

On Al-Ghazālī's Moderation in Belief
A Study in the Medium of Reason and Revelation
(AL-IQTİŞĀD Fİ AL-I' TIQĀD)

§ I – Introduction

The present paper contributes to contemporary debates on the theologico-political problem. It does so by turning to Medieval Islamic debates in philosophy and theology concerning the relationship of reason and revelation. Contrary to prevalent understandings identifying a principally antagonistic opposition of reason and revelation, as identifying the principal political character of the theologico-political problem and its articulation of the fundamental irreconcilability of political theology and political philosophy, a critical study of the seminal work of one of Islam's greatest exponents Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazālī (AH 450/1058 CE-AH 505/1111 CE) provides a persuasive contrary thesis. For Ghazālī the removal of antagonism in defense of Islamic faith is necessitated by the cooperation of faith and reason – and the articulation of a counter problem, a *theologico-religious problem*.

This problem concerns the relationship of reason and revelation upon the basis of the authority of revelation. The counter problem might be understood in the implicit consideration of a *theologico-religious treatise that rejects the political dimensions of the principal opposition* of the theologico-political problem. The theologico-political problem is thus underwritten by a theologico-religious conception, as yet without elucidation in the scholarship. The present study of Ghazālī seeks to show that the co-operation of reason and revelation, leads to moderation in belief's rational economy and the rejection of fanaticism. Indeed, it anticipates the possibility of secularism in a theological or indeed philosophical guise as consistent with forms of fanaticism. In order to shed light, in a renewed fashion and contribute to a correct understanding on Sunni Islam, regarding both the status of religious knowledge, philosophy and science, as well as reason and revelation's "political" or "sectarian" arbitration, the following paper studies Ghazālī's *Al- Iqtisād fī l-i' tiqād* (The Moderation in Belief) the classical work on this distinction in detail; its doctrine, argument, design and scientific economy, root and branch, to establish the works literary coherence and comprehensive doctrine of moderation as a theologico-religious treatise on the

relationship of reason and revelation. An elucidation of this seminal and neglected position of Islamic theological science is laid out in the papers critical commentary.

§ II – The Theologico-Political Problem

Our contribution is one of many that might be written on what has come to be known under the concept of the theologico-political problem. The philosopher who found his task in the recovery of political philosophy and "like no other of the philosophers of the twentieth century engaged in a confrontation with revelation,"¹ was Leo Strauss. Heinrich Meier characterizes Leo Strauss in his book *Leo Strauss and the Theologico-political Problem* by suggesting that the theologico-political problem consists in an irresolvable contest between the grounding of political philosophy and the confrontation with faith in revelation or confrontation with faith in a revealed God. Upon this interpretation, what constitutes the theologico-political problem is the opposition of philosophy and revelation. From the point of view of the political philosopher, revelation is the arch opponent of the final legitimacy of philosophy and philosophical reason. Faith in revelation and political philosophy, while "two sides of one and the same endeavor,"² are fundamentally opposed, contributing to the founding of philosophy and the self-understanding of the philosopher to which it refers. I contend – however, that this endeavor has not been treated from the point of view of the authority of revelation, where that authority is not considered *fundamentally* antagonistic to the legitimacy of the philosophical life. At issue then for the theologico-political problem from the point of view of political theology is the rational justification and legitimacy of the political defense of the religious life explored from the perspective of the religious defense of the life led in faith in revelation. Whereby, it is assumed that the authority of revelation is fundamentally antagonistic to the rational justification and political defense of that life – it has also been assumed in this interpretation that the defense of the religious life is *theologically justified as primarily political* rather than *religious*.

Leo Strauss sketched in a selection of notes for a lecture to be delivered at the Hartford theological seminary January 8th 1948 the

¹ Meier, Heinrich, *Leo Strauss and the Theologico-Political Problem*, Cambridge

² Ibid.

relationship of philosophy and revelation according to the fundamental antagonism the theologico-political problem outlines. It is necessary before we begin to approach Ghazālī's demonstration of the fundamental harmony, or "median" of reason and revelation in a theologico-religious treatise to briefly review some aspects of the position set out in these notes. This is indispensable before turning to an understanding of *philosophic knowledge* in terms of a justification, which allies and aligns the political dimension of theology as being inconsistent with the true aims of the philosophic life, and therefore its true rational consistency as being consistent with a belief in Ghazālī's moderating account of the revelation of Mohamed.

Strauss writes; "by the problem of reason and revelation I understand the problem of *philosophy* and revelation. "Reason" is neutral: the rights of reason would seem to be recognized by believers [...] and unbelievers alike. We rise above the level of neutrality [...] we enter the arena of conflict, if we confront revelation with a particular *interpretation* of reason [...] the perfection of man is *philosophy*. *Philosophy* is incompatible with revelation: philosophy must try to *refute* revelation, and, if not revelation, at any rate theology must try to *refute* philosophy."³ By turning to the question of *philosophic knowledge*, we begin to see the contours of the problem. We begin to see the different positions and their potential disagreement or their dialogue with one another.

The question here, as it is relevant to our inquiry, is not the obvious one, of the potential harmony of reason characterized as a form of discourse, which is exercised both by theologians and philosophers. It is rather about the rational legitimacy of *reason* in its philosophic guise, whose legitimacy is given by the natural condition of the human being's political and philosophical life and inquiry, his philosophic eros and its natural perfection, and on the other hand the final authority of revelation as being irreducible to reason as understood upon its own legitimacy, rather than upon the authority of the revealed God. This antagonism provides the basis, we note, for a renewal of political philosophy as interpreted by Leo Strauss, in the context of modernity, in which amongst other traditions, Christianity came to be seen as the synthesis of rational doctrines of logos and theological claims of a revealed God that is no longer irreducible, or

³ Strauss, Leo. *Reason and Revelation* in Meier, Heinrich, *Leo Strauss and the Theologico-Political Problem*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, p 141

at least is historically intelligible at least with a view to its eschatological synthesis.⁴

Let us consider this problem further from the point of view of revealed religion. "The legitimacy of philosophy does not seem to be a serious problem for the philosopher as long as he is confronted only with pagan myths and laws. For those myths and laws essentially antedate the awareness of the problem posed by the contradictions between the various divine laws, i.e., the problem whose realization immediately precedes the emergence of philosophy. The situation of philosophy becomes fundamentally changed as soon as philosophy is confronted with the *Bible*. For the Bible claims to present a solution to the very problem which gave rise to philosophy, and the Biblical solution is diametrically opposed to the philosophic solution."⁵

Here we read of the contest of philosophical texts that are the products of human beings as opposed to the question of biblical texts or scriptures, which are finally the products of God. This opposition is the basis upon which the theological and philosophical dialogue or contest begins. Implied by the formulation of the problem that we will discuss regarding Al-Ghazālī, is the implicit statement that nature or the basis of the scriptural texts, whether Torah, Bible, or Quran nevertheless place in the same way and to the same degree philosophy into question and that the authority or justification of human reason in its philosophic guise is principally authoritative with a view to the necessary refutation of the "idea" of revealed religion or a revealed text (scripture). Just as for Spinoza the rationalization and demythologization of revealed religion that occurs in his theological political treatise becomes the substrate of his philosophy's rational edifice, it becomes necessary in recognizing the irrefutable distinction that the basis of revelation may very well be irrefutable from the point of view the legitimacy of human reason, while, on the other hand, it becomes the object of faith in a different way precisely because of its rational irrefutability by human reason.

This brief introduction to what I have set out to study in the following investigation of Ghazālī is a small contribution to understanding the complexity of the theologico-political problem

⁴ The problem of Christianity and the theologico-political problem requires another paper.

⁵ Strauss, Leo. *Reason and Revelation* in Meier, Heinrich, *Leo Strauss and the Theologico-Political Problem*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, p 148, 149.

with a view to revealed religion. However it introduces a subtle distinction, upon whose basis, from both sides of the antagonism, and from the perspective of the demythologization of revealed religion, comes to be seen as an abstract instance of super-rational plausibility.

This in turn places into question philosophy and suggests that just as the political philosophers of the tradition that engage with revealed religion exercised a form of writing and a form of discourse which comes to be understood under the distinction of exoteric and esoteric writing, in order to establish the public political legitimacy or defense of philosophy in societies, dominated by forms of orthodoxy - the very religious writers and theologians who also exercised philosophical reason, in complex and differentiated ways, articulated the problem in a different way for orthodoxy. That is - the primacy of the problem as it has hitherto been understood, nevertheless requires a complimentary analysis of the problem from its opposite side. To put this in terms of a conceptual distinction, just as Spinoza's writings might be called *theologico-political treatises* in the philosophical articulation of the basis of political philosophy upon the ground of the rejection of the legitimacy rationally of revealed religion, i.e., the accommodation of the rational need underlying religion and therefore the articulation of faith in a transformed way - one might speak of authors such as Ghazālī, as successfully integrating the claims of reason in sectarian disputations of theological distinction, as well as understanding the philosophers upon the basis of a doctrinal orthodoxy of doxological reason and its subtle compatibility, achieved via refutation of the principle opposition.

