AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF AL-GHAZALI’S CONTRIBUTION TO USUL AL-FIQH

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Abstract:
Abu Hamid, al-Ghazali (1058-1111/450-50), a medieval Muslim theologian, Sufi, Jurist, Usuli remarkably contributed to Usul al-fiqh on Tariqat al-Mutakallimin (Tariqh al-Shafi’iyah) along with many other sciences. The details of his life and the works are well-documented with some exceptions. He wrote al Mankhul min Taliqat al Usul (the sifted from the Commentary on the fundamentals) when he was young, than he wrote many other books on the same subject, this continued till the end of his life. After 25 years he wrote al-Mustasfa min Ilm al-usul, (a year before his death in 504/1110) which gained a lot of renown from many circles, on the other hand one of his best books was neglected and gradually faded away from the screen. Some thinkers have refused to accept it as al-Ghazal’s book. Some others showed their doubts about its authorships. Some more scholars when writing about his literary contributions have failed to mention al-Mankhul and said that some books have been falsely attributed to him. Many other have analyzed a few pieces from this book and commented that this kind of language used in this book is without dignity and much below the level of such scholar. There are others who have claimed that this could be a compilation of lectures by his student which were delivered by al-Ghazali. This paper will focus on the analyses of above mentioned points and removal of doubts to ensure the facts related to this work of al-Ghazali, so that we may pass on unprejudiced and transparent information to the young people keeping in mind the respect and great contribution of our heroes. This paper aims primarily to show authenticity of his juristic contribution, especially al-Mankhul and to remove the fallacies related to this book and give a clear picture.

Keywords: ANALYTICAL STUDY; AL-GHAZALI’S CONTRIBUTION; USUL AL-FIQH

Introduction
Hujjat al Islam (proof of Islam), Abu Hamid, Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Ghazali, al Tusi, Shafi’i, al-Ash’ari was born (450 /1058) in Tus in the province of Khurasan in Iran, and died in (505 /1111) at the age of fifty-five.1 He was a philosopher, commentator, jurist, theologian, mystic, who synthesize the energies of the thinkers towards the mystic path leading to blooming of mysticism.2 He gained distinction in the court of the Seljuk vizier Nizam (d.1092 A.D) and at the age of thirty-four he was appointed professor at the Nizamiyah college at Baghdad.3 While commenting on his immense knowledge Ibn Khalkan Shafi (d. 681 H) says, “Towards the end of his life he was unparallel among the Shafi’i scholars”.4

AL-JUWAYNI’S INFLUENCE ON AL-GHAZALI’S WORK IN USUL AL-FIQH
A major role towards his inclination to Usul al-fiqh (the principles of jurisprudence) was played by Imam-al-Haramayn, al-Juwayni al-Shafi’i al-Ash’ari (1028-1085/419-478) al-Ghazali was one of his youngest most devout students at the age of twenty.5 He also started his writing career at the same age which polished his skills. Al-Ghazali also started delivering lectures to his classmates. Al-Juwayni after teaching 30 years in the madrasah Nizamiyah in Nishapur passed away.6 In this way al-Ghazali was associated with him and reaped the benefits for eight years till the age of twenty-eight. Al-Ghazali was greatly influenced by his
illustrious teacher and the effects of this can be seen very clearly in the early writings of al-Ghazali, his first book on Usul al-fiqh, al-Mankhul’s style of writing is an evidence of his teacher’s influence; the same attitude and way of thinking resulted in many controversies in his life and after his death. Azeem Adeeb, after indepth study of the book, al-Burhan by al-Juwayni and al-Mankhul by al-Ghazali came to the conclusion that in reality al-Mankhul is the summary of al-Burhan.7

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF AL-GHAZALI TO USUL AL-FIQH
Al-Juwayni, teacher of al-Ghazali, an important thinker of the Ash’ari school, philosopher, theologian and jurist remarkably contributed to Islamic theology, Usul al-fiqh like al-Burhan, al-Waraqat,8 Talkhees, al-tuhfa9 etc. along with many other sciences which gained a lot of renown from many circles8. Moreover, his student, al-Ghazali is seen writing on the same level of his teacher in the service of principles of Islamic Jurisprudence (Usul al-fiqh) and proved not only a prolific writer but also a highly accomplished one. Al-Ghazali, in the preface of al-Mustasfa mentioned that he wrote most of the books on Usul al-fiqh before stepping into Tasawwuf (mysticism).11


