, unclear and clear, and firm and allegorical verses must be considered. In the second stage, we should refer to traditions and resolve conflicts among them through treatment reports. In the third stage, traditions should be presented to the Quran, and those contradicting the Book of Allah should be rejected. In the fourth stage, besides valid tradition, attention should be given to the epistemological role of intellect, as understanding the book and tradition might conflict with logical arguments or the content of traditional evidence might be specified, conditioned, or explained by rational evidence. Therefore, understanding God's decree and valid proof from religion is complete when both sources of religion, intellect, and tradition are fully considered, allowing us to claim Islam's stance on an issue. Thus, intellect cannot oppose religion but can conflict with tradition, as intellect is

part of the epistemological structure of religion and is considered a source of knowledge.

Now, the question is how to resolve the conflict between intellect and tradition, both of which are epistemological sources of religion. If intellect and tradition are contradictory, certainty prevails. If a verse contradicts a certain rational argument, its apparent meaning is interpreted in line with the rational argument. If no interpretation is possible, it is left to experts. For instance, a strong rational argument states that God is not corporeal, but in an authentic tradition, it is stated, "The hand of Allah is above their hands" (Quran 48:10) and "Faces on that day will be radiant, looking at their Lord" (Quran 75:22-23). These should be interpreted correctly.

Rational evidence, as a specific or conditional context, specifies and conditions apparently conflicting traditional evidence. Similarly, in general and specific cases, the specific is preferred over the general without needing to determine which is more apparent or stronger, as referring to the apparent is necessary when there is a conflict between distinct entities. The preference of the specific over the general and the conditioned over the absolute is rational. The specific and conditioned serve as a context for determining the serious intention and are considered contextually indicative by legal experts. For instance, in traditions on health, it is said that this disease is not contagious (Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 11, p. 506). However, if modern medical sciences confirm that some types of this virus or disease are contagious, this scientific medical finding serves as a specific and conditional context for that tradition. The tradition should be interpreted as referring to non-mutated and other types, while the newly recognized type is contagious. In some cases, specific and conditional contexts may not nullify generality or absoluteness but imply exclusion. For example, traditions recommending bringing joy to believers' hearts exclude cases involving defamation, backbiting, or slander. Similarly, traditions on the virtues of cupping do not include the elderly and weak.

Exclusion is not necessarily verbal exclusion, which is the technical term. Verbal exclusion means a term used in different contexts frequently applied in one context leads to its general usage in that sense. However, in some cases, the source of specificity and narrowing of generality or absoluteness is rational judgment, not verbal exclusion. Conflicts between intellect and tradition are not always straightforward, like interpreting "the hand of Allah" quickly. They require careful scientific scrutiny and rational diligence to resolve. In Sum:

- A traditional argument conflicting with rationality indicates a conflict between two religious epistemological sources, not between religion and intellect.

- In an initial conflict between intellect and tradition, rational and common sense resolution paths are open, resolving conflicts through general and specific rules, absoluteness, and conditioning.

- In some cases, conflicts between intellect and tradition are binary. In such cases, one must resort to certainty or stronger evidence. Therefore, the one with stronger evidence is adopted, and the other is interpreted or left to experts if not interpretable.

Conclusion

Al-Ghazali paid special attention to both intellect and revelation in his works, demonstrating the role and effectiveness of intellect in understanding religious texts. He was a rational thinker who utilized rational methods to comprehend religious texts effectively. In Ghazali's epistemological framework, understanding religious texts is based on rationality. Intellect plays a crucial role in Ghazali's thought system, and he acknowledges its limitations. This approach reflects Ghazali's ability to balance both religious law and intellect. Ghazali believed that intellect guides humanity to religious law, and the law is explained through this intellect. In "Ihya' Ulum al-Din," he promoted the integration of rational and religious sciences, explaining the necessity of both and expressing that intellect needs tradition, and tradition needs intellect.

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