Indeed, it may be argued that the philosophical circumscription of Islam in terms of the authority and legitimacy of reason upon its own "natural" condition, rather than its scriptural condition - is no less of interest. In this way the core characterization of the counter project to the single endeavor as articulated in the foregoing reflection on Strauss' notes, is to inquire into the possibility of a "*theologico-religious treatise*," which is to investigate the neutrality of reason as it informs the basis of the distinction independent of the naturalistic criterion of political philosophy, i.e., the principle relationship of reason and revelation. It is my thesis that once one does this - one wins the true ground both for the contest of political philosophy and political theology, but also for the first time a reassertion and foundation for the understanding of revealed

scriptures according to an apolitical engagement within an adequately articulated framework for the problem of rational knowledge.

I am not here going to give a final answer to the question of the legitimacy of the opposition of philosophic reason and reason upon the authority of revelation. Rather I will now turn to Ghazālī who provides one of the most paradigmatic examples of the counter-position to a theologico-political understanding of the problem, which is "doxologically" informed and articulates a possible harmony of reason and revelation on the basis of the *Quran* and *Sunna*. This I hope will add more adequately to an articulation of the complexity of the political dispute from the basis of the legitimacy of a theologico-religious condition for the refutation of fanaticism, *either secular or religious*.

It is notable, that upon this basis, the possibility of a "philosophical" fanaticism emerges - for depending on the basis of the scriptural source, the very circumscription of a philosophic naturalistic political criterion may very well lead to the politicization of the religion and its radicalization. Conversely, one might argue that this is not the "true" designation of the love of wisdom. This disjunction, suggests a range of questions whereby a simple symmetrical and asymmetrical equivalence of political philosophy and political theology no longer holds, or i.e., that this opposition is finally doxological. It therefore places in turn the philosophical legitimacy of the opposition to political "myth" as being characteristic of its opposition to revealed religion into radical question.

§ III - *Al-Ghazālī's Theologico-religious Authorship*

Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazālī is generally considered to be the most important thinker within the Islamic intellectual and broadly speaking rational theological Sunni tradition. Finally irreducible to the various sectarian schools of Islamic thought from Kalam through to the Suffiyya, the uniqueness of Ghazālī consists in his unique interpretation of the sectarian distinctions which frame the "*theologico-religious*" dimensions of his engagement, which might in common speech be characterised as being "political" because they consist in sectarian disputes or "factionalism," disagreements between vying and opposed "groupings." This is the first example, I would suggest, of error in interpretation of the problem in its modern

as opposed to medieval formulation, because the sectarian basis would necessarily need to be understood in the heterogeneity of orthodox and heterodox understandings for the legitimacy of rational justification as opposed to the inquiry into the nature of the subject matter. In turn, this requires the contest of opinion on the basis of nature, or the assumed commonality of man as “politically” determined, i.e., as the “political animal.”

One cannot assume – and this is decisive, as it is assumed by many contemporary political philosophers that encounter the problem - that man’s nature as a “political animal” can be assumed to follow from the revealed authority, or that this definition can be assumed of scripture. Rather, the definition that must identify the assumption underlying the condition of revealed understandings *provides an explanation of nature* – which does not automatically assume the political determination of man’s natural life. Entirely characteristic of the entire medieval dispute as well as the later scholastic disputes is the relationship of nature to the scriptural precedent of the authority of revelation, as legitimising, finally, the nature of human beings.

Let us provide a description of the problem that will confront us in our interpretation of Ghazālī’s *Iqtisād*. If we move from the question of the orthodox and heterodox basis of rational legitimacy for Islamic theology, we will see that Ghazālī’s adoption of his form of writing exercises the various aspects of theological schools in a set of compounding “explications” or counter-refutations or proofs after the *Quran* and *Sunna*, which mutually enforce the transition of heterodoxy to orthodoxy - and that this questioning and this framework is no less significant for Ghazālī’s theology, that it is for political philosophy in the Socratic and Platonic discourses and dialectics. What it achieves, however, is the harmonious interplay of reason and revelation, and therefore the mutual illumination of a natural order of rational justification as well as a scriptural order of rational justification. This achievement produces the possibility of an orthodoxy, which moderates and does not give way to false justification. This false justification leads to a *political* legitimisation, which emerges in the transformation of the religion into a political theology in the guise of a “naturalistic criterion,” or indeed its instantiation in modern forms as an “existential threat,” both being implicitly or explicitly tantamount to secularism. The possibility of the orthodoxy we learn from Ghazālī rather brings about moderating answers, with which the “liberalism” instituted upon the basis of

natural law, upon equally natural moral grounds, would find agreement. If not with respect to its final cause, than, at least in respect to its “political” outcomes.

§ IV – Exegesis of *Al-Ghazālī’s Al- Iqtisād fī l-i’tiqād*

The most important affairs of mankind stated in Ghazālī’s *Al- Iqtisād fī l-i’tiqād* are the attainment of eternal happiness and the avoidance of everlasting misery. The coherence of the argument of *Al- Iqtisād fī l-i’tiqād* consists in the agreement of reason and revelation. The agreement of reason and revelation ensures moderation of belief and this moderation ensures both the attainment of eternal happiness in the Hereafter and the avoidance of misery. The present essay makes the *Al- Iqtisād fī l-i’tiqād* the object of a study, cross-examining the relationship of reason and revelation in that seminal work of medieval Islam that argues centrally for faith’s moderation.

A cursory investigation of Ghazālī’s theologico-religious treatise reveals an exemplary defence of Sunni orthodoxy, while fanaticism, or perverse species of immoderation emerge, contrarily in the opposition of reason and revelation. Even the most superficial initial reading suffices to ascertain that the “median”⁶ named by the treatise title is intended to constitute the solution, the treatise sets forth in its entirety. Considering that the Islamic nature of the theoretical problem appears inseparable from the theologico-religious treatise itself, we might imagine that moderation in belief may not exclusively consist in the opposition to the false teachings the treatise expounds. That, while *Al- Iqtisād fī l-i’tiqād* consists in a Sunni orthodox argument for God’s existence,⁷ the moderation it defends or

⁶ I refer to Yaqub’s superb recent translation together with critical comparison in Arabic (*Al- Iqtisād fī l-i’tiqād*, Ankara, Nur Matbaasi, 1962) translating (الاعتدال) variously; “moderation,” “median” or “economy.” Yaqub’s “moderation” correctly identifies the work’s outcome, “balanced” against the correct relationship (median) of reason and revelation, it is, however, simultaneously itself the ordering (economy) of belief producing “moderation.” I thank my colleague Ahmmed Hamed for his assistance in clarifying aspects of the Arabic terminology.

⁷ While agreeing with Yabub that the *Iqtisād* consists in “a single argument for the existence of a transcendent being, whose essence, attributes and acts are affirmed of Him by Sunni orthodoxy based on Ash’arite tradition,” I disagree with the possibility left open, of a positive or negative argument for this

maintains is not gained upon the basis of the treatise's own immediately rational edifice, nor is it gained finally by way of rational justification based upon faith in revelation. Rather Ghazālī informs us “there is no conflict between transmitted revelation” and “intellectual truth.” The absence of conflict between intellectual truth and revelation is maintained by moderation. Controversy precludes moderation. To forsake “the intellect” to rely solely “on the light of the Qur’ān” is to dwell “in sunlight” with one’s “eyelids shut.” “There is no difference,” Ghazālī writes, “between” this observer and “the blind.” Indeed, “reason together with revelation is light upon light,” and anyone “who tries to observe,” either reason or revelation “specifically,” comprehends them with a “blind eye.” He is one “hanging from an illusory rope”⁸ – for what might a proof of reason and revelation imply regarding the existence of God? Incorrect rendering of the proof of moderation’s justification, the “median” of belief and reason’s demonstration implies a rational inability to distinguish apposite or faithful reasoning from false faith or pseudo-revelation and reason from belief. Error is thus unable to render its intellectualism, doctrine, or revelatory claim to truth intelligible. Error promotes controversy. Erroneous faith is fanatic faith.

