

Ghazālī's Influence on Mullā Ṣadrā's View of Causal Necessity and Freewill*

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Muḥammad Ghazālī (d. 1111) influenced some of the key metaphysical teachings of Shia Safavid philosophers, most prominently, Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. ca. 1636). In this paper, I argue that Mullā Ṣadrā reads Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037) through the lens of Muḥammad Ghazālī's Sufi Ash'arism to offer a solution to the problem of freewill in the Islamic context. In his adaptation of causal necessity from Ibn Sīnā, Mullā Ṣadrā argues that "necessity" as a concept is co-extensional with "existence" because in reality all that is the case is necessarily so. On the other hand, all things including voluntary actions and will are only relatively existent since the only independent existence is that of God. I demonstrate that like Ibn Sīnā, Mullā Ṣadrā acknowledges the existence of a causal chain in which all intermediary causes including human freewill have causal power. But, similar to Ghazālī's account, all human acts including voluntary ones are from God since in Mullā Ṣadrā's universe freewill is a lower degree of God's Will. For Mullā Ṣadrā, the acquisition of action by human beings in the case of voluntary actions, a notion that he adopts from Ghazālī, is the same as "acquiring" existence from God's existence.

Key words: Freewill; causal necessity; compelled chooser; acquisition; Sufi Ash'arism

The Safavid philosopher, Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Yayā Qawāmī Shīrāzī, known as Mullā Ṣadrā (d. ca.1045/1636), is famous for his metaphysical thesis of the graded unity of existence that is best captured by this statement that "The Simple Reality is the whole of all things in a nobler and more refined manner."¹ In the light of this principle, Mullā Ṣadrā is known for his attempt to bring together the wisdom of classical and Sufi philosophies to solve the old metaphysical problem of unity in diversity.² His solution also extends to a host of theological and ethical paradoxes. One important among these is the paradox of considering human beings as free agents responsible for their choices and accountable to the divine law and rulings while believing that everything including human agency issues from God. This paradox overlaps with the problem of causality and whether or not one can establish any true causal power other than God's. As a follower of Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), Mullā Ṣadrā confirms diverse existences, which are ruled by the principle of causal necessity; as a Sufi philosopher, he interprets all causal relations as relative to the absolute and perfect causal agency of God. Mullā Ṣadrā discusses the problem of freewill in several of his works. However, only a few publications in English focus on this aspect of his philosophy.³ In this paper, I discuss Mullā Ṣadrā's modification of Ibn Sīnā's view of causal necessity through the lens of unity of existence, and then proceed to argue that he is strongly influenced by Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) Sufi-style Ash'arism, which will be explained below, in his interpretation of causality especially where human voluntary actions are concerned.

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Ghazālī's influence on Mullā Ṣadrā is not limited to the problem of freewill. In addition to the deep impact of Ghazālī's interpretation of the Quran's Light Verse (Q. 24:35) on Mullā Ṣadrā's thesis of the unity and gradation of existence,⁴ the latter is also indebted to Ghazālī for some of his theological and ethical teachings. Mullā Ṣadrā even tries to exonerate Ghazālī from the accusation of hostility against philosophers. He says in this regard that,

As for the refutation and rejection of [philosophers] in his [Ghazālī's] books, that sometimes appear for the sake of religious expediency and guarding the beliefs of Muslims from perdition and misguidance when they hear philosophers' words without comprehension and wisdom and find blasphemy in their meanings; So that their faith would be preserved and their strides would not become unsteady by hearing from the imperfect pseudo-philosophers (*al-mutafalsifin*) that learning philosophy makes the divine law (*al-sharī'a*) superfluous [...] Or [his rejection of philosophers] is for the sake of dissimulation (*al-taqiyya*) and fear of excommunication (*al-takfir*) by some literalist jurists (*al-zāhirīyyīn min al-fuqahā*) of his day [...] Or, it was due to the fact that he was in his early stage [of spiritual growth] before reaching the level of sophistication and perfection in knowledge [...].⁵

Ghazālī's influence on Mullā Ṣadrā is especially noteworthy with regard to the problem of freewill for the following reasons. First, freewill is pivotal to long-held tensions among different schools of *kalām*, i.e. dialectical theology. The Mu'tazilīs for the most part uphold absolute freedom for human voluntary actions, the mainstream Ash'arīs believe that all actions are created by God; and the Shi'as claim a position in between the two. Secondly, unlike in his other metaphysical discussions where the Andalusian Sufi thinker, Ibn 'Arabī (d.638/1240) is forcefully present, Mullā Ṣadrā does not involve him when discussing freewill. This makes one wonder what is at stake in the problem of freewill that directs Mullā Ṣadrā more in the direction of Ghazālī and, as I will later explain, Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 606/1210) rather than Ibn 'Arabī.⁶ Thirdly, Mullā Ṣadrā is a follower of Ibn Sīnā's principle of causal necessity, which is often the target of Ash'arī criticism. Mainstream Ash'arism finds the principle of causal necessity incongruent with the Ash'arī doctrine of the "creation of actions" (*khalq al-a'māl*) by God that is a form of occasionalism.⁷ Yet, the causality issue becomes more complicated when it falls into Ghazālī's hands, which a good number of contemporary scholars have addressed by investigating Ghazālī's different texts on the subject.⁸

The problem of freewill as a point of contention between Peripatetic philosophy and Ash'arī theology arises from Ibn Sīnā's famous principle that "Whatever is not necessary does not exist" or more precisely, "Everything existing possibly in itself—if indeed its existence has occurred—exists necessarily through another" (Ibn Sīnā, *Ilāhiyyāt al-Najāt* II: 3, 548, in McGinnis and Reisman 2007: 212).⁹ In simple terms, the existence of X is inevitable as long as its cause is there. Despite the possibility of applying this principle in a general sense to all causal relations, for Ibn Sīnā, the ultimate relation of causal necessity is between God and the world "For it is the Necessary Existent itself that ultimately explains why everything else exists" (McGinnis 2010: 167).¹⁰ While in Ash'arī theology broadly considered, ultimate causal relation is between God and the world, it would not characterize this relation as "necessary" in order to retain God's freedom in the act of creation. Moreover, in contrast to Ibn Sīnā, there is no necessary causal relation among things in the world and God freely creates all events including human 'voluntary' actions as He wishes. Thus, God is *the* truly free agent

who determines what is to be the case in all that occurs in the world as He creates every event.¹¹ However, as I argue below, the Sufi turn in Ash‘arism through Muḥammad Ghazālī facilitated the coexistence of the principle of causal necessity and the attribution of human actions to God in the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā. The Sufi turn in Ghazālī’s Ash‘arism happens through “Shifting the emphasis from causality to ontology, from denying power to creatures to denying existence itself to them, from occasionalism to theomonism (Mayer 2008: 274).¹² Simply put, regarding those human acts for which we are morally responsible, we will still be held accountable with God being the creator of the acts because our existence itself is no *other* than God’s. This ontological turn is the main premise based on which I argue for Ghazālī’s influence on Mullā Ṣadrā’s treatment of freewill in the present article.