1. al-Mankhul min Taliqat al-Usul (the sifted from the Commentary on the fundamentals

2. al-Mustasfa min ‘ilm al-Usul (On Legal theory of Muslim Jurisprudence)

3. Shifa al- Ghalil fi bayan al-shubh wa al-Mukhîl wa Msalik al-Ta’îl

4. Tahseen al Maa’khaz

5. Muntahal fi ilm al Jadal

6. Maakhz fi al Khilafiyat

7. Mfassal al Khilaq fi Usul al Qiyas 14

Shifa al Ghaleel fi byan al shibh wlmkhyl wa msalik al talil has been edited by Hamd al-Kbisi and published from Baghdad, al Irshad Press in 1971 A.D/ 1390 H. al-Ghazali in the preface (Mugaddima al Kitab) of al-Mustasfa has mentioned name of another book Tahzib al Usul. Ibn al Khankan (608-681 H) has mentioned another book al Muntahal fi Ilm al Jadal by Ghazali.15 Ibn al- Immad Hanbali (d. 1089), has also mentioned ‘al-Mustasfa and Tahsil al-Makhz fi al Khilaq”16 but he did not mention al-Mankhul. Al-Marghi has included al-Mknun fi al Usul by al-Ghazali17 Ismail Basha (d.1339 H) has not only mentioned al-Mustasfa fi Usul al-fiqh but also Ghayat al Wsul fil Usul.18 Haji Khalifa Hanafi (1067 H) while discussing the intellectual services of Abu Mansoor Jamal al-Din Hassan b. al-Motahhair al-Sha’i (d. 726 H) has stated that the Sharah (commentary) on Ghayat al Wsul fil Usul was written by him and he was able to complete the work in 681 H.19 Mazhar Baqa has also included Sharah Ghayat al Wsul fil Usul in the works.20 It is evident from the above mentioned statements that Ghayat al Wsul fil Usul was a book of al-Ghazali, Abu Mansoor al-Motahhair al-Sha’i (d. 726 H) wrote a sharh (commentary) on it. Ismail Basha has also mentioned one more book al-Taliq al Usul written by al-Ghazali21. Al-Ta’liga (a commentary
on al-Juwani’s *Usul al-fiqh* work) is also mentioned and appreciated in the works of al-Ghazali.22

**Place of al-Mustasfa in the books on Usul al-fiqh:** Abd al-Rahman b. Muhammad b. Muhammad, Ibn Khaldun, Malki (d.808 /1406) writes, al-Mustasfa by al-Ghazali Shafi’i is one of four works that all *Usul al-fiqh* works revolve around them, al-Burhan by al-Juwayni Shafi’i (d. 478 H), al-Am’d by `Abd al-Jabbar, Mu’tazalite (d. 415), al-mu’tamad (commentary on al-`umad) by Abu al-Hussain al-Basri (d.473 H).23

**al-Mustasfa min ’ilm al-Usul:** It has been published from Cairo, Mustufa Muhammad Press in 1937 A.D. and also in two volumes from Cairo, al-Amiriya Press in 1322/1905 and 1324/1907 with *fwatih al Rahmut*. Again it has been published from Baghdad, Maktaba al-Musanna in 1970 A.D. Its Bulaq edition in two volumes reprinted in Beirut. Recently edited by Hamza bin Zubair, Hafiz, in four volumes (in 2156 pages) published from Jeddah, Dar al-Nashr. Hammad, Ahmad Zaki did his Ph.D on Abu Hamid al-Ghazali’s Juristic doctrine in *al-Mustasfa min ’ilm al usul*’ from the University of Chicago, in 1987. Vol. I was translated into two parts in English.24

**Shoruh /Taliqat/Ikhtisarat of al-Mustasfa:** Some of scholars who wrote sharh (commentary) on *al-Mustasfa* are:

1. Ibn al-Nazir, Hussain b. Abd al-Aziz Muhammad, Malki (603-679 H)25

2. Abu Ja’afer, Ahmed b. Muhammad b. Ahmed Abd al-Rehman bin Mus’ada al-Gharnati (d. 699 H.) also wrote *Sharh* on it. Ibn Farhun al-Malki (d.799 H) said it is “an excellent *sharh* (Commentary)”26