The beauty of the analogy that begins the *Iqtiṣād* promises mutual illumination, dissolving the opacity of cognitive confusion or the distortion of reason and revelation. The root of fanaticism identical with this distortion is singled out as infidelity. However, before turning to the argument, the subtlety of Ghazālī’s teaching, his sensitivity and doctrinal organisation of expression, we note the *Iqtiṣād* neither demotes nor justifies the rational condition either of revelation’s final legitimation nor reason’s convictive self-assertion. Rather, Ghazālī opens a hardly clandestine and public path of theoretical religious reflection upon the infidelity of various sectarian assertions, presented in the arrangement of the treatise, which seeks their resolution while compassionately preserving these opponents, compelling unreservedly the relinquishing of false belief.

existence. The work’s demonstrations finally recur finally to God’s authority, in so far as reason and revelation cohere after the manner of this existence, while conflicting opinions are resolved on the rational basis of this recurrence. Interpretive Essay in *Al-Ghazālī’s Moderation in Belief*, Al- Iqtiṣād fi l-i’tiqād, Translated, with an interpretative essay and Notes by Aladdin M. Yaqub, the University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, Chicago, 2013, p 251

⁸ Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation*, p 1- 4

We turn to the “religious preface” where Ghazālī instructs us, that by way of the conjunction of intellectual truth with revelation, only reason and revelation mutually illuminating prohibit the possibility of committing error, either intellectual or religious, or prevent error, either rational or faithful. While Ghazālī begins in the first treatise with arguments for God’s existence considered independently of revelation, as if the writing were primarily concerned with a proof for God’s existence (or the “manner” or “kind” of this existence), the final chapter of the last treatise seeks to identify according to the median of faith, (or faith’s moderation in which the treatise’s proofs consist); “which amongst the sects must be charged with infidelity.” Faithful religious attendance, is cultivated in appropriately rational contemplation, occasioned by following the revelatory communication of truth in contradistinction to the demonstration of God’s existence. However, rational proof of God’s existence however consists in demonstrable certitude. Intellectual truth consists in knowledge according to faith or faithful knowledge. The foundations of belief in which the *Sunna* consists, to whose guidance the preface’s instruction concerning the whole treatise presents itself as subordinate, are to be demonstrated by what is established in conclusive proofs, progressively integrating revelation and theoretical verification by refutation and counterproof.

The study’s whole, its comprehensive purpose and the median it defines, moderates and exemplifies, distinguishes true religious guidance from false religious guidance. Ghazālī’s teaching adopts a pattern of submission before divine instruction (*tawqīf*). The avoidance of harm and mitigation of false legal judgement concerning the judgment upon sectarian infidelity, which concludes the work, a prerogative ascribed neither to the self-confessing believer or non-believer, the subordination of faiths institution after this guidance outlined to the multitude or to tradition is irreconcilable with verification understood on the basis of zealous immoderation.⁹ Zealous immoderation is incompatible with religious guidance. Ghazālī places compassion before ambiguous religious vindication. The worldly consideration of the concluding treatise on the condemnation of infidels, we find inversely presupposed by the first treatise on God. Exemplary guidance is characterised, in contrast to

⁹ Ghazālī’s notes “the importance of wading into this science” classifying groups exposed to its affective potential harm. *Al-Ghazālī’s Moderation*, p 9 -12

zealous immoderation, testifying to its theorization in defence of moderation. Religious guidance for the multitude is set apart from the rational, intellectual and faithful reflection in thought and deed of what is testified to distinguishing guidance of what can be theorized. God's benevolent guidance is evident in truth. Truth alone is capable of demonstrating true faith. The true faith is moderate faith. The way of integrating law, reason and the pacification; the elimination of conflict between transmitted revelation and intellectual truth, the source of infidelity in faith, is the highest accomplishment of Ghazālī's reasonable theory. The *Iqtisād* is the adequate expression of this theory. The teaching of the *Iqtisād* coheres in an account wholly rational and faithful, in so far as it is wholly a theory of truth.¹⁰

Considering the literary and scientific conduct¹¹ of *Al- Iqtisād fī l-i'tiqād* the reader notes that to understand its teaching, the scripture of Qur'ān is indispensable, amongst the sectarian disagreements of its theoretical objects. While the book consists primarily in counter proofs of interlocutor's opinions and beliefs, the prophetic revelation of Mohammed is omnipresent. Al-Ghazālī's moderating study and defence of Islamic revelation, the argument's form, propositional proofs, the foundational institutes of belief are established by way of "revelatory" approximation in theoretical reflection. Theoretical reflection is presented as literary and scientific conduct. This conduct establishes, or is arbitrated by a vindication of God's existence, on the one hand, and on the other, the articulation of

¹⁰ Franks bifurcation is only superficially, or one-sidedly correct grasping the meaning of Ghazālī's twofold insistence "that those who cling to the truth and follow the Sunna" succeed "uniting" what is demanded by "revealed law" and things "demanded of reason (*al-talfiq bayna muqtadayāi l-sharā' i 'wa-wājibāi l-'uqūl*)," no inconsistency exists between the "Sunna" and "rational theology." The true basis disqualifies the *true existence* of the basis for conflict. Frank, R.M. *Al-Ghazālī and the Ash'arite School*, Duke University Press, London, 1994, p 7, 8

¹¹ The primarily importance of science (scientific theology) is analogous in utility to the remedial physician tending ailments of the heart, sickness due to ignorance or zealotry requiring expulsion. The depths of science and its mastery are not an individual (*fard'ayn*) but collective obligation (*fard kifāya*). The guiding theme of its science, or that the difference of the bearers of the fruit of jurisprudence and the fruit of medicine and their respective fruits are the same shows that the root of the distinction is nourished by respective differences of obligation. Al-Ghazālī's *Moderation*, p 14

His prophetic messenger in disproof of proofs presented by ignoramuses, sectarians or doubters. We note the proof of the revelatory claims Ghazālī prepares *does not serve the proof* of God's existence, i.e. it is rather a disambiguation or clarification, but primarily, demonstrates unambiguously, the truth of the Islamic revelation as *moderating*. Moderation constitutes, mediates and clarifies the rational order or economy of faith. Natural or "secular" fanaticism is properly chastened by faithful fanaticism. Faithful fanaticism consists in correct demonstration of the proper relationship of reason and revelation. Proper order of demonstrable fidelity or "faithful certitude" accounts both for the economy of the work and the true or best economy for faith. The source of moderation consists in the practice of correcting error. Immoderation's source is error. Knowingly or unknowingly immoderation is falsehood disguised as "revealed" truth.

Both Ghazālī's conviction and his study are determined in the face of this articulation of the "speeches" in which his theoretical proofs veridical countenance consists. The treatises of *Al- Iqtisād fī l-i'tiqād* organize their proofs as obligatory truth statements dictated upon the basis of a cognisance of the scriptural transmission of the revelation's record. The Islamic character, if we are to understand the literary and scientific conduct of Ghazālī's teaching in this light, consists in a certitude of reason provided by faith, while its literacy, indeed the *literalism* of its argumentative conduct is literally given as faith, or derived from inner or faithful speeches. There is no disparity only parity between revelation and truth. Exclusively between faith and certainty, between literacy and the scientific proof of reason is moderation circumscribed or given intelligibility.

Considering the foregoing it becomes indispensable for a study of Ghazālī's scholarly activity, indeed necessary to the doctrine of reason and revelation the *Iqtisād* propounds, necessary then to the coherence of faith's argument and its reasoning and in view of the distinctly Islamic character of its written economy, that his teaching of God's existence, *distinguishes* itself amongst its sectarian disputants. The intellectual teaching of God's existence is distinguished as true faith opposed to false faith. Therefore we are led to the classification of the disputants whose opposition Ghazālī arranges in refutation. This classification presents a taxonomy and indexation of those who put forward what can "only be based on malefic consciences," the *Hashawites*, who adhere strictly to

“conformism” and “literalism,” the *Falāsifah* and those among the *Mu'tazilites*, who rely “excessively on the dictates of the intellect, so as to collide against the absolutes of revelation.”¹² These interlocutors views Ghazālī contrasts with the uniqueness of true Islam and the originality of knowledge appropriate to God’s existence. Reasonably no less than faithfully, authority of the revelatory guidance presents a rational certitude for faith, as the criterion of disclosure of its own and of reason’s rational disambiguation, contrary to the fanatic irrationality of unfaithful and sectarian dispute.¹³ Sectarian disputes diverge from what is original. Revelation, according to Ghazālī is thus able to demonstrate irrationality contrary to true faith, or true faith is able to resolve erroneous renderings of reason, whether claims pertaining to revelation or indeed to questions of knowledge, possibility or certainty.