Building on Ibn Sīnā’s principle of causal necessity, Mullā Ṣadrā highlights the co-extensionality of “existence” and “necessity,” because what is existent is also necessarily so. As he says in his magnum opus, *al-Asfār*, “Every cause is necessary in its causality and every effect is necessary in being caused.” (my translation; Shīrāzī, 1999: I 223). In his commentary (*al-Ta’līqāt*) on Ibn Sīnā’s *Metaphysics of the Healing (Ilāhiyyāt al-Shifā’)*, Mullā Ṣadrā revisits the principle of causal necessity from the perspective of existential unity. Following the order of chapters in Ibn Sīnā’s book, the sixth chapter of Mullā Ṣadrā’s commentary discusses causality and causal relations. The selection of passages and the places of emphasis all point to his attempt to prove that for Ibn Sīnā, causality proper is efficient causality in the sense of bestowing existence. Specifically, in his comments on Ibn Sīnā’s Aristotelian classification of causes, Mullā Ṣadrā decides that,

Truly, the consideration of priority, posteriority, causality and being caused and their divisions in the quiddities [by which he means material and formal causes] are only accidental and in virtue of considering the existence (*min jahat i’tibār al-wujūd*); otherwise there are no causal relations among them whatsoever (Shīrāzī 2003: II 992-93).¹³

Shortly after the above passage, Mullā Ṣadrā’s commentary on Ibn Sīnā’s view of causality takes a slightly critical tone. He frowns at Ibn Sīnā for saying that “The agent bestows from itself an existence upon another thing.”¹⁴ Mullā Ṣadrā criticizes the phrase “another thing” and argues that what the efficient cause bestows is “coupled with” the bestower and there is no escape from this coupling. In other words, there is unity rather than diversity. But, we tend to think that when Ibn Sīnā speaks of “existence other than the efficient cause” he has in mind a universe which consists of distinct existences (*wujūdāt*) with God’s Existence being the only one that exists in Its own right. In other words, for Ibn Sīnā, despite the necessary causal relation between the bestower of existence and the receiver of it, which also implies the constant existential need of the latter, the effect is ontologically other than the cause. However, for Mullā Ṣadrā, the continuation of the existential need for the cause makes sense only if the effect is “Not other” than the cause (Shīrāzī 2003: 995).

The above unity principle means that the only independent existence is God’s Existence. And if there is no independent existence other than God’s, then there is no independent agency other than God’s. Mullā Ṣadrā arrives at this conclusion by reading Ibn Sīnā through the lens of Ghazālī’s Sufi Ash‘arism according to which, the only reality that exists and has real causal power is God.¹⁵ Similar to Ghazālī, Mullā Ṣadrā considers God as the only real power and cause of all actions, and in his writings, including *al-Asfār*, he frequently seeks support from the Quran by quoting verses such as

“Who has control today? God, the One, the All Powerful” (40:16). And, “Everything will perish save His Face” (28:88). It is noteworthy that these two verses are also among the Ash‘arī favorites in support of God’s creation of actions. In the *Asfār*, Mullā Ṣadrā quotes Ghazālī on different levels of comprehending God’s Oneness (*tawhīd*), which culminates in the Sufi experience of seeing God in every aspect of creation:

And he [Ghazālī] said in another part of the *Ihyā’*, “As for the one whose insight is strengthened and whose faith is not weakened [...] he beholds no one but Allah, recognizes no one but Him, and knows that there is no existence other than Allah the Transcendent, and that His Acts (*af‘āl*) are traces of His Power (*qudra*) and follow It (*tābi‘ lahu*). Therefore, they have no real existence since the only existence is that of the Real One (*wāḥid al-ḥaqq*) through which all the acts [i.e. every part of creation] exist. Thus, the person who is in this spiritual state (*ḥāl*) does not see any acts unless he sees the [real] Agent (*al-fā‘il*) in them” (Shīrāzī 2003: II 324-25).

Before I proceed with my argument about Mullā Ṣadrā’s view of freewill under Ghazālī’s influence, I would like to note that attributing classical Ash‘arī *kalām* to Mullā Ṣadrā is out of question because of his commitment to Twelver Shi‘a theology which is officially distinguished from the Sunni Ash‘arism.¹⁶ Furthermore, in contrast to classical Ash‘arism, Mullā Ṣadrā’s philosophical theology does not deny the efficacy of secondary causes and acknowledges them as lower degrees of God’s power.¹⁷ This means that, Ghazālī’s theological influence on Mullā Ṣadrā can only be justified if he reads Ghazālī’s Ash‘arism through the lens of Sufism.¹⁸ Furthermore, based on Mullā Ṣadrā’s reading of Ghazālī’s *Ihyā’ al-‘ulūm al-dīn* (*Revival of the Religious Sciences*) which he cites frequently in the *Asfār*, one can reasonably claim that he regards Ghazālī’s view of divine attributes and acts in harmony with “the path of the perfect Sufis (*al-manhaj al-ṣūfiyya al-kāmilīn*)” (Shīrāzī 1999: VI 280).