5. **Some Ikhtisarat (brief commentaries):** Ali b. Abu al-Qasim b. abi Qanun (d. 575 H)29


8. Abu al-Walid, Muhammad bin Rushdal-Hafid, al-Maliki (520-595 H) wrote *al-Darori fi Usul al-fiqh* (*Mukhtasr al-Mustasfa*), which has been edited by Jamal al-Din Alwi, Muhammad Allal Sinadr and published from Beirut, Dar al-Gharb al-Islami in 1994

**Place of al-Mankhul in the books of Usul al-fiqh:** al-Mankhul min ’ilm al-Usul has been edited by M.H. Hito, and published from Damascus, Dar al Fikr ed. 2nd 1400 H. Some of the al-Ghazali’s books such as al-Mankhul have not given due regard and status which they deserve. Many scholars have written in detail on his life and academic services and mentioned some of his book on *Usul al-fiqh* but have not mentioned al-Mankhul even in passing. The following sources prove that the book al-Mankhul was just studied...
superficially, Encyclopaedia Britannica, The Encyclopaedia Americana, The New Columbia Encyclopaedia, Encyclopedia of Islamic Civilisation and Religion, Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Chambers's Encyclopaedia, The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World. In addition to the above mentioned sources, Umar Raza Kuhala after giving a list of books by Orientalist which deal with the life and academic contributions of al-Ghazali also affirm that the book al-Mankhul was just skimmed through.

We value the work of non-Muslim scholars who have contributed and commented on the life and works of al-Ghazali without any prejudices and without taking any sides. But at the same time we feel it is necessary to point out their flaws and to their wrong claims. Putting doubts in the minds of the readers regarding Islam and some books of Muslim scholars. Some Orientalists created doubts in the minds of readers regarding al-Mankhul in such a subtle but effective manner. Therefore, it is necessary that the young generation be guided on the right ways in this regard and their doubts and suspicions be removed. W. M. Watt in the Encyclopaedia Americana while discussing the life and works of al-Ghazali says, "Most of his books and pamphlets have survived and works have also been falsely ascribed to him". Montgomery has not pointed out the books of al-Ghazali which are falsely attributed to him. The reader is left with the question unanswered about the doubtful books.

W.M. Watt has also discussed the life of works of al-Ghazali in Encyclopaedia Britannica. He says, “Over 400 works are ascribed to al-Ghazali, but the probably did not write nearly so many. Frequently the same work to found with different title in different manuscripts, but many of the numerous manuscripts have not yet been carefully examined. Several works have also been falsely ascribed to him and others are of doubtful authenticity. At least 50 genuine works extant, some relatively short." The following points become evident from the above statement by Montgomery on intellectual achievements of al-Ghazali,

1. Al-Ghazali did not write 400 books
2. At least 50 short and long book definitely his writings.
3. The same book has many names.
4. The books have not been carefully, deeply and thoroughly studied and analyzed.
5. Doubts have been expressed regarding the authenticity of the written material.

The above mentioned comments have made least 350 of al-Ghazali’s book under suspicion and doubt. M. H. Haito has mentioned and discussed 500 of al-Ghazali’s books but has not expressed doubts about anyone. Shibli highlighted that only 4 books of al-Ghazali, regarding his authorship can be categorized as doubtful.

**Root and meanings of al-Mankhuk:** The root word of Mankhul is Nakhl. Nakhl has many meanings such as flour after it has been sieved (means pure flour). If it is from bab nasara yansuru it means to sieve or purify flour. According to this meaning, the name of the book implies that the problems of the principles of Islamic Jurisprudence after passing through rigorous standards have been stated. The meaning of nakhl al-shai means to choose and purify something, its subject is al-Naakhil. And naseeha al-nakhilah means to give advice sincerely, without any selfish motives. Therefore, this book guides and advises to the readers on the Usul al-fiqh and issues related to it. A date-palm tree is also called al-nakhl and its plural is nakhlah. Date palm tree grows in hot places like deserts and its trunk is tall and straight. The dates that this tree produces if full of benefits.
A person’s hunger can be satisfied with dates and feel nourished and strengthened. This way this book will satisfy the people who are hungry for knowledge of *Usul al-fiqh* and give them a feeling of complete satisfaction and happiness. In a Hadith a Muslim is compared with a date-tree, because this tree can provide a lot of benefits and it is one of its own kinds.  