Revelation, as presented in *Al- Iqtiṣād fī l-i'tiqād* is thus not opposed to reason any more than belief may be asserted independent of the will, matters reported in the revelation, deemed possible by reason are obligatory for belief.¹⁴ Reason is thus for Ghazālī obliquely faithful or compulsive, rather than directly persuasive. The understanding of *Al- Iqtiṣād fī l-i'tiqād* as exhibiting the Islamic revelation as a “kind” or as being “like a genus” for “rational faith,” might be summarised by the following: “The affirmation of knowledge necessitates the affirmation of seeing God, which is one of its analogues and perfections and shares with it a characteristic.” It

¹² Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 2, 3

¹³ “The aim” Averroes brings against Ghazālī in *Tahafut Al-Tahafut* is instructive suggesting the multiplicity of ways this coherence or incoherence might be “disambiguated.” Averroes writes defending philosophy; “in the same way as you are unable to refute *our* argument [...] so we cannot refute *your* theory,” responding to an implication, that the “argument aims only at creating and establishing a doubt,” the inverse appropriation of the argument’s voice changes the rational relationship to the coherence of doubt regarding faith. Ghazālī, Averroes effectively charges, swaps the rational intelligibility of “philosophical” belief with unbelief; however belief per se, the latter being incomprehensible to reason rationally provides coherence, by a different rational degree than the duality of coherence and incoherence rationally. It *clarifies* reason. Averroes, *Tahafut Al-Tahafut, Averroes’s Tahafut Al-Tahafut, (The Incoherence of the Incoherence)*, Trans. Van Den Bergh, Vol 1 and Vol 2, University of Oxford Press, London, 1954, p 1, 8, 9

¹⁴ Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation*, p 209

is “not veiled to rational man that this is moderation in belief.”¹⁵ However, while a species of syllogism (or syllogistic likeness) of faith and reason distinguishes only a rational knowledge independent of the necessary character and economy of the *Iqtiṣād*, i.e. seeks the disambiguation of the “characteristic” shared with its faithful analogue in the cognition, the *Al-Iqtiṣād fī l-i'tiqād* proves by way of the necessity of belief, which the *Al-Iqtiṣād fī l-i'tiqād* articulates upon the basis of Islamic revelation - the meaningful impossibility of the syllogism, and hence the rationally moderating measure that distinguishes true faith from reason and reason from revelation. Faith, regarding this necessity, therefore can be obligated. The condition of rational knowledge distinguishes the complementary of intellectual knowledge and knowledge through revelation or necessity, as divided into obligatory proofs of reason as known through the revealed claim and knowledge via proof of reason, quite independent of the literacy of the revealed account and therefore, also of the occurrence of the world admissible by faith.¹⁶ The existence (essence) of the Originator and Creator, His Power knowledge and Will,¹⁷ that Ghazālī will treat in the first treatise of ten propositions, which he follows with a discussion of God’s attributes (*ṣifāt*) in the first and second parts of the second treatise is not established by the revelation (or is previously established, by intellectual or theoretical reflection and proof), while in turn, revelation is founded on speech.¹⁸ But what is known through the revelation (inner speech); what is inaccessible to the intellect independently and what is known posterior in rank to God’s speech is established by virtue of an obligatory (rational) necessity.¹⁹ Revelation does not establish speech, so we might

¹⁵ Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation*, p 72

¹⁶ While the *Iqtiṣād* recommends jurisprudence primacy, the proof of science’ justification is theological. Theoretical reflections on God consist in attendant differentiation; “if we reflect upon the world we do not reflect upon it insofar as it is world [...] but insofar as it is the work of God.” Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 5, 6

¹⁷ Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 209

¹⁸ Inner speech is unable to establish what is prior to it. Speech is prior to it. Revelation does not establish speech. Cf. Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 210

¹⁹ Cf. “Human beings are unable to understand the speech of God [...] to its innermost depths [...] divine speech has an exalted status [...] an executor of judgement in respect to truth and falsehood.” Al-Ghazālī *On the Interpretation and Recitation of the Qur’an*, book eight, *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*

contend, that our syllogism, employed to illuminate G constructed upon the basis of the conventional assumption of a harmony of reason and revelation, can only be *consequently* established, although it is then *established necessarily*.

Given this disjunction of revelation and the existence of speech, let us observe the inner argumentative order of the *Iqtiṣād* more closely. Its order devises moderation. The *Al- Iqtiṣād fī l-i' tiqād* consists of four sections, treatises or subsections in total, these are divided into a series of treatise and each treatise is divided into a series of further propositions or aspects.²⁰ The design of the argument of the median of belief is aimed at clarity throughout and clarity of the whole. Moderation of belief is the standard of moderating design. There is no incongruence between the argumentative design and what is stated explicitly about its order. The ordering of belief's moderation in its design is reflected in what it states in structure and intention in clear and unambiguous terms. Amongst the supreme achievements of the *Al- Iqtiṣād fī l-i' tiqād* is this organization. An absence of rhetoric provides its rational economy. Persuasion becomes superfluous in view of obligatory necessity; but we restrict ourselves, as we are advised by Ghazālī to the treatise's own circumscription of method, adumbrated in the fourth introduction. For the purpose of a cursory introduction to its argument's order undertaken in this article, "apprehensions"²¹ that belong to the revelatory, just as the knowledge following principles of demonstration, that endow its arrangement, demonstrate proofs of what is *unknown*.²² "Seeking" truth is combined with "awareness of

mind" or reflection. Seeking truth is an activity of faith or faithful reflection, knowingly or unknowingly. The median, thus also circumscribes the demonstration of rational organization, it is reasons and faiths organising principle in terms of the works theoretical objects (i.e. disputations of erroneous faith that lead to immoderation or fanaticism) whose inference is clarity of belief or clarification through belief. Any deliberation upon *Al- Iqtiṣād fī l-i' tiqād* that fails to attend to its structure, as though its rational coherence achieves clarity of moderation in belief solely through the comprehensiveness of its own reflection, that neglects that Ghazālī directly posterior to the books religious preface (Cf. Qur'ān 33:56), then explicitly sets out the book's title, division into four introductions, parts and chapters,²³ or neglects the theoretical reflection that "Thus there is no reflection but on God, and there is nothing sought but God"²⁴ throughout, will also miss the governing organisation of its parts. This governing organisation entails a consideration that suggests the order of which it is, but itself a reflection, a part, or inference, on the basis of which the consideration of its arguments coherence is reflected according to the design's economy. It might be supposed that its order has as its presupposition the guidance of a revealed book. Ghazālī writes: "The example of the intellect is that of eyesight," while "the example of the Qur'ān is that of the sun."²⁵ A perfect clarification of its design would therefore appear transparent, as it were - so one might contend that the perspicuity of the ambiguity of reason and faith constitutes the image of an argument envisaged by its author, while its outline is the example of rational sight or illuminating perspective of the true or comprehensive proof of the argument.

We now turn our attention to the first treatise; because it is in the reflections upon the essence (*dhāt*) of God that the insight of the *Al- Iqtiṣād fī l-i' tiqād* has cognition of the knowledge it demonstrates throughout, on the basis, either of God's existence (*wujūd*) or the

(*Ihyā' 'Ulūm ad-Dīn*), trans. Quasem, in *The Recitation and Interpretation of the Qur'an* Al- Ghazālī's Theory, Kegan Paul International, London 1982, p 59, 60

²⁰ The subjects, order and argument obey integers 2, 4, 7 and 10. The supervening division of "introductions" and "treatises" is tetradic. To discuss the architectonics of the "mean" i.e. including derivations from Asharite doctrine would require another paper.

²¹ Cf. Al-Ghazālī's *Moderation in Belief*, p 19, 20, 21

²² The *Al- Iqtiṣād fī l-i' tiqād* ramifies the setting forth, the method of its proofs clarification or *al-sabr wa-l-taqṣīm* in which two cases, one of whose refutation demonstrates the affirmation secondarily following the arrangement of two principles on a different matter, while the refutation of the impossibility of the opponents position, indirectly establishes a claim. Clarity proscribing obscurity provides faith's median an economy of method. Cf. "for something which is a branch of two principles can be made a principle in another inference" or

"revealed truth." Al-Ghazālī's *Moderation in Belief*, p 14, 15, 16, 19-21) There is no imaginable denial of the threefold method, whose theoretical reflection consists in bringing the two principles to mind in awareness of the third unknown cognition they imply. The third and fourth and so on provide a clue to the *pattern* of argument.

²³ Al-Ghazālī's *Moderation in Belief*, p 5 - 7

²⁴ Al-Ghazālī's *Moderation in Belief*, p 6

²⁵ Al-Ghazālī's *Moderation in Belief*, p 4

revelation, which becomes decisive for the legal court of decision in the fourth treatise, arbitrating the nature of infidelity or fanatical immoderation. According to Ghazālī this is achieved not by virtue of knowledge, but by virtue of the necessity ascribed to its intelligible reflection, the true or comprehensive proof of the argument. A consideration of the subjects reflected of this necessity provides the argument, just as it refutes the contrary. Appositionally, the subjunctive questions or errors that Ghazālī’s variously advances and refutes throughout are resolved by the correctness of the theoretical reflection upon the essence of God whose illumination, or perfect clarification disambiguates implicit confusion.