He even uses ideas and terminology from Ghazālī’s Sufi-style treatise on God’s Beautiful Names, titled *Al-Maqṣad al-asnā’ fī sharḥ asmā’ Allah al-ḥusnā* in the context of discussing the relation between God’s Essence and Attributes. Similar to Ghazālī, he differentiates “names of names,” (*asmā’ al-asmā’*) as words, from names as “meanings” (*al-ma‘ānī*) in the mind, and their referents in God’s Essence.¹⁹ Borrowing Ghazālī’s semantic analysis to understand the relation between God’s Essence and Attributes, Mullā Ṣadrā argues that the diversity of divine attributes occurs only at the level of words and concepts not God’s reality, thus, the real referents of God’s Names or Attributes are unified in the One Simple Being (Shīrāzī 1999 VI: 280-81).

Mullā Ṣadrā goes further to argue that the unity of Attributes and Acts in God’s Existence entails their necessity because God’s Existence is necessary. Thus, as a divine attribute, God’s Power is perfect power and in general, “When the power is perfected in its aspects of influence and origination, it is necessarily coupled with the will and it is necessary that the effect follow without fail. And this is perfect power (*al-qudra al-tāmma*)” (Shīrāzī 1999 IV: 113). But what does the necessity attributed to divine acts entail for the nature of relation among created things and events in the world, including human actions? For Mullā Ṣadrā, if existence and necessity are co-extensional and there is no existence other than God’s, therefore, there is no mode of necessity other than God’s. To translate this into Ghazālī’s Sufi Ash‘arism, the necessity that seems to hold between cause and effect is only a reality with respect to its origin that is God Himself. This idea is reinforced by Ghazālī’s notion of

God's "custom" (*āda*) according to which "Nothing preceding precedes and nothing following follows except by means of right (*ḥaqq*) and necessity. This applies to all of God's action" (cited from the *Ihya'*, 4:317.20–25 / 2512.3–6, Griffel 2009: 225). In this regard, Frank Griffel points out the "problematic" implication of the term "necessity" in this quote as it "suggests that God's actions are the result of an arrangement that works by necessity and leaves no room for alternatives" (Griffel 2009: 225). This would also mean that the arrangement among created things and events could not be otherwise because all causes other than the First Cause, namely all secondary causes, necessarily originate in the First. Does this mean that Ghazālī's worldview is not genuinely different from Ibn Sīnā's because Ghazālī is understood as agreeing that the causal relation among God's creations is a necessary one? I think this is a defensible theory if one interprets Ibn Sīnā from the perspective of the unity of existence in Mullā Ṣadrā's metaphysics. As shown below, Mullā Ṣadrā does not see any incoherence between the necessity that rules over Ibn Sīnā's cosmos and that of Ghazālī's as long as one distinguishes between the true sense of the necessary causal relation that God has with the world, and the necessary conditions that regulate the relation among things and events in the world. Just as God is the only Necessary Being, his causality is the only truly necessary causality. This means that other 'causes' than God can hold their 'necessary' relation to their effects only in virtue of the real necessity of God's causality. According to Mullā Ṣadrā,

All contingent beings (*al-mumkināt*), with their differentiations and grades in perfection and deficiency are, in their essences, in need of it [the Necessary Being] and derive their sufficiency in being from it. Considered in themselves, they are contingent beings made necessary by the First, the Necessary Being—transcendent is He. Indeed, they are in themselves illusory and perishing and are made real by the only Real One. "All things are perishing save His Face (Q. 28:88)." The relation between It and that which is other than It is analogous to the relation between the rays of the sun [...] When you witness the rising of the sun in a place and the illumination of that place by its light, then another light resulting from this light, you will judge that this second light is also from the sun and will trace its origin back to the sun; likewise for the third light and the fourth light [...] The same is true for the existence (*wujūd*) of contingent beings in which there is differentiation in their proximity and distance from the One, the Real; for everything proceeds from God (Shīrāzī 2014: 53).

The above gradation of existence that is based on proximity and distance from God also applies to human will. For Mullā Ṣadrā, just like all existences proceed from God, human wills and acts are lower grades of God's Will and Act. Furthermore, due to the co-extensionality of existence and necessity, as existences all acts and wills are necessary in virtue of God's Necessary Existence. This implies that the contingency of human voluntary action is simply a consideration of the mind and, like all other phenomena, acts of freewill are necessary. According to Mullā Ṣadrā,

Just as there is no mode of existence unless it is His, there is also no act in existence unless it is His Act. This does not mean that, for instance, Zayd's act does not issue from him, but it means that Zayd's act, while being his act literally not figuratively, is truly the Act of Allah [...] [Thus] the attribution of action and production to God's servant is correct—like the attribution of existence, hearing, vision, and all the rest of the senses with their characteristics, actions, and passions—regarding the aspect that is really attributed to him; And, just as the existence of Zayd is a fact in reality that is attributed to him literally not figuratively—while it is one of the modes

of the First Reality—the same is true of his knowledge, will, motion, rest, and all that issues from him and it is attributed to him literally, not figuratively and falsely. Thus, humankind is the agent of what issues from him, but his action is one of the Divine Acts at the highest and noblest level associated with the Absolute Oneness [or Simplicity] of His Essence without the impurity of passivity and imperfection (Shīrāzī 1999: VI 373-74).

Thus, for Mullā Ṣadrā, the necessity of actions including voluntary actions does not contradict freewill. To avoid the determinist implications of the necessary relation among events and acts in virtue of their necessary relation to God, he considers “freewill” as a necessary cause of voluntary actions. The term he uses in this regard is “necessitation by freewill” (*al-wujūb bi'l-ikhtiyār*). He argues that while God’s Providence is the cause of one’s acts, as it is the cause of all that exists, it also preordains that the existence of free acts be preceded by the power and will of the human agent (Shīrāzī 1999: VI 385). For him, this means that God’s Providence does not contradict the power of intermediary causes. He invokes Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī in order to support his own position and as is often the case, his quotation of Rāzī is more of an adaptation.²⁰ In this context, Mullā Ṣadrā finds Rāzī’s use of “compelled in freewill”²¹ (*muḍṭarr fi ikhtiyār*) very similar to his own “necessitation by freewill” (*wujūb bi'ikhtiyār*). He continues to express his surprise and wonders, “How the truth [about necessary causality] passed on the tongue of ‘the Imam of inquiries and debates’ (*Imām al-bāḥithīn al-munāḍirīn*), but he still returned to his Ash‘arī doctrine of denying causality?” He cites Rāzī comparing God’s agency (*fā‘iliyya*) that is necessary because of the necessity of His Essence, with human agency:

