



The Position of Rational Sciences in the Era of Imam Muhammad Gazza'li

A Perspective on the Disagreements between Al-Ghazzāli and Avicenna

Ramezam Rezaie¹  | Fatemeh Abdollahpour Sangchi² 

1. Corresponding Author, Associate Professor, Department of Islamic History, Culture and Civilization, Faculty of Islamic Thought and Studies, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran. Email: rezayi@ut.ac.ir

2. PhD Student, Department of Theoretical Foundations of Islam, Faculty of Islamic Thought and Studies, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran. Email: f.abdollahpour@ut.ac.ir

Abstract

One of the advantages of Islamic and Iranian culture and civilization is the controversy, discussion and criticism of the opinions of its thinkers, which has increasingly developed based on the teachings of the Quran and the Prophetic tradition and show the religious atmosphere of its time relatively. Abu Hamid Al-Ghazzali is one of the great and rare scholars in the Islamic world. He also has been one of the strongest opponents of philosophy throughout history, who wrote the book entitled Tahafut-Al-Falasifah to examine the opinions and thoughts of philosophers, including Avicenna, and to express the weakness of their thoughts in a fair manner. Tahafut-Al-Falasifah is one of the greatest and most influential books that has been written throughout the history of criticizing philosophical ideas in accordance with Islamic and Iranian customs. The present paper has tried to elucidate the position of rational sciences in the era of Imam Muhammad Ghazzali and to explain disagreements between Avicenna and Ghazzali using descriptive-analytical approach. The research findings indicate that Ghazzali has sought to return the faith of Muslims to its strength and originality, but with his opposition to philosophy and philosophers caused the roots of philosophy to wither and dry up in many Islamic countries.

Keywords: Avicenna, Emam Muhammad Ghazzali, Rational Sciences, Religion, Philosophers.

Introduction

In the era, represented by Al-Ghazzāli as a thinker and spiritual figure, the Islamic world was confronted with several significant events that distinguished it from previous periods: During that time, the Seljuk Turks progressed and formed a unified and independent state. Additionally, with the advancement and spread of an independent Sunni religion supported by the Nizam al-Mulk, who was the powerful vizier of the Seljuks at that time, local governments and centers supported by them was destroyed. Furthermore, some special religious schools were established for the advancement of this official religion, where Al-Ghazzāli himself taught. As a result, religious debates increasingly expanded.



Research Findings

Al-Ghazzālī has opposed only with specific philosophical views, but not with Reason and Rationality. His explicit words on the relationship between religion and Reason shed light on this discussion. Al-Ghazzālī himself has stated: "Reason is dominant ruler and cannot be isolated, as any argument for its isolation has a reliance on Reason itself." (Ganji, 1383: 69-70).

Conclusion

The disagreements between Al-Ghazzālī and Avicennā regarding to the position of rational sciences arose out of their differences in method and logic. Generally, Al-Ghazzālī tended to emphasize on Reason and logical reasoning more, while Avicennā focuses more on reasoning and examining the causes and details of reason in analysis.

Al-Ghazzālī accused Avicennā to denying God's knowledge in details; this is while Al-Ghazzālī misunderstood some of the topics that Avicennā had raised regarding to the divine knowledge in detail.

References

- Avicenna, Abu Ali (1404 AH). *Al-Shifa - Theology*. Edited by Saeed Zaid. First Edition. Qom: Mar'ashi Najafi Publications.
- Avicennā, Abu Ali (1375). *Al-Isharat wa al-Tanbihat*. First Edition. Qom: Nashr al-Balaghah.
- Al-Ghazzālī, Muhammad ibn Muhammad (1402 AH). *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*. Vol. 1. Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah.
- Al-Ghazzālī, Muhammad ibn Muhammad (1382 AH). *Tahafut al-Falasifah*. Translated by Ali Asghar Halabi. Tehran: Jami.
- Al-Ghazzālī, Muhammad ibn Muhammad (n.d.). *Maqasid al-Falasifah*. Researched by Dr. Sulaiman Duniya. Egypt: Dar al-Ma'arif.

Cite this article: Rezaie, R., & Abdollahpour Sangchi, F. (2024). The Position of Rational Sciences in the Era of Imam Muhammad Gazzaāli: A Perspective on the Disagreements between Al-Ghazzālī and Avicenna. *Religions and Mysticism*, 57 (1), 11-34. (in Persian)

Publisher: University of Tehran Press.

© The Author(s).

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22059/jrm.2024.366362.630474>



Article Type: Research Paper

Received: 22-Nov-2023

Received in revised form: 3-Feb-2024

Accepted: 7-Feb-2024

Published online: 19-Mar-2024