For our present purpose, we begin with the separation of God and world. This distinction foreshadows the separation of arguments from reason and arguments from revelation. This first distinction Ghazālī deploys in order to discern how arguments of immoderation confuse the mean, suggests the world as an occurrent has, as its cause, God, who precedes the cause (*sabab*). The prevailing argument of the world’s eternity, i.e. that would reject the mean, moderating or arbitrating the distinction, rejects the distinction, that would distinguish antecedent and precedent.²⁶ Thus, God’s essence in resolution of this confusion, distinguishes itself as eternal anteriorly and posteriorly, both from the occurrence of the world that demonstrates the cause as independent of, while necessary to, the pre-suppositional occurrence of worldly existence. Ghazālī disagrees with the assumption of causation in regard to the occasionalism of the

cause, in prospect of God, as reflected in theoretical reflection.²⁷ Revelation is attributed to “freedom”(or lack of the will’s compulsion). Thus, the *Iqtisād* redresses any attribution of anthropomorphisms to God and suggests the unfaithful supposition of such attribution. While this prospect occasions the knowledge of God as being “seeable,” able to be viewed, according to His rational “possibility” and His reality, whose intelligibility, known only through the revelation, demonstrates for all attendant theoretical considerations “reality,” or existence per se, or that the knowledge of its possibility is inevitable, The Exalted is *seeable* due to His existence and the existence of His essence.²⁸ Everything, however, that exists, i.e. *causally*, notes Ghazālī is “seeable.” Seeing, writes Ghazālī is a form of knowledge. It is a specific form of intellectual insight or “witnessing.” That the uniqueness of perfection belongs to the existence of His existence, correspondingly qualifies that this seeing is not sensory visualisation. The reality, of what is intended by the phrase, that “God is seeable” can, in contradistinction to the world of man and “seeable beings,” only be known through revelation, i.e. that it belongs to classification of the *seeable* rather than that which is seen. Rather, it is the necessary “image”²⁹ of that which makes what is effectively “see-able” *seen*.³⁰ This proof as represented in an “effective rational approach,” achieved through “seeings” true nature, a kind of perfection and increased or considerable illumination in

²⁶ A tripartite refutation of the philosopher’s doctrine of the world’s eternity, (that the divine will is eternal so the world is eternal) is held apart via the non-rationally improbable, namely, what we find discussed in Ghazālī’s *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa*; the positing of three divisions, God existing without the world, God creating the world, and then the beginning of a “new order which is the one promised in paradise.” Consistent with the perishability of the soul, “the whole” could “be annihilated so that nothing would remain save God. This [latter] is impossible except that the religious law has conveyed [its opposite – namely] that reward, punishment, paradise, and the fire have no end.” Temporal origination while two fold, makes probable or improbable, what discloses itself a impossible or necessary.” Al-Ghazālī, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers, (Tahāfut al-Falāsifa) A parallel English-Arabic text translated, introduced and annotated by Michael E. Marmura*, Brigham Young University Press, Provo, Utah 2000, p 225

²⁷ The proofs that Averroes for instance elicits in the incoherence of the incoherence adumbrate the core topics Ghazālī differentiates according to moderation. The coherence of faith and reason form a kind of true duplicity, necessary for the differentiation of coherence and incoherence. Averroes applies the term “sophistry” to cover Ghazālī’s refutation of arguments concerning the world’s eternity, the participatory relationships of the First and its genus’ specificity, the First as incorporeal, and the question of whether God knows himself. Averroes, *Tahāfut*, Cf. p 37, 38, 57, 221, 223, 414

²⁸ Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 63

²⁹ We note with Frank that “interpretation and exegesis” (*ta’wīl*) has multiple modes or “levels of the presence of existence (*darajāt al-wujūd*)” and that the “intellectual level: (*al-wujūd al-‘aqli*)” while interpreting statements make mention, i.e. of “God’s Hand,” referring to “a spiritual and intellectual hand,” this “hand” is belied by a diversely layered taxonomy, also in the refutation of speculative intellectual reflection (*nazar*). Frank, R.M. Al-Ghazālī and the Ash’arite School, Duke University Press, London, 1994, p 77a

³⁰ Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 64, 65

relation to the imagination,³¹ of the faculty of intellectual “insight,” the median of belief perceives in a clarification of knowledge and what knowledge is to a complete degree, and thus requires a perfection of “seeing” or – vision, necessary to the comprehension of what intellectual knowledge is, qua its claim to truth.³² This vision is however distinguished from a mystical vision (*mukāshafa*) simply understood.³³ It is distinct from the world of *cause*, equally understood in its simplicity.

The *Al- Iqtisād fī l-i’ tiqād* compliments the clarification and illumination of this cognition of knowledge of God with the evidence of the revelation, (Cf. Quran 2:1-20) that is, the affirmations of its transmissions, object and coherence in “seeing God” accord to the revelation, by way of a reflection upon its own standard of communication. Distinctively, the Qur’ānic record is iterated, evidentially and presents the strongest proof of God’s “visibility” as presented in the statement of Moses: “Show me that I may look upon you” (Quran 7:143). Consistently, the “visibility” of God is understood as knowledge of its impossibility as knowledge of God’s prerogative, simultaneously distinguishing ignorance from possibility in contradistinction to the sectarian, dispositional and literal. In turn, these present arguments not according to the visibility of God as knowledge of the impossibility of his being seen, rather worldly

³¹ Buchmann correctly differentiates a distinction from the school of Ibn al-‘Arabī which emerges in view of the luminous separation of the religious-theological author from Tūs. For while, his reading with a modern eye notes “presence” is as important as “absence,” and “divine immanence” is “as real as the divine transcendence,” that “God’s similarity (*tashbih*) must be conceded is we are to understand the true significance of declaring Him, incomparable (*tanzih*);” perceiving “God’s similarity” nevertheless “depends upon a full appreciation” of the “as if” only available via “imagination (*khayāl*).” It is the “as if” of the imagination itself, however, in incomparable contrast here, which provides, as it were, the “niche” for the “light,” ‘in’ or ‘by’ which the distinctions are made visible. Cf. (āyat al-nūr, Qur’an 24:35) Al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights (Mishkāt al-anwār)*, A Parallel English-Arabic text trans. Buchmann, Brigham Young University Press, Utah, 1998. p 5-10. Cf. Al-Ghazālī, *The Incoherence*, p 13

³² Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 68

³³ “God,” Ormsby comments, is “a free agent (*fā’il mukhtār*)[...] He may choose to create or not to create. But when he does choose to create His creation must be the utmost of “what wisdom demands” (*mā taqtadīhi al-hikmah*) Ormsby, Eric L. *Theodicy in Islamic Thought*, The Dispute over Al-Ghazālī’s “Best of All Possible Worlds”, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, p 75, 76

perception, the indictment of infidelity and immoderation, become ever more pronounced in conflation of the ignorance of God’s visage with God’s possibility, such that they support and constitute a position throughout defective in regards to faith whether through faithful extremity or rational deficiency.³⁴ They contradict definitive revelatory assertions through immoderation. Furthermore, we are led to conclude, their lack of affirmation of knowledge as affirmation of the “seeing of God” contains within it the attribution finally of a worldly consideration to the scriptural precedents of the Hereafter. Following upon the demotion of the revelatory, the evidential speech of the prophet lowered to the level of the perception or cognition of man, immoderation and deficiency belong to any rejection of knowledge by man without reason. Al-Ghazālī’s theoretical reflection, similarly accords to God’s being One,³⁵ the affirmation that asserts the denial of the possibility of God’s being otherwise conceived, which, according to his argument, demonstrates even more the certain impossibility of its contrary, than the possibility of its belief. *Al- Iqtisād fī l-i’ tiqād* has faith moderate necessity making reason intelligible.

The second treatise complimenting the reflections upon the essence of God, further forces apart reason and revelation so as they cohere in the moderation of faith in seven propositions. These seven propositions, characteristic of *Ash’arite* doctrine, establish the Divine Attributes, of which there are four, and are, in recognition of their respective determinations (*himma*) additional to God’s essence, although they subsist eternally therein. This subsistence indicates that God is, by virtue of theoretical reflection of the attributes consecutive distinction “powerful,” “living,” a “knower,” “willer,” “hearer,” “seer” and “sayer.”³⁶ Potency, originating the world in exquisiteness of design and good order provides the demonstration of God’s

³⁴ Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 72

³⁵ To the first of the ninety-nine names of God, “He is *Allāh* and there is no other god but he,” and Ghazālī adds “As for His saying *Allāh*, it is a name for the true existent, the one who unites the attributes of divinity, is subject of the attributes of lordship, and unique in true existence. For no existent thing other than He may claim to exist of itself [...] everything is perishing except His face [...] [*Allāh*] is analogous to proper names.” (Cf. Quran 27:88) Al- Ghazālī, *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God, al-Maqsad al-asnā fī sharh asmā’ Allāh al-husnā*, translated with Notes by David B.Burrell and Nazih Daher, The Islamic Texts society, Cambridge 1992, p 51