It is impossible for the agency of the servant (*fā‘iliyya al-‘abd*) to be necessary through his essence because his essence does not subsist itself and so his agency does not subsist itself, hence its attribution to Allah Himself. Thus the act of the servant is through God’s Providence (*qaḍa*) and Power (*qudra*) [...]. However, the necessity of an act does not contradict its being the object of power because the necessity of an act is caused by the necessity of the power (*wujūb al-fi'l ma'lūl al-wujūb al-qudra*) and the effect does not contradict the cause” (Shīrāzī 1999: VI: 386).²²

Mullā Ṣadrā finds this in agreement with his own claim that “The very validity of attributing the act to the servant rests on the validity of attributing it to the Lord, and the act issues from the servant from the same perspective that it issues from the Lord” (Shīrāzī 1999: VI 387). The above citation of Rāzī reinforces my claim as to the influence of Ghazālī because Rāzī’s exposition and interpretation of freewill is very similar to Ghazālī’s famous characterization of human agents as “compelled choosers.” For Ghazālī, “People will, whether they intend to will or not, for willing is not up to them. And if it were to belong to one [to will], then another [willing] would be required to will, and so on *ad infinitum*. Yet while it does not belong to a person to will, nevertheless it is the activity of willing, as it directs the power to its actions” (Ghazālī 2001: 34).²³ According to Ghazālī’s *Iḥyā*,

The motive of the volition (*dā‘iya al-irāda*) is subservient to the judgment of the intellect and the judgment of sense perception; the power-to-act is subservient to the motive, and the movement [of the limb] is subservient to the power-to-act. All this proceeds from him [*scil.* the human] by a necessity within him (*bi'l-darūra fīhi*) without him knowing it. He is only the place and the channel for these things. As for them coming from him? No and once again no! (cited in Griffel 2009: 218; Ghazālī 2001: 38).

Mullā Ṣadrā's evaluation of theologians and philosophers in his *Risāla fī khalq al-a'māl* (Treatise on the Creation of Acts), a title of Ash'arī undertone, is further evidence for my claim. In this text, after criticizing Mu'tazilī doctrine of the absolute delegation of power (*tafwīd*) to humans, and Ash'arī determinism (*jabr*), Mullā Ṣadrā, as is the case with most Shi'a scholars on this topic, commends Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), a notable Shi'a philosopher and commentator of Ibn Sīnā, for choosing the path between the two.²⁴ However, he proceeds to say that Ṭūsī's philosophical position is still an imperfect interpretation of the Shi'a tradition of Imam 'Alī, namely, "Neither determinism (*jabr*) nor delegation (*tafwīd*), but a state in between."²⁵ For Mullā Ṣadrā, although the compatibilism of philosophers is better than both determinism and absolute freewill, it is not yet a perfect rendering of the Shi'a tradition. To solve the problem, Mullā Ṣadrā shifts from the language of "necessitation" to that of "compulsion" in *Risāla fī khalq al-a'māl* which is also meant to connect his thesis on freewill with Ghazālī's doctrine of the "compelled chooser." According to Mullā Ṣadrā,

[The tradition] does not mean that the servant's act (*fi'l al-'abd*) is a combination of determinism and freewill, nor does it mean that his act is devoid of determinism and freewill. And it does not mean that his determinism is imperfect (*nāqis*) and his freewill is imperfect, or that he has freewill in one respect and compulsion in another; And not that he is *compelled* in the form of freewill (*muḍṭarrun fī ṣūrat al-ikhtiyār*) as mentioned by Master Abu Ali [Ibn Sīnā] —May Allah have mercy on him. What [the tradition] actually means is that he is free inasmuch as (*min ḥayth huwa*) he is *compelled*, and *compelled* inasmuch as he is free; meaning that one's freewill (*ikhtiyār*) is identical with his *compulsion* (*iḍṭirār*) (Shīrāzī, "Risāla fī khalq al-a'māl," 276, my emphasis).

Mullā Ṣadrā does not directly mention or cite Ghazālī in *Khalq al-'amāl*, but neither does he place him under any of the three categories of the Ash'arī denial of freewill, the Mu'tazilī delegation of power to humans, or even philosophical compatibilism. Furthermore, in the same text where Mullā Ṣadrā offers his solution to the problem of freewill, as the fourth category belonging to "those firm in knowledge" (*al-rāsikhūn fi'l-'ilm*), he cites the Quranic verse from which the Ash'arī doctrine of "acquisition" (*kasb*) is believed to have originated: "Is He who stands over every soul marking its [acquired] action (Q.13:33)." According to this doctrine, in voluntary actions, humans acquire what God creates.²⁶ Mullā Ṣadrā is a serious critic of the traditional Ash'arī denial of causal necessity so any suggestion of the Ash'arī doctrine of acquisition in his writing needs to be reconciled with causal necessity. Mullā Ṣadrā's criticism of the Ash'arī view of freewill and determinism is aligned with his refutation of their position on causal necessity. In *al-Asfār*, he calls this "a disgusting doctrine" (*al-madhhab al-qabīḥ*) which is at odds with any form of demonstration and certitude about anything. Following Ibn Sīnā, Mullā Ṣadrā argues that nothing becomes existent unless it becomes necessary, and that causation is the same as necessitation (Shīrāzī 1999: VI 321). Additionally, for Mullā Ṣadrā, to reject the necessary relation between cause and effect in general is tantamount to rejecting the necessary relation between God as the First Cause and His creation. On the other hand, if there is only one true existence, then there is only one true mode of necessity, that between God and His creation. One can infer from Ghazālī's positive status in the *Asfār* that the Mullā Ṣadrā distinguishes between his understanding of acquisition and that of mainstream *kalām* Ash'arism. In effect, in none of his passages in the *Asfār* where he criticizes Ash'arism does he mention Ghazālī to the point that

one would wonder if he considered him a mainstream Ash‘arī at all.²⁷ Ghazālī’s Ash‘arism has been “revisited” in contemporary scholarship too. For example, Michael Marmura considers Ghazālī’s use of the Ash‘arī doctrine of “acquisition” (*kasb*) in the *Iḥyā’* as only a means or “aid to the *sālik*, the sufi wayfarer” in reaching true knowledge (gnosis) (Marmura, 2002: 110).