**THE ARGUMENTS TO PROVE THE AUTHORSHIP OF AL-MANKHUL TO AL-GHAZALI**

And from the time of al-Ghazali till today a great number of Jurists and historians have claimed that this book was written by al-Ghazali.

1. Shibli justifies the authorship of al-Ghazali to *al-Mankhul* by various opinions of scholars and then expresses his opinion as followers, “Among the famous books of Imam Ghazali, scholars express their doubts about certain books claimed to be written by him. Four of his books are mentioned in this regard, *Mankhul*, *Mznun bhi ala ghair ahlhi*, *kitab al- Naqkh wa al-Tswyah*, *sir al-Almin*.  


3. Al-Ghazali has indicated about *al-Mankhul* in preface (muqaddimah al Kitab) of *al-Mustasfa min Ilm al-Usul* and said it is a concise book. M. A. Gilani draws the conclusion from the same passage in *al-Mustasfa* that, “*al-Mankhul* was written by al-Ghazali” He further says, “(the statement by al-Ghazali) removed the doubts from the minds of scholars who suspected about the authorship of *al-Mankhul* to al-Ghazali. *al-Mankhul* is also mentioned in another book *Shifaul Ghali* by al-Ghazali.

4. Taj al-Din, Ibn al–Subki’s (727-771 H) comments in *Tabaqat al-Shafi‘iyah* confirms the authorship of *al-Mankhul* to al-Ghazali with strength of conviction. He has also mentioned the period of writing of *al-Mankhul* and says “al-Ghazali wrote *al-Mankhul* in the life of his teacher, Imam al-Haramain”. One of the early attempts on legal theory of Muslim Jurisprudence. Followed his teacher (al-Juwayni) who was reportedly impressed with this work. Al-Juwayni died in 478 H at that time al-Ghazali was 28 years old. We can guess that this book was written in the early life of al-Ghazali and is a product of his studious life and teachings at madrassa Nizamiyah.

5. Al-Maraghi mentioned only *al-Mankhul* and *Al-Mustasfa*, and indicated about other books. Al-Maraghi illustrated *al-Mankhul* again in detail description of al-Ghazali. Perhaps Al-Maraghi wanted to remove misconception about the authorship of *al-Mankhul* to al-Ghazali, that is why he only mentioned first (al-Mankhul) and last (al-Mustasfa) books of al-Ghazali on Usul al-fiqh.
6. Shibli has quoting from *Kashful Zonon* by Haji Khalifa says that he has discussed *al-Mankhul* by another name *rd abi Hanifa*. It is possible that Haji Khalifa remembered *al-Mankhul* by this name as in certain parts of the book, al-Ghazali has criticized Imam Abu Hanifa and has disagreed with him on various issues. The same justification for the book is also found in other sources. Sheikh M. Zahid Kawsari (1296-1371 H) has cited quotations in which al-Ghazali has spoken unfavorably about Imam Abu Hanifa and has refuted Imam Abu Hanifa’s views strongly. He also hinted that al-Ghazali gave up unfavorable opinions against Imam Abu Hanifa.

7. Shibli states about *al-Mankhul*. “Whereas al-Ghazali wrote books on different subjects but especially he contributed in the fields of *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *Usul al-fiqh* (Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence), Theology and Ethics……. Al-Ghazali came up with a lot of new issues on *Usul al-fiqh*. Therefore, his book *al-Mankhul* is a proof of his forte”. Shibli further writes “*al-Mankhul* which is a book on *Usul al-fiqh* is the first book of al-Ghazali. I have read it. It’s a book of high standards as it was written by Ghazali in his youth. Al-Ghazali does not bind himself on passing verdict of any other Imam or Jurist. He gives his verdicts openly and freely with great confidence. This according to many scholars is a flaw and, therefore, this book lost its place in their eyes”.