³⁶ Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 80, 83

Sovereignty, His originating act; and concomitantly implies the attributive relationships as circumscribed. Knowledge, which is unopposed to faith, whose basis is the division of the anteriorly eternal, the occurrent proceeding from God, existence and non existence, and “potency” where the principle derives his attributive status as “living” as well as possessing or ‘being’ “will” from His existence, is requisite to the distinguishing of possibilities as well as the previous distinctions as an *actual activity*, rather than a *causal activity*. These Ghazālī deems likewise sufficient for the methodology of attribution of “Hearing” and “Sight” as parallel to his consideration of their communication in the revelation’s transmitted scripture. The propositional relationship adduces a complimentary attribution. That the “Maker of the World is a knower of knowledge, living *with life*, powerful *with power*” is thereby adduced.³⁷ Thus returning to the economy of faith’s moderation, “the attempt, in turn, to prove divine speech by asserting that reason deems it possible that the creation frequently receives commands” has “transgressed reason,” by virtue of transgressing faith in the attempt of its proof, whereas considered according to revelatory speech “the concept of the messenger” or prophet, “is that of one who conveys the speech of the sender”³⁸ necessarily, i.e., according to the definition. That the existence of speech implies conveyance of speech, suggests that the perfection belonging to a created being, necessarily exists for the creator, i.e. what a messenger is, implies what a messenger conveys. For Ghazālī reason rests upon faith rather than cause, thus making reason “rational” or intelligible. Unlike “sounds” or “occurrences” of speech, God’s speech would then correspond to an “inner speech,” which is *neither* “sound” *nor* “letter.”³⁹ God may be heard in the same way He is seen. According to Ghazālī reason provides proofs, reason does not cause proofs. The fourth and concluding attributive characteristic, the names that are derived from the divine attributes are thus, according to Ghazālī true of God eternally.⁴⁰

³⁷ Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 129

³⁸ Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 114

³⁹ Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 116

⁴⁰ Ghazālī offers explanation of how the God’s names compiled from their Qur’ānic source (after Abū Hurairam) resolve to an essence of seven attributes. How a name resolves to an attribute is underlined by the essence of the name (i) *Allah* and “the truth” [*al-Haqq*], which involves a meaning that the name’s essence iterates as a “necessary existence,” whereas other designations imply

While the previous treatises conceived the moderation of faith according to God’s being, then according to God’s attributes, that the “median,” or “arbitration” of faith with faith is reason; the third treatise concerns in its corresponding seven propositions, the Acts of God. Its theme sets apart fidelity from reason. The basis of its concern with the Acts of God concerns the obligatory or contingent character of such acts or the extent of rational claims upon God previously established as non-obligatory. In this way, understood from the point of view of his opponents’ obligatory circumscription of God, constituting the basis upon which the consideration of the foregoing exclusively took place, i.e. by way of the opponents refutation and not by way of a positive foundation or definition legitimising the revelation according to its sanction, Ghazālī establishes the median, or moderating arbitration between his opponents and himself between infidel and faithful orthodoxy. This method, resting entirely upon “a principle taken from the opponents beliefs or concessions”⁴¹ derives its proper order, in turn, from the revelation, by way of an “aspect” of reason and faith underlying a

multiple determinations. For instance (ii) “What indicates essence with a negation” i.e. “the Holy [al-Quddūs]”, “the Flawless [al-Salām]”, “the One [al-Wāhid]”, (iii) “what refers to the essence when something is added”, i.e. “the Most High [al- ‘Alī]”, (iv) “What refers to the essence with negation and addition, i.e. “the King [al-Malik]”, (v) “What refers to an attribute, i.e. “the Omniscient [al-‘Alīm], (vi) “What refers to knowing with something in addition, i.e. “the Wise [al-Hākīm]”, (vii) “What refers to power with something more added “the Dominator [al-Muqtadīr]”, (ix) “What refers to attributes of action”, i.e. “the Creator” [al-Khāliq], (x) “What refers to an indication of an action with something more,” i.e. “the Benevolent” [al-Latīf].” Ten primary distinctions recur to seven attributes necessitating, what is derived from the essence, (i) in what the “naming” articulates (ii-x), i.e. the reduction of the number of the names, is preceded by a priority given by the *naming*, that necessitates a thinkable as opposed to unthinkable distinction; what *can be put together* and what *can be set apart* in designation. The *muz’ tizlities* and the philosophers argue that the attributes may be denied, as there is only a single essence in God. The seven attributes life, knowledge, power, will, hearing, knowledge seeing, and speaking all then resolve to knowledge, which resolves to essence. For Ghazālī this could only consist in the articulation of a single name, that arbitrary in regard to the differentiation of what is attributive in distinguishing the possibility of knowledge’s resolution, itself remains itself nameless or contradictorily exclusive of either predicates of essence or knowledge. Al-Ghazālī, *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names*, p 1, 49, 159, 161

⁴¹ Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 21

self-consistent refutation *not of the revelation*, i.e. of its proper conception, *if faithfully believed*, but by virtue of the truth of the revelation independent of faith *in the revelation*, that is, by virtue of the refutation of false reason by virtue of God's Sovereignty. Asserting the entirety of God's acts are contingent Ghazālī, establishes the absolute potency of God's acts and the incomparability of God's Sovereignty as singular, or being One.⁴² None of them may be described as being obligatory of God. God may assign obligations or not with discretion independent of any obligation to reward obedience, or punish disobedience, to bring suffering or to alleviate suffering. Thus, Ghazālī in the context of this claim understands the obligation of man to God by virtue, not of reason, but by revelation or fidelity to the revelation's preceding potency. The consideration of the acts of God then turns towards the consideration of obligation. For it is by virtue of God's inscrutable power, that the legitimate avoidance of harm is at once the condition for the amelioration of chastisement conditioned on the basis of the immoderation of belief advanced. The fidelity in the appropriate avoidance of harm consists in a "rationalisation" of fanatic faith, or of its becoming "falsely revelatory," that ends in the true faith being identified as being "fanatically moderate" or reasonable.

The considerations of obligation in accordance with the distinction of 'good' and 'bad' established according to reason, are, thus, argues Ghazālī, cognates of the meaning of "obligatory" and are conditions of necessity, dividing according to speaker and relational association. The totality of propositions,⁴³ understood against the background of God's absolute Sovereignty, "circumscribes" the acts of God, or being inconceivable or contradictory - demarcates rather the incorrect attribution of "acts" to God by Ghazālī's sectarian adversaries. Contrarily the considerations of 'good' and 'bad' as established by the intellect makes what is "obligatory" for faith, also

⁴² Watt's study "Muslim Intellectual" repeats the error characteristic of Ghazālī's approbation. At "issue" between Ghazālī and the philosophers is whether the ground of all being is more adequately described by human analogies or by analogies from natural forces." Precisely what is *not analogous* either to human analogies or natural forces is what is "characteristic" of the true relationship of reason and revelation. Watt, W. Montgomery, *Muslim Intellectual. A Study of Al-Ghazālī*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1963, p 60

⁴³ Al-Ghazālī's *Moderation in Belief*, p 157

convergent with the avoidance of harm.⁴⁴ For it is the disjunction that is determinative of the terms 'obligatory' and 'necessary.' The former describes the performance of an act as preponderant over refraining from it, that is in turn defined according to its type considering the latter. The given act is known or imagined regarding a future harm, just as the worldly life might involve harm, the Hereafter or next life presents the *possibility* of intolerable harm. Returning to Ghazālī's prior investigation of the terms of 'obedience' and 'disobedience' corresponding to the avoidance of harm, 'good' and 'bad' as established by the intellect might be thus complimented by a legal distinction. Unlike the compounding of obligation to God by his sectarian adversaries, it establishes the distinction of the affirmation of the revelation as distinct from legal convention, or the intolerable harm that contravenes revelation as vindicated by man, just as affirmation of revelation is coherent with that which prevents moderate, tolerable harm and is not called 'obligatory.'⁴⁵ Ghazālī's purpose in establishing the absolute contingency of God's acts cannot be divorced from the establishment of revelatory obligation, demonstrating the relationship of the intellect, whose purpose ameliorates a worldly misapprehension of the obligation, understood at its most extreme, or in its error, that requires an observance and subsistence of action preponderant in obligation of man presiding over God's own institutes. The faithful apportioning of the avoidance of harm provides its own moderation, unlike the enshrining of reason established upon the necessity of worldly or rather immoderate and therefore false obligation.