Moreover, Mullā Ṣadrā’s does not find Ghazālī a denier of causal necessity. Rather, his position on causal necessity resonates with the Sufi Ash‘arism of Ghazālī. Like Ghazālī, he regards God as the ultimate cause with all the other intermediary causal powers including human freewill being existentially dependent on Him. Also, as God is the only necessary existence, only *His* power and will are truly necessary. As Griffel shows, Ghazālī views the commonly known necessities as merely necessary conditions such as the necessity he associates with the human will. He quotes from the *Iḥyā’*:

One of God’s acts is the cause (*sabab*) for another; I mean that the first one is the condition (*shart*) for the second. The creation of the body, for instance, is the cause for the creation of the accident (*‘araḍ*), since He does not create the attribute before it. The creation of life is a condition for the creation of knowledge and the creation of knowledge is a condition for the creation of volition. All these are from among God’s actions and one of them is a cause for the other, meaning that it is a condition. Being a condition means that only a substance (*jawhar*) is prepared to receive the act of life, and only something that lives is prepared to receive knowledge. There is no reception of volition other than by something that has knowledge. Therefore, “some of God’s actions are a cause for others” means this and it doesn’t mean that one of His actions brings the other into existence. Rather [one of God’s actions] clears the way for a condition [whose fulfillment is required] for the existence of another of God’s actions (Griffel 2009: 223-24).

With the above in mind, in terms of human agency and freewill, for Ghazālī, knowledge of what is the best choice is the necessary condition for the will to make it and the will is the necessary condition for the power to act in a certain direction. However, as existences, knowledge, will, and power, all necessarily come from God because there is no existence but God. Thus, it seems that Ibn Sīnā’s “cause of causes” (*sabab al-asbāb*) and Ghazālī’s “causer of causes” (*musabbib al-asbāb*) are equivalent and signify the same truth.²⁸ According to Ghazālī in the *Iḥyā’*,

All is predetermined (*muqaddar*) by necessity (*bi’l-ḍarūr*) in him (human) in a place he does not know. He is the locus (*maḥal*) and the channel (*majrān*) for these orders. Nothing comes from him. The meaning of his being compelled is that [compulsion] occurs in him not from him but from other than himself. The meaning of his having freewill (*mukhtār*) is that man is the locus for the will, which arises in him necessarily after the judgment of the intellect, that [establishes if] a certain act is pure good and useful. Also, the judgment takes place necessarily. Thus man is compelled in his choice (*majbur ‘ala’likhtiyar*) [...] God acts in pure free choice and man acts in an intermediate way, being compelled to choose freely (cited in De Cillis 2014: 124).

Risāla fī khalq al-‘māl is one of the best places to observe the similarity between Mullā Ṣadrā’s view of freewill and that of the Sufi Ghazālī. In this short text, Mullā Ṣadrā grounds his position on freewill

in the following premises. First, all existents, regardless of their existential ranks and differences in their attributes and effects, are the same reality, and there is no mode and act that is not God's. Secondly, all existence is good, and evil is only a concomitant of quiddity which is not a reality, so evil (or evil action) does not come from God. This is analogous to the sunlight that shines on filthy objects but does not become dirty. Thirdly, the human soul holds together all its faculties including volition (*al-irāda*) as one simple existence that comes from God because "All existents, regardless of their diversities, rankings in existential nobility, different essences and actions, and various attributes and impacts, are gathered together in the one divine reality" (Shīrāzī, "Risāla fi khalq al-a' māl," 274).

Mullā Ṣadrā moves from the above premises to the conclusion that human freewill depends on God's Will as a lower existential degree of it. Mullā Ṣadrā's application of the existential gradation principle to the relation between God's Will and human will resonates with Ghazālī's above-mentioned distinction between God's "pure free choice" and human's conditioned or "intermediate" choice. For Ghazālī, God's pure choice is not preceded by any indecision. When we say that God decided to act in a certain manner, our limited human understanding reflected in the limitation of human language might create the illusion that God was undecided between two choices and then picked one side. The attribution of deliberation in this anthropomorphic way to God is completely "absurd" for Ghazālī (Ghazālī 2001: 39). The essential distinction between God's Will and human will is also associated with two different senses of the term "agency" in Ghazālī's *Iḥyā'*. "The sense in which God the Most High is agent is that He is the originator (*al-mukhtari*) of existing things, while the sense in which a human being is an agent is that he is the locus [*maḥal*] in which power is created... [and] depending on the power of God is like the dependence of effect on cause" (Ghazālī 2001: 42-3). It is according to the second sense of agency that people are responsible for their actions and divine rulings are applicable to them. Ghazālī's prince and executioner analogy suggests the ontological dependence of the human will on divine Will. According to him, both the prince who commands the execution of the culprit and the person who carries out the execution are the "agents" behind the killing though in two different senses because "the killing depends on the power of both of them, yet in different respects" (Ghazālī 2001: 43).

In the *Asfār*, Mullā Ṣadrā acknowledges the complexity of Ghazālī's position by calling him "the arcane sea" (*al-baḥr al-qamqām*) (Shīrāzī 1999: II: 326). Yet, he praises him for resolving the seeming conflict between the unity of being and what the intellect captures as diverse realities and the prescriptions of the "intellect" (*al-'aql*) and the divine law (*al-shar'*) based on diversities of existences and real differences among people's actions (*al-af'āl al-'ibād*). He elaborates on Ghazālī's position on diversity in unity by saying that,

Under this unity all diversities are contained as one together (*waḥda jam'iyya*) when we consider the reality of the absolute existent (*al-maujūd al-muṭlaq*) as such [namely, the Names and Attributes and the fixed entities (*al-'ayān al-thābitāt*)] (Shīrāzī 1999: II 326, editor's footnote) which is referred to as the level of oneness (*aḥadiyya*). However, when we consider the Simple Pure Existent (*maujūd al-ṣirf al-baḥt*) whose Essence is not mixed with any other meaning and His Reality has no determination whatsoever, [this Existent] also has emanations and effusions by Himself, and issues quiddities and fixed rulings that correspond to reality. Yet, the source of all these and their realization is nothing but the very Existence Himself that is realized by Himself and has no need of anything other than Himself (Shīrāzī 1999: II 326-27).