THE ARGUMENTS ON DENIAL OF AL-GHAZALI’S AUTHORSHIP TO AL-MANKHUL

- Shibli quotes from the author of *Qlaiad al-Uqyan* from the source of *Kashf al-Zunun* that, “That (*al-Mankhul*) was not written by al-Ghazali but by Mahmud Mautazili.
- M.A Gilani writes that some scholars suspected the authorship of al-Ghazali to *al-Mankhul* and Haji Khalifa probably of the same views.
- Joshi has mentioned this book with reference to Ibn-e-Khalkan and writes, “Undoubtedly I could not find authentic proofs to support the authorship by al-Ghazali of this book except that a Hanafi Scholar had written a book to contradict it.”
- Carl Brockelmann (1868 -1956 A.D), a German Orientalist, expresses his opinion that it could have been written by one of Ghazali’s disciples. He says, “Perhaps, It is a book based on the lectures of al-Ghazali by one of his disciples who attended his classes religiously and noted down all the lectures.”

While giving one of the reasons which created doubts about *al-Mankhul* M.A.Gilani writes, “Scholars were surprised on the language used by al-Ghazali in *al-Mankhul* about
Imams, because of the style of language in the book, some scholars did not accept Ghazali’s authorship to it\textsuperscript{63}. M.H. Hitu in the introduction of \textit{al-Mankhul} describes the reasons that why some scholars raised doubts regarding this book. In short those reasons are:

1. Quoting Imam Malik’s opinions without context:

   a. Al-Ghazali quoting Imam Malik (d.179/795) in \textit{al-Mankhul} says concerning \textit{maslaha} (considerations of public interest) he (Imam Malik) goes to the extent for the \textit{istislah} (juristic preference) of 2/3 rd of the Ummah, 1/3 rd of the Ummah can be killed. In a similar way al-Ghazali quotes Imam Malik capital punishment is allowed in Tazeer, (punishment, not mentioned in the Quran). And out of necessity and expediency the rich people of the society can be forced to contribute money to the poor people. The sources to these quotes of Imam Malik have not been mentioned by al-Ghazali and according to some books by Maliki School of thoughts, these verdicts have been contradicted.

   b. In the same way, al- Ghazali quotes Imam Malik in his book, \textit{al-Mankhul} that he by logic or reason is not convinced of the abrogation of the Qura’nic commandments by Hadith; although this stand of Imam Malik cannot be proved with certainty. Imam Malik accepts abrogation of Qur’anic Commandments by Sunnah is lawful but it has never been applied. It is may be for these reasons that al- Ghazali in \textit{al- Mankhul} has not mentioned these statements again in \textit{al-Mustasfa}.

2. Quoting Imam Abu Hanifa’s opinions without context and in a harsh manner:

   a. Al-Ghazali quotes Imam Abu Hanifa in \textit{al-Mankhul} and says, “undoubtedly injunctions carried out repetitively are beneficial” But the writings of Imam Abu Hanifa prove the contrary. Imam Sarkhasi Hanafi (d.483/1090) said, “The right thing is that the repetitiveness of injunctions is neither compulsory nor probable”.

   b. After a few lines, he says again, “Imam Shafi’i has said, injunctions may not be necessarily repeated but probable some other scholars claim that injunctions have been repeated until proven otherwise”. Al- Ghazali, quotes and relates it to the Hanafi school of thought and then refutes it. However it should be noted that this view does not match with the Hanafi school of thought and Ibn Hammam too agree with the Hanafi school of thought. Ibn Hammam Says, “This structure and tense (of \textit{amr}) is used for absolute demand. There are no benefits attached to repetition of injunctions and not probable to it and this is the best- liked injunction of Hanafis. And the same thoughts and feelings are found in the Hanafi wittings.

   c. Al- Ghazali in \textit{al-Mankhul} in a chapter of the book gives priority of Shafi’i school of thought on others and explained the reasons for doing so. Therefore he refuted
the views of Hanafi school of thought. The details are given in *al-Mankhul* on page 499. Al- Ghazali says, Imam Abu Hanifa has no command over the Arabic language and calls him a non-Jurist and his judgments on juristic issues are wrong. Maybe Al- Ghazali followed Al-Juwayni’s method blindly, as he has also done the same in another book *Mugheesul Khalq*.