Having established revelation's reasonable economy in his theologico-religious treatise on faithful moderation, the coherence of Ghazālī's theoretical proofs in the fourth and concluding treatise of the *Iqtisād* serves the refutation of sectarian infidelities and the reliant affirmation of a doctrinal orthodoxy comparable to Sunni orthodoxy. It presents demonstration of the median or moderation, both by way of the establishment of Muhammad's prophetic status and regarding the imamate. The proof of Muhammad's prophetic status and the refutation of the sectarian arguments, provides a challenge in the form of the definition of miracles for the preceding parts of the

⁴⁴ Al-Ghazālī's *Moderation in Belief*, p 205 ff

⁴⁵ Al-Ghazālī's *Moderation in Belief*, p 159

Iqtisād based upon the Qurʾān as consisting in a challenge⁴⁶ to confirm a truthfulness “mankind cannot meet.”⁴⁷ It concerns the absence of meaning that suggests that a false miracle is one able to be definitively met or conceived by mankind. Having concluded the proofs of God’s existence according to faith’s moderation in revelation, upon which the faithful economy of that existence for rational belief is based, we are brought to a discussion of miracles, or rather the miraculous order of the foregoing moderation foreshadowing the economy of its median. A true miracle consists in its being unable to be proven by mankind. Not merely the beauty of the construction of Qurʾān with elegance beyond “mankind’s ability,” but beautiful organisation itself demonstrates the impossibility of its disproof. The Qurʾān has a unique literary character. Qurʾān combines in beauty and elegance the occasion that challenges theoretical proof of its construction by virtue of a claim to truthfulness that demonstrates the contrary challenge. The counter claim to Qurʾān is therefore revelation. Inner speech while based upon speech cannot be proven by reason. The disproof of the miraculous that belongs to the truthfulness of the Qurʾān is a truth that cannot be proven by man’s speech. Contrarily, however, the disproof of a miracle established by mankind is self-evident.⁴⁸ The

⁴⁶ Yabub notes “Ghazali is referring to Muhammad’s challenge to the Arabs to produce a piece of the same literary eloquence as the Qur’an (to produce an imitation of the Qur’an) [...] The Arabic word Ghazālī uses [...] is *mu’rāda*” meaning “opposition”, “meeting a challenge,” “counterpart” and “imitation.” Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 202

⁴⁷ Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 202

⁴⁸ The same Aladdin Yaqūb who translated the *Al- Iqtisād fī l-i’ tiqād* published a volume entitled *The Liar Speaks the Truth*, a defence of the concept of truth completely and correctly defined by the Tarskin Schema. Namely, all bi-conditionals, collectively and exhaustively, are individually constitutive of the concept of truth for a bivalent language in which “every sentence is either true or false, but not both” that “contains its own truth predicate.” He notes a “fundamental intuition” of the “concept of truth,” citing Aristotle *Metaphysics*: 1011b23-27), (*De Interpretatione*: 18b1-5) and Plato’s *Cratylus*, (385b-c), that applies to all logical systems the schema sets out, disqualifying “truth values” as distinct from the exclusionary inclusiveness of the schema as exhaustive. Indeed, semantically paradoxes are circular, according to their truth conditions. Thus “the revision process captures the intuitive judgement that the truth status of the Truth-teller is arbitrary, but consistent. However when a language contains a Liar sentence, its truth predicate can no longer receive fixed extensions. No revision hierarchy in this case terminates. [...] The Liar is paradoxical: its “truth status is

proof of the prophet’s truthfulness is the challenge of the meaningfulness of this proof or the challenge to render the relationship of meaningfulness to truth as such. This, according to Ghazālī is precisely what the Qurʾān’s literary construction consists in or its organisation achieves. The Book or Qurʾān is the height, or highest arrangement of proof and truth (Quran 2:2). Qurʾān is the challenge that truthfulness itself has or is. “We say: ‘A miracle has no meaning except when it is combined with a prophet’s making a challenge in order to confirm his truthfulness with a challenge that mankind cannot meet.’”⁴⁹ Thus knowledge, not known through necessity, unlike knowledge that is known through necessity, consists in the distinction of knowledge through proof of reason, through revelation or the conjunction of reason and revelation. The truth of revelation and by revelation is meant inner speech, while founded upon speech, is not necessitated by anything prior to speech or what is founded upon it and, distinguished from speech, cannot be established by the revelation’s proof. The character of the revelation thus suggests that matters reported in the revelation and deemed possible by reason are obligatory for belief, or the human justification of revelation is immoderate fanaticism. Reasons’ dictates are finally inseparable from a unique understanding or arrangement of truth.

It is hardly surprising, that the imamate proceeding in the third chapter of the fourth treatise that Ghazālī raises as an explicit subject for the consideration of obligatory action, or the question of infidelity or fanaticism as proceeding from wilful immoderation, is ranked below the important matters of reflection upon the “intelligible” that precede it. It is ranked below the contest of revelation and reason, as it is here that human affairs are discussed in the light of the foregoing concern with divine matters. They are discussed from a vantage point removed from the divine. From the Sovereignty of Allah we turn to

either way contradictory.” The exclusion of the “liar” would provide a logical condition not dissimilar from the condition Ghazālī requires for the philosophical disproof of revelation. Could it be a “revealed text” has a logically unique structure unaccounted for in the Tarskin schema? (Yaqūb, M. Aladdin. *The Liar Speaks the Truth*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1993, p 3, 6, 36, 37, 40) Cf. Also Yaqūb, M. Aladdin Al-Ghazālī’s Philosophers on the Divine Unity, Arabic Sciences and Philosophy, vol. 20, 2010, p 284, 285
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the issue of the will in human affairs.⁵⁰ “Infidelity” being a legal topic and exciting of prejudices, consists in the study of conventional beliefs. The demotion in rank of the topic to legality, from the prior considerations, reflects the worldly condition of the avoidance of harm to which is added a legal demonstration, consistent with the avoidance of everlasting harm. Not the consensus of the Muslim community, but the basis of community consensus distinguishes both the reason for the demotion, this stepping down in rank and the legal precedent, which governs and is itself the demotion of rank. This legality is a step down, despite it none the less governing the importance of relativity of rank in consideration of intolerable harm in the hereafter. Well-ordered religious affairs, we read, achieved through well-ordered worldly affairs are accomplished through an imam who is obeyed. The appointment of the imam is obligatory. This appointment is integral to the avoidance of misery.

It becomes clear in consideration of the prior parts of *Al-Iqtisād fī l-i’tiqād* and in consideration of the belief of the followers of the *Sunna* “regarding the Prophet’s companions” and “rightly guided caliphs” that following the consideration of rank that compels the coherence of legal precedence for the avoidance of harm in the Hereafter, and thereby in the amelioration of potential harm in the present, that both excesses, either of attribution of infallibility to the imams or attacks upon the “rightly guided” as reports sanctioning of the good-order of worldly affairs, i.e. either the attack upon “integrity,” or evincing finally of oneself “to be a liar” regarding matters of guidance in worldly affairs does not follow “moderation in belief.” Similarly, regarding any report that is not “authenticated,” any governance operating on “interpretation” and “likelihood” is to be confronted, maintaining “our rejection” of any such report that it is to be interpreted “figuratively.”⁵¹ Well-ordered worldly affairs serve the maintenance of religious affairs. Literal interpretation preserves

⁵⁰ The dispelling of doubts regarding the fundamentals of beliefs is obligatory, while science can be harmful. It is “shown that what is obligatory for mankind is only resolute conviction,” “purifying the heart from scepticism and doubt about faith.” However, if “there is a country, region or city, lacking the scientific defence of truth, the means of uncovering the ugliness of false doctrine are lacking also. If a country lacks such a person, the whole population of the country would be at fault, exactly as if it lacks a physician or a jurist.” (Cf., Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 10-12, 13)

⁵¹ Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 236, 237

immoderation in governance of religious affairs. Excellence in order, or fidelity of order does not reverse the appropriate order of rank. Worldly affairs may not govern religious affairs. Al-Ghazālī treats worldly-affairs as subjected to moderation of belief and the alleviation of harm. The latter being prior to and posterior to the proper moderation of faith, or consisting in this subjection, alleviates harm based upon revelation, or is the appellate, ensuring mercy.

Extremity in belief, therefore accounts for the sectarian dispute of infidelity, whose quotation constitutes the contrary format of *Al-Iqtisād fī l-i’tiqād*. Which sects are to be charged with infidelity⁵² is itself both the issue occasioning greatest zeal amongst sectarians and the subject furthest from true faith. The legal issue of explaining which sects must be charged with infidelity, the issue of imputing infidelity to someone is a matter, according to Ghazālī, for which there is no “room for the evidence of reason.”⁵³ This apparent contravention of moderation, i.e. the rescindment of reason, adequately refutes extremity in faith as it seeks to revoke according to the order of its arguments, the imputation of judgement to the revelation, preserving the distinction that the imputation of judgement is secured by revelation or independent opinion. A legal judgement decisive for the indictment of infidelity, *may contravene the revelation*. For it is possible that the revelation asserts the opposite, of what its rational, legal or human interpretation dictates, i.e. than the legal premise would derive on the basis of human reason. It is observed that while it is possible upon evidence of reason to know the falsity of “a statement” and “ignorance of belief,” that knowledge which would consider it sufficient upon the basis of this knowledge to impute infidelity or to conduct actions contrary to the assumption of this knowledge by forming a judgement; that it is justifiable according to the revelation to “spill” the “blood” of an infidel “and take his property,” or that “it is permissible to say he will reside in hellfire forever,” may not in fact be sanctioned by the revelation. The prerogative of deciding upon the revelation destroys the economy of rank. In turn this would require, that it is possible that falsity is truth, or ignorance is knowledge be maintained on the basis of the revelation, rather than its impossibility being maintained.⁵⁴