Mullā Ṣadrā's praise for Ghazālī's position on divine oneness and its application to the problem of freewill with respect to human moral/religious accountability is understandable considering the Sufi connection between the two thinkers. However, what is surprising is the absence of Ibn 'Arabī in Mullā Ṣadrā's discussion of freewill despite Ibn 'Arabī's pivotal role in shaping Mullā Ṣadrā's metaphysics. The details of Ibn 'Arabī's position on freewill cannot be sufficiently addressed within the confinement of this article, especially due to all the enigmas and ambiguities surrounding it.²⁹ However, it seems that, at least in Mullā Ṣadrā's eyes, Ibn 'Arabī's thoroughgoing doctrine of the unity of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) makes it difficult to justify a genuine coexistence of human freewill and moral accountability. This is of course despite Ibn 'Arabī's attempts to offer a position between the Ash'arī vulgar determinism and the Mu'tazilī absolute delegation of power to humans, not to mention his unwavering adherence to the Islamic Law. As Chittick explains, Ibn 'Arabī himself is aware of the difficulty of saving freewill in his system and that "His position on the acts wavers. Or rather, it depends on the point of view he has in mind" (Chittick 1989: 208).³⁰ According to Ibn 'Arabī in *The Meccan Revelations*:

The servant is annihilated from his acts through God's standing over them. This is indicated by His words. "What, he who stands over every soul for what it performs" (Q. 13:33). Hence the servants see the act as belonging to God from behind the veil of engendered things, which are the locus wherein the acts become manifest. This is indicated by God's words, "Surely thy Lord is wide in concealment" (53:32), that is, His covering is wide. All engendered things are His covering, while He is the one who acts (*fā'il*) from behind the covering, "but they are unaware" (Q. 7:95) (Chittick 1989: 207).

Mullā Ṣadrā's indebtedness to Ibn 'Arabī's thesis of the unity of being throughout his ontology makes it unreasonable to think that he did not appreciate and sympathize with his struggles regarding the problem of freewill though he finds a better foothold in his own existential gradation thesis. Moreover, he would definitely approve of Ibn 'Arabī's use of the dual perspectives of "He/Not He" through which the attribution of acts to humans is affirmed and denied at the same time. Yet, Ibn 'Arabī himself admits that "There only remains which of the two views is better for the servant, though both are good. And this is a place of bewilderment (*ḥayra*)" (Chittick 1989: 211). I speculate that particularly when Mullā Ṣadrā is concerned with freewill beyond metaphysical bewilderment and considers its relevance to people's accountability to the divine law (*al-sharī'a*), he seems to find Ghazālī on a safer side. Yet, this is a topic for another article.

In conclusion, with regard to the problem of freewill and determinism Mullā Ṣadrā reads Ibn Sīnā and Ghazālī by "checking them one against the other."³¹ Like Ibn Sīnā he identifies the causal relation between God and the world as necessary causation and like the Sufi Ghazālī, he sees no existence but God. In contrast to mainstream Ash'arism, Mullā Ṣadrā does not deny the power of secondary causes and the necessity that rules over causal relations including the relation between the faculties of the soul and the actions issued from it. Thus, the influence of Ghazālī on him regarding this subject is justified only if he does not consider Ghazālī, at least the Sufi Ghazālī, to have followed mainstream Ash'arism with respect to freewill and determinism. I imagine that Mullā Ṣadrā would agree with Richard Frank on Ghazālī's departure from mainstream Ash'arism and his endorsement of Ibn Sīnā's universe in terms of causal forces. Yet, he would disagree with Frank on calling this worldview

“deterministic” in the Avicennian sense of the term (Frank 2009: 38-9). Rather, in Mullā Ṣadrā’s philosophy, one can infer from the graded unity of all existence that the acquisition of action from God in the case of voluntary actions is the same as “acquiring” existence from God by way of the existential unity of all degrees of existence. In Mullā Ṣadrā’s words, “Like the existence of the soul, the will that originates in the soul is not from the soul itself but from God’s Will that is one with His Essence” (Shīrāzī “Risāla fī khalq al-a‘māl,” 279). Thus, the existence of human agency, which is required for voluntariness, is dependent on the existence of God and His necessary causal agency. For Mullā Ṣadrā, this is the true meaning of the verse “*You did not throw when you threw but it was Allah* (Q. 8:17)” (Shīrāzī “Risāla fī khalq al-a‘māl,” 279). God’s agency overflows in different existential degrees throughout the universe including the human soul:

Thus, just as the soul issues a ray (*shu‘ā‘*) in the vision by which colors and lights are perceived, and issues a power in the hearing by which sounds are perceived, so does Allah create in the soul a volition (*irāda*) and knowledge to understand and manage (*tataṣarrif*) things (Shīrāzī “Risāla fī khalq al-a‘māl,” 279).

The thesis of the gradation of existence seems to have saved Mullā Ṣadrā from the bewilderment that overwhelmed Ibn ‘Arabī when he wanted to solve the problem of freewill. However, a fair assessment and comparison of their positions requires another study. For Mullā Ṣadrā, the one solution to the challenging issue of freewill is that our freedom is real to the extent that our existence is. Therefore, while we make real choices and our choices are existential events with causal forces, following Ghazālī, we can see through the veil of diversity and find all that exists issuing from the only Truly Real, or God. In short, understanding freewill and the accountability that entails from it depends on one’s view of existence in general.

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¹ Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *Al-Ḥikmat al-muta‘āliya fī’l-asfār al-‘aqliyya al-arba‘a*, ed., Muḥammad-Riḍā Muzaffar, 9 vols (Beirut: Dār al-iḥyā’ al-turāth al-‘Arabī, 1999), VI: 114.