3. **Imam al- Ghazali’s view to a Hadith:** Al- Ghazali explaining the meaning of *Adad* says that if someone argues that the Prophet (pbuh) said “*sazeedu ala al-sabeen*” about people for whom the verse (9:80) was revealed, “Weather you seek forgiveness for them or not, even if you (pbuh) ask Allah to forgive them 70 times Almighty Allah will not do so” This is not based on truth. Al- Ghazali expresses his opinions in this regard and says, “The verse on forgiveness quoted from a Hadith is totally incorrect, because the purpose of the verse is to stop any expectations of forgiveness by Allah and therefore the Prophet (pbuh) cannot say or do contrary to this verse. Although this Hadith is sound, narrated by Bukhari, Muslim and others.

4. **The formats of al- Mustasfa and al- Mankhul are not in same:** Al- Ghazali, in 504, a year before his death, wrote the book *al- Mustasfa*. Preface of *al- Mustasfa* does not follow this pattern in *al-Mankhul*. By reading this style of *al- Mustasfa* it appears that it is logical that understanding of the *Usul al fiqh* is not possible without knowledge of theology. He justifies his stand by quoting from the Qur’an. A similar approach is not to be found in *al- Mankhul*.

There is imbalance in most chapters of *al- Mankhul*. Some chapters are so short that they appear to be an indications and hints. They are also hard on the intellect, sometimes the chapters are only simple that there is absolutely no difficulties or complications in understanding them.64

**Analysis of above mentioned points**

i. Before analyzing the above mentioned points it has to be borne in mind that any book written by a person cannot claim to be a completely error free, al- Ghazali inspite of being a great renovator was a human being.

ii. As regards his indirect contextualization of Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Malik and harsh language in dealing with them are concerned, he changed his negative opinion about them to positive ones with the passage of time which led to his intellectual growth. Inspite of one’s best intentions, he errs. People who write a lot of good matter, but they are bound to make mistakes. There is no solution to this intellectual accountability but to stop writing. Most of the past and present writers have come under critique and criticism.

a. Al-Ghazali came in the teaching circle of al-Jawayni in 470 H. at the very young age of twenty and soon after started teaching his class-mates. He would
revise the lessons with his class-mates. Al-Jawaini passed away in 477/478 H. Therefore, we can conclude that at the time of al Juwayni’s passing away, al-Ghazali was only 28 years old. This book al-Mankhul was written when al-Ghazali was between 20 and 28 years of age.

b. Although a careful study of al-Mankhul makes us conclude that the book was written after the death of al-Jawaini. To justify the claim an example from the book is quoted, al-Ghazali says the words RahmatuAllah (May Allah be pleased with him) for al-Juwayni.

c. It is difficult to calculate the exact period of the writing of this book, but what can be said with a lot of evidence is that it is definitely one of al-Ghazali’s earliest written books.

iii. As far as the harsh language towards Imam Abu Hanifa is concerned it is necessary to point out that a person’s thought processes and intellectual dimensions change with age, experience and knowledge achieved during this period. Many times a person revises his past opinions and changes them. Therefore we must look at al-Ghazali’s work with a clear mind and more-so because al-Ghazali himself has talked about this positive change very openly in Ihya ulum al-din (Revival of the Religious Sciences). His transformed thoughts and ideas are given in this book of his which proves that he had given up her prejudices related to opposing schools of thought.

He praises Imam Abu Hanifa in the following words. “And now I want to mention the intellectual development of some Islamic jurists and in no way have I insulted or passed any insulting remarks on any of them. Infact I have given these negative remarks to the followers of the past centuries who are contradictory their wise and knowledgeable teachers. They are damaging the reputation of those great scholars. Who have had a great following of disciples, those five honourable jurists are, Imam Shafai, Imam Malik, Imam Ahmad bin Hambal, Imam Abu Hanifa and Sufyan al-thawri. All of them were pious people and were always concerned with the welfare of the Ummah and sought only rewards from Allah by their juristic works.”