⁵² Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 243

⁵³ Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 241

⁵⁴ Al-Ghazālī’s *Moderation in Belief*, p 242

Thus, while it is more than improper to suggest revelation assert that falsity is truth and ignorance is knowledge, it is also an impropriety upon the assumption of immoderation. The distinction between falsity and truth and ignorance and knowledge requires for its clarification in legal judgements the distinction between revelation and law to be made clear and distinct. What is sought in Ghazālī's distinction is to what extent revelation may determine ignorance and falsehood, as a condition for the annulment of the inviolability of the charged infidel. Consistent with this distinction Ghazālī holds that true utterance and its consistency, the conviction at heart in its expression and accordance with the decree of the revelation can be decided within the purview of the revelation in consideration of whether the infidels utterances are false or true, however, whether he is ignorant or knowledgeable, whether he can be justifiably condemned or punished, rests upon a *different* legal basis.⁵⁵ In contradistinction to whether someone is a liar or ignorant, guilty or innocent, whether he is infidel or Muslim is decided through the revelation, legitimately, but not by human judgment, which is immediately illegitimate.⁵⁶ The consideration Ghazālī presents at the

⁵⁵ Al-Ghazālī prepares the question of which sects are to be charged with infidelity by asserting its status as a legal issue. The reason he asserts it is a legal issue is because the infidelity that is attributed to these sects, or that is attributed by sects to one another is central to the provocation of zealotry itself. Al-Ghazālī is inclined to present the imputation of infidelity as an act based upon revelation. It is excluded from the consideration by evidence of reason. Therefore, infidelity imputed to a particular sect, errs in regard to the question of revelation if it calls upon the revelation as the satisfying condition by which the attribution of judgement can occur. The condition for that in which infidelity consists is given by the revelation, however the evidence that would establish condition for legal judgement is not accorded to reason, but to independent opinion. The relation, then between revelation and independent opinion is ambiguous, in that it is deliberative, but not the prerogative of man. The step from the question of what constitutes infidelity to the assertion or judgment formed on the basis of a legal precedent that considers a sect to be infidel entails an assumption of knowledge or a condition of reason that attributed to the basis of the revelation shares this basis with worldly decision and cannot be faithfully imputed to the revelation.

⁵⁶ The emergence of the mean for the circumscription of opinion according to tradition, as distinct from legal opinion, finds its parallel in book eight Chapter four of *Ihyā' 'Ulūm ad-Dīn*; "Understanding Qur'an and its explanation by personal opinion which has not come down by Tradition," which constitutes a parallel break to the break between God and world is bridged by Qur'anic

conclusion of the *Iqtisād* takes the form of a legal investigation upon the basis of ignorance and knowledge, but regarding the question of fidelity or infidelity, asks us to consider this as being most similar to the question of whether someone is a slave or a free man. Ghazālī selects this analogy as it pertains to the realm of legal precedent. Its selection does not pertain to revelation or faith.

Legal judgements regarding infidelity, while they can only have their foundations sought in the revelation, if the law, as it were, *judges* is thus neither legal nor based upon the revelation. This is corroborated by independent opinion. The fundamental principle of jurisprudence turns to the sources of law as consensus generated on the basis of transmitted report or legal analogy based upon a principle source (i.e., independent reports, or unrevealed claims).⁵⁷ The appeal to revelation is independent from the sovereignty attributed to the judgement of independent opinion's sanction legally. Such sanction would consummate a legal judgment with a prerogative regarding the revelation that is possibly inconsistent with the revelation, but necessarily consistent with the actions of infidelity. The separation of reasonable evidence, from the consideration of revelation in regards to independent opinion and legal precedent preserves moderation, as the imputation of infidelity may thereby exist in contravention of law. To make the revelation arbitrate is hardly the prerogative of faithful man. The connexion of independent opinion and revelation preserves the prudence that avers legal judgement in the case of the violation of the infidel.

Ghazālī in his classification of the ranks of infidel sects repeats the doctrinal divergences of the second and third treatises. What

exegesis. Qur'anic magnification of proper exegesis, the "deep meanings" (asrār a;-Qur'an) and those "unveiled (yunkashif) to people possessed of purified souls" (arbāb al-qulūb az-zakiyya) is contrasted with the prophetic saying; he "who explains the Qur'an according to personal opinion (bi-ra 'yihi) shall take his place in Hell." [At-Tirmidhī, sunan, Tafṣīr, 1.] Exegesis magnified by the Qur'an is distinguished by its opposite, "for the prohibition" of interpreting Qur'an by personal opinion lies with forming an "opinion [of his own] on the matter" influenced by "nature (*tab*) and passion (*hawā*)." Thus "it happens despite knowledge of the Sharī'a" such as one "who adduces an argument from a certain Qur'anic verse for validating his heresy" (bid 'a) is opposed to legitimacy of searching out a proof that proves the reason for that proof in Qur'an. The latter annuls the former influences, as it rectifies the impossibility of finding legitimacy in false judgement. Al-Ghazālī *On the Interpretation*, p 86, cf. 90, 91, 92

⁵⁷ 243 (See footnote on pg 243)

remains undoubted by all the sects, we discover, those more or less infidel, is the prophetic nature of the messenger as implied in the third treatise. The classification of rank, which concludes the final part of *Al- Iqtisād fī l-i 'tiqād* consists in the resolution of multiple sectarian disputes, resolving in a report of the messenger, consistent with moderation, apportioned by virtue of its correctness as reason being illuminated by faith and at the works conclusion, by its inverse. In each case, the sectarians are shown to be infidels, that is, a specific heterodoxy of reason and faith resolves to evidence the true moderation of reason and faith as the true or faithful orthodoxy underlying false heterodoxy. Orthodoxy in faith and reason establishes moderation.⁵⁸ According to this orthodoxy Ghazālī defines sects that are extreme and those that are moderate in relation to the former. The imputing of infidelity to such sects is not permissible on the basis of textual evidence. The role of independent opinion upon the basis of legal analogy in judging the infidel can be understood as moderating of the latter's truth also regarding the former. "A demonstration" writes Ghazālī "is either a principle or an analogy based on a principal; and the principle here is unequivocal disbelieving of the prophet," to which he adds "He who does not disbelieve is not described as an unbeliever in the first place; hence he remains sheltered by the general inviolability that is conferred by the deceleration of faith."⁵⁹

Moderation therefore remains the prerogative of the orthodox refutation of the heterodox. The conditions for the imputation of infidelity serves to contrarily distinguish subjects relevant to theologians in that it informs in contrast the object of legal investigation. Thus clarifying the distinction, the condition for the

imputation of infidelity as corresponding to lies and ignorance remains the prerogative of intellectual investigation. From the position of the annulment of inviolability or eternal condemnation to hell it is a legal investigation distinct from revelatory proof. The latter is based upon the former, in so far as the revelation dictates and preserves moderation in belief. In turn moderation ensures both the attainment of eternal happiness in the Hereafter and the avoidance of worldly misery.

The preceding study had in view, the comprehensive analysis of the relationship of reason and revelation in Ghazālī's *Al- Iqtisād fī l-i 'tiqād*, to cross-examine that work in order to observe the establishment of its Islamic argument for faithful moderation, as inseparable from its foundation as a theologico-religious treatise after the *Sunna*. Particularly it had in view the design of argument and its economy of faithful moderation. The question of the relationship of reason and revelation according to which, or on the a basis of which an argument that seeks moderation of reason and revelation, not in their opposition, externally or internally, but in their fundamental coherence for Islam, requires a renewed study of what that coherence dictates for the comprehensive analysis of Sunni orthodoxy, in light of the mitigating views and legitimacy of the coherence of rational moderation and faith, and on the other hand, the attainment of happiness and avoidance of misery. In this way, the present article contributes to a preface that might be written in rehabilitation of an understanding proper to the relationship of reason and revelation, as it was understood by one of its greatest Muslim defendants against abuse and misinterpretation, indeed, against fanaticism.

⁵⁸ One commentator argues in consideration of reconciliation of reason and revelation through the "rule of interpretation" (*Qānūn al-ta'wīl*) that the criteria for the distinction between unbelief and clandestine apostasy, corresponds to two further sets of criteria for "classifying heterodox beliefs, one that determines the boundary between Islam and apostasy and one that distinguishes orthodoxy from heterodoxy." While correct, these criteria are not immune from involvement in the controversy, for the correct understanding of the distinction that underlies the criteria, also dispels the necessity of the obligatory character of the criteria independent of the revelation's heterodox ambiguity, if rightly, as opposed to falsely, understood, i.e. the criteria do not circumscribe the revelation, revelation necessarily illuminates them rationally. Frank, R.M. *Al-Ghazālī and the Ash'arite School*, Duke University Press, London, 1994, p 86

⁵⁹ Al-Ghazālī's *Moderation in Belief*, p 246