² The problem of “unity in diversity” has a long history in both Greek and Islamic philosophical traditions. Briefly put, when we predicate a universal attribute of particular objects, we face the problem of justifying the real diversity of things in the face of the universal attribute predicated of them univocally. In the context of Islamic philosophy, following Ibn Sīnā’s famous distinction between essence and existence, the problem is extended to the question of how we predicate the same “existence” of all the different essences in the universe, and more importantly from a theological point of view, how we predicate “existence” of God and His creation in the same sense. Mullā Ṣadrā’s solution with regard to this problem is his famous principle of “gradation in existence” (*tashkīk fī’l-wujūd*) which he extensively argues for in his major works. He also tries to prove that his position is not at odds with Ibn Sīnā’s metaphysics. According to this principle, existence is predicated of essences in gradation or modulation because existence is graded in its very reality, which is not only *the* reality of all existents, but also the ground of their particular realizations. See, Shīrāzī, *Al-Ḥikmat al-muta‘āliya*, I: 35-53; Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations (Kitāb al-Mashā‘ir)*, trans. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, ed. Ibrahim Kalin (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2014: §81).

On this subject, see Sajjad Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā and Metaphysics: Modulation of Being* (London & New York: Routledge, 2009), 38-53; Sayeh Meisami, *Mulla Sadra* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2013), 29-42.

- ³ For examples of works devoted to the subject see, David Ede, “Mullā Ṣadrā and the Problem of Freedom and Determinism,” PhD Thesis (McGill University, 1978); Zakieh Azadani, “Mullā Ṣadrā on freewill and freedom,” *ASAI* 76, no. 2 (2022): 355-70 (URL: <https://doi.org/10.1515/asia-2021-0015>; last accessed on December 21, 2024).
- ⁴ This verse that begins with “*God is the Light of the heavens and the earth,*” became a subject of philosophical and Sufi interpretations beginning with Ibn Sinā in his *Al-Ishārāt wa’l-tanbīhāt* (3: 10, 3) in *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa’l-tanbīhāt*, ed. Sulayman Dunya, 3 vols (Cairo: Dār al-ma’ārif, 1992), II: 389-92. Influenced by Ibn Sinā and inspired by Sufi theology, Ghazālī wrote a philosophical-Sufi treatise on the Light Verse, titled *Mishkāt al-anwār* (*The Niche of Lights*). There he describes a hierarchy of lights, or rather existents, which originally emanates from God as the source or “the Light of lights.” See Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights*, trans. David Buchman (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1998), 14. In the wake of this tradition, Mullā Ṣadrā too wrote his own philosophical reading of the verse using it as a Quranic support for his doctrine of the graded unity of existence. Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *On the Hermeneutics of the Light-Verse of the Qur’ān (Tafsīr āyat al-nūr)*, trans. Latimah-Parvin Peerwani, London: ICAS Press, 2004.
- ⁵ My translation of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *al-Mabda wa’l-ma’ād*, ed. Seyyed Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: Anjuman-i ḥikmat wa falsafa-yi Iran, 1354 sh.), 405 (URL: <https://lib.eshia.ir/71482/1/4>; last accessed on December 21, 2024).
- ⁶ For the second question, I am indebted to Dr. Robert Wisnovsky at McGill Institute of Islamic Studies.
- ⁷ For this subject, see Richard M. Frank, “The Structure of Created Causality According to Al-Ash‘arī: An Analysis of *Kitāb al-Luma’*,” *Studia Islamica* 25 (1966): 13-75, (URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1595163?origin=JSTOR-pdf>; last accessed on December 21, 2024). See Ulrich Rudolph, “Occasionalism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Khaled El-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), 347-63.
- ⁸ For example see, Richard M. Frank, *Al-Ghazālī and the Ash‘arite School*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994; Frank Griffel, *Al-Ghazali’s Philosophical Theology*, Oxford University Press, 2009; Lenn E. Goodman, “Did Ghazālī Deny Causality: To the Memory of Richard Walzer,” *Studia Islamica* 47 (1978): 83-120 (URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1595550>; last accessed on December 21, 2024); Michael E. Marmura, “Ghazālī’s Chapter on the Divine Power in The *Iqtiṣād*,” *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 4 (1994): 279-315; “Ghazālīan Causes and Intermediaries,” *JAOS* 115, no. 1 (1995): 89-100 (URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/605311>; last accessed on December 21, 2024); “Ghazālī’s Ash‘arism Revisited,” *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 12 (2002): 91-110 (URL: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423902002047>; last accessed on December 21, 2024); Kojiro Nakamura, “Was al-Ghazālī an Ash‘arite?” *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Tokyo Bunko* 51 (1993): 1-24.
- ⁹ Ibn Sinā, *Ilāhiyyāt al-Najāt* in *Classical Arabic Philosophy: An Anthology of Sources*, trans. Jon McGinnis and David C. Reisman, Indianapolis: Cambridge Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2007. For an accessible explanation of Ibn Sinā’s position on necessary relation between cause and effect, see Jon McGinnis, *Avicenna* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 192-95.
- ¹⁰ On this topic, see Robert Wisnovsky, “Final and Efficient Causality in Avicenna’s Cosmology and Theology,” *Quaestio* 2, no. 1 (2002): 97-124; Kara Richardson, “Avicenna’s Conception of the Efficient Cause,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 21, no. 2 (2013): 220-39.
- ¹¹ Abu’l Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī, *Kitāb al-Lum‘a fī radd ‘alā ahl al-zayhg wa’l-bida’*, ed. and trans. Richard J. McCarthy (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1953), 92-4; Zeyneb Betul Taskin “An Occasionalist Reading of Al-Ash‘arī’s Theory of Kasb in Kitāb al-Luma’” *The Muslim World* 13 (2023): 399-15.