Al-Ghazali further says, “And most definitely Imam Abu Hanifa (ra) was one who was pious, filled with the fear of Allah, who was always fearful of Allah and one who sought Allah’s happiness by their knowledge and expertise”. What so ever many be, when al-Ghazali changed his attitude then any complain is of no fruit. The above mentioned examples reflects his positive change and therefore should not be looked upon with skepticism.

iv. Firstly Shibli has commented on the prejudiced outlook of al-Ghazali towards Imam Abu Hanifa he studied and analyzed the various phases and the changes that took
place in al- Ghazali’s life. Shibli says, “al- Ghazali has used harsh words for Imam Abu Hanifa and claimed that 90% of his judgments are wrong. Al- Ghazali is all praise for Abu Hanifa in his book Ihya ulum al-din (Revival of the Religious Sciences). Moreover, it is unbelievable that he could have said bad things about Islamic Jurists. Therefore that book according to some scholars cannot be his. In the books of Rijal all books have been ascribed to al- Ghazali. Secondly, scholars who have studied the life of al- Ghazali carefully, come to the conclusion that the nature of al- Ghazali in his youth was fond to debates and criticisms. Abd al- Ghafir who witnessed al- Ghazali’s life, his young days and his middle ages says that al- Ghazali in youth was egotistic, proud and status conscious but in later life he was an entirely different person. al-Mankhul must definitely be the book of the earlier days”.

Al- Ghazali has disagreed with the opinions of many scholars and many scholars have also disagreed with him. Disagreements by scholars on intellectual topics have always been welcomed. Al-Ghazali is a Shafai’i and he has disagreed with Imam Abu Hanifa although al-Juwayni was a Shafai’i too and he was greatly impressed with al- Jawayni and his school of thought but al-Ghazali later in his life contradicted al-Jawayni and accepted the change of his thoughts. Al-Ghazali in his book, al-Mankhul has quoted many opinions which were common between al-Juwayni and him and he defended and accepted by him.

If we accept this point that al- Ghazali has spoken a very harsh manner about Imam Abu Hanifa, this is against his loftiness. If his closeness with al-Juwayni led him to accept these premises and they be seen in his later books too like al-Mustasfa. Al- Ghazali expressed opinions which were contradictory to al-Jawayni’s opinions.

Abu Yousuf (182-113 H) Muhammad b. Hassan al-Shaibani (131-189 H), students of Imam Abu Hanifa, on various issues disagreed with the opinion of Abu Hanifa and pointed out flaws in his writings, Books have also been written on differing scholastic views. Ahmed b. Yahya b. Abi al- Aqeeli al-Hilabi (b. 308 H) wrote a book in which he compiled the difference between Imam Abu Hanifa and his companions.

Scholars have always refuted each others’ opinions and being human one can always expect them to err especially when they are producing thousands of pages. If al-Ghazali has contradicted other scholar opinions, other scholars have also contradicted his opinions. Whole books have been written by scholars like Ibn Rushd (Tahafatul Tahafa) to oppose al- Ghazali. He refuted al- Ghazali’s opinions with arguments to which the Orientalists have said, “The Tahafut is, then more than a straight forward refutation of al-Ghazali’s work”.

v. Al- Ghazali has disagreed with the opinions of many scholars and many scholars have also disagreed with him. Disagreements by scholars on intellectual topics have always been welcomed. Al-Ghazali is a Shafai’i and he has disagreed with Imam Abu Hanifa although al-Juwayni was a Shafai’i too and he was greatly impressed with al- Jawayni and his school of thought but al-Ghazali later in his life contradicted al-Jawayni and accepted the change of his thoughts. Al-Ghazali in his book, al-Mankhul has quoted many opinions which were common between al-Juwayni and him and he defended and accepted by him.

If we accept this point that al- Ghazali has spoken a very harsh manner about Imam Abu Hanifa, this is against his loftiness. If his closeness with al-Juwayni led him to accept these premises and they be seen in his later books too like al-Mustasfa. Al- Ghazali expressed opinions which were contradictory to al-Jawayni’s opinions.

Abu Yousuf (182-113 H) Muhammad b. Hassan al-Shaibani (131-189 H), students of Imam Abu Hanifa, on various issues disagreed with the opinion of Abu Hanifa and pointed out flaws in his writings, Books have also been written on differing scholastic views. Ahmed b. Yahya b. Abi al- Aqeeli al-Hilabi (b. 308 H) wrote a book in which he compiled the difference between Imam Abu Hanifa and his companions.