- ¹² Toby Mayer, "Theology and Sufism," *Classical Islamic Theology*, ed. Tim Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 258-87.
- ¹³ Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *Al-Ta'liqāt 'alā ilāhiyyāt al-shifā li al-shaykh al-ra'īs Abū 'Alī Ḥusayn ibn Sīnā*, ed. Najafqulī Ḥabībī, Tehran: Bunyād-i ḥikmat-i Ṣadra, 2003. This does not implicate the final cause. For Mullā Ṣadrā, God is both the efficient and final cause of all that exists. He also believes that for Ibn Sīnā, too, all motion in the world below and above is stimulated by God though final causality. See his *Al-Asfār*, II: 277-79. For Ibn Sīnā's view of God's final causality in relation to efficient causality, see Robert Wisnovsky, "Final and Efficient Causality in Avicenna's Cosmology and Theology," *Quaestio* 2 (2002): 97-123 (DOI: 10.1484/J.QUAESTIO.2.300461; last accessed on November 7, 2024).
- ¹⁴ For Ibn Sīnā's complete statement in his *Ilāhiyyā al-Shifā* (VI. 1: 6, 14), see trans. Michael M. Marmura, *The Metaphysics of the Healing* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 196.
- ¹⁵ For a concise and useful survey of the synthesis of Sufism and Ash'arism prior to and under Seljuq dynasty (r. 11th-12th cent) that also highlights Ghazālī's contribution, see, Mayer (2008: 270-74). Also see Martin Nguyen, "Sufi Theological Thought," in El-Rouayheb and Schmidtke (2016: 325-43).
- ¹⁶ For a concise study of Shi'a theology, see Reza Pourjavady and Sabine Schmidtke, "Twelver Shi'a Theology," in El-Rouayheb and Schmidtke (2016: 456-72).
- ¹⁷ The theological school of Ash'arism is not homogeneous with regard to the issue of causality and it is traditionally a fertile ground for metaphysical debates. This is further complicated by the fact that some influential Ash'arī figures such as Ghazālī and Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 606/1210) had strong philosophical and Sufi tendencies. For a study of Ash'arism and their metaphysical positions, see Richard M. Frank, *Classical Islamic Theology: The Ash'arites*, ed. Dimitri Gutas (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008). For Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī's Sufi side, see, Ayman Shihadeh, "The Mystics and the Sceptic in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī," in *Sufism and Theology*, ed. Ayman Shihadeh, 101-22 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).
- ¹⁸ Over the past few decades, especially after Richard M. Frank's controversial claims about Ghazālī's relation to Ash'arism, scholars have written substantially on Ghazālī's contribution to the development of early Ash'arism into a more systematically philosophical theology. For a nuanced recent treatment of later Ash'arism, see ed. Ayman Shihadeh and Jan Thiele, *Philosophical Theology in Islam: Later Ash'arism East and West*, Leiden: Brill, 2020. Studies of Ghazālī's Sufi ideas for the most part endeavor to show that Ghazālī did not abandon his Ash'arism upon becoming a Sufi. For example, see Michael E. Marmura, "Ghazālī and Ash'arism revisited," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 12 (2002): 110, (URL: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423902002047>; last accessed on December 21, 2024); Griffel (2009: Ch. 8).
- ¹⁹ In his discussion of divine names, Ghazālī makes a distinction between word, meaning, and thing. The "name of name" corresponds to the word in speech. See Muḥammad Ghazālī, *Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God*, trans. David Burrell and Nazih Daher (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 2007), 5-7.
- ²⁰ For Mullā Ṣadrā's appropriation of Rāzī's *al-Mabāḥith* in the *Afār*, see Cécile Bonmariage, "Ṣadrā's Use of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya* in the *Asfār*," *Oriens* 48, no. 1-2 (2020): 188-218.
- ²¹ Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*, 2 vols (Haydarabad, 1343 [1925] Reprinted in Qom: Intishārāt-i Bidār, 1411 [1990], II: 517.
- ²² Here Mullā Ṣadrā has glued together different passages from the *Mabāḥith* under the chapter on divine providence. For the original text, see Rāzī *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*, II: 516-19.
- ²³ Muḥammad Ghazālī, *Faith in Divine Unity & Trust in Divine Providence = Kitāb Al-Tawḥid Wa'l-Tawakkul ; Book XXXV of the Revival of the Religious Sciences = Iḥyā 'ulum Al-Dīn (Fons Vitae, 2001),*

34. For Ghazālī's theory of human voluntary action and the "compelled chooser" thesis, see Griffel (2009: 216-25); Maria De Cillis, *Freewill and Predestination in Islamic Thought: Theoretical Compromises in the Works of Avicenna, Ghazālī and Ibn 'Arabī* (Abingdon & New York: Routledge, 2014), 122-25.
- 24 For Ṭūsī's position on this subject, see Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, "Determinism and Predestination (*jabr wa qadar*)," in *The Metaphysics of Ṭūsī*, ed. and trans. Parviz Morewedge (New York: The Society for the Study of Islamic Philosophy and Science, 1992), 4-6; Sayeh Meisami, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *A Philosopher for All Seasons* (Cambridge, UK: Islamic Texts Society, 2019), 59-64.
- 25 Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, "Risāla fī khalq al-a'māl," in *Majmū'a-yi rasā'il falsafī-yi Ṣadr al-muta'alihīn*, ed., Hamid Naji Isfahani (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ḥikmat, 3rd edition 1385 sh.), 276.
- 26 For this subject, see Merlin Schwarz, "Acquisition (*kasb*) in Early Kalam," in *Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition*, ed. Sámuel Miklós Stern, Albert Hourani, and Vivian Brown (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1972), 335-87; Binyamin Abrahamov, "A Re-examination of AL-Ash'arī's Theory of *Kasb* According to *Kitāb AL-Lum'a*, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2 (1989): 210-21 (URL: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0035869X00109219>; last accessed on December 21, 2024).
- 27 Some scholars, at least with respect to his deviation from certain Ash'arī doctrines, have raised the question about Ghazālī's affiliation with traditional *kalām* Ash'arism. See Kojiro, "Was Ghazali an Asharite?" in *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Tokyo Bunko* 51 (1993): 1-24.
- 28 For this notion and its meaning in Ghazālī's system, see Frank (2009: 37); Griffel (2009: 221).
- 29 For an analysis of this topic, see De Cillis (2014: 172-91).
- 30 William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989.
- 31 In the introduction of his famous philosophical fiction, *Ḥayy ibn Yaḳzān*, Ibn Ṭufayl provides a critical evaluation of his intellectual predecessors including Fārābī, Ibn Bājja, Ibn Sīnā, and Ghazālī and decides that the best route to intellectual truth is reading Ibn Sīnā and Ghazālī "Checking one against the other." See, trans. Lenn E. Goodman, *Ibn Tufayl's Ḥayy Ibn Yaḳzān: A Philosophical Tale* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, fifth edition 2009), 102.