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vii. On one side al-Ghazali received a lot of recognition and fame, but on the other hand many scholars were utterly jealous of him and were bent upon harming him with intellectual circles e.g. al-Ghazali had criticized Imam Abu Hanifa; opponents took this as an opportunity to complain against him in the court of Sanjar. Al-Ghazali was asked to appear in court in person. He justified his stance so well that the king was highly impressed and offered him teaching position in the court.74

viii. The styles of al-Mankhul and al-Mustasfa are certainly different in many ways because 25 years gap between the writings of both books. The Muqaddamatul Kitab of al-Mustasfa is logical. Al-Ghazali goes to the extent of saying that if arguments are not covered logically, there will be completely lack of authenticity in those research works.75 The style cannot be witnessed of al-Mankhul.

al-Ghazali’s opinion about those who cannot combine jurisprudence with theology.

“But this is exceeding the limits of this science and mixing it with theology. The theologians from among the Usulis have elaborated (excessively) in this regard, mainly because theology overwhelmed their nature. The love of their profession compelled them to mix it with this art, just as the love of the language and [its] grammar forced some jurists to mix parts of grammar with usul. Thus, they mention about the meanings of prepositions and inflections certain things which specially pertain to the science of grammar, just as the love for fiqh has led a group of legists from Transoxania, namely Abu Zayd [al-Dabbusi], and his followers, to mix many questions about the details of fiqh with its principles. Although they brought this by way of examples to illustrate how a principle lead to certain detailed legal points, they76

This difference in style cannot be used as proof to deny the authorship of al-Mankhul. A clear understanding may be achieved by looking at the difference of more than 20 years in their time of writing. Therefore their styles are different. In all of his books al-Ghazali had his own unique style and left his readers in surprise. And amazement. This different style of al-Ghazali’s writing (combining jurisprudence with theology). Sayyed Muhammad al-Mortaza Zubaidi (d.1205 H), the commentator of Ihya ulum al-din differentiates that al-Ghazali defends and justifies certain type and style of theology. S. A. Jackson writes, “al-Ghazali’s arguments against the theological extremists-among whom are both Traditionalists and Rationalists.”77

ix. As far as putting limitations on freedom of expression in al-Mustasfa is concerned, al-Ghazali in his early years was completely under the influence of his teacher, al-Juwayni. The magical style of al-Juwayni was obvious in the early writings of al-Ghazali. This book proves that in those early days al-Ghazali did not have an independent personality of his own. On the other hand, al-Ghazali tried to copy
and defend the style of his teacher. He supports the thoughts and values of his
teacher and writes them down religiously without the slightest changes.

Al-Ghazali expresses very subtly these feelings towards the end of the book, *al Mankhul* and says, “And this book, *al-Mankhul* is complete. In this book, unnecessary points have been deleted/removed. Every problem has been dealt with and analyzed logically according to its requirements in a concise manner. Questions have been answered keeping in mind the varying queries of people in jurisprudence. The writings of Imam al Haramain have been followed without any additions or deletions in a concise manner. The only modifications are in the division of the book into chapters, headings and sub-headings”.

x. The tremendous respect that al-Ghazali had for his teacher al-Juwayni did not deter him from expressing his opinions freely. In his book, *al-Mankhul*, al-Ghazali opposes the idea of his teacher, and has adopted values which went contrary to those of al-Juwayni’s.

xi. The Prophet (pbuh) said “Thinking well of others partakes in service to God.” Muslims, therefore must have good thoughts about the past scholars and philosophers.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

*al-Mankhul* is one of al-Ghazali’s earliest writings. Therefore, one should not have high expectations with it and it would not be right to compare it with *al Mustasfa* written after 25 years of *al-Mankhul*. As *al-Mankhul* was criticized for some flaws, and it was taken as it was not written by al-Ghazali. The first book of al-Ghazali on *Usul al-fiqh* is *al-Mankhul* which he wrote during his studies at madrasah Nizamiyah, Nishapur in the life of his teacher, al-Juwayni, when he was between 20-28 years of age or perhaps he wrote this book after the death of his teacher. *Al-Mankhul* is an excellent book for beginner and Intermediate levels students because in the start al-Ghazali was among the special students of al-Juwayni and after the classes he could conduct revision sessions with his class mates. A detailed analysis of *al-Mankhul* proves that during the period of authorship of this al-Ghazali was greatly influenced by al-Juwayni. Al-Ghazali at this stage seems not to have exercised his free will as an independent Jurist. This is but natural as good teachers have an indelible mark on their students. Where thousands of pages are written by any scholar some words and thoughts of the writer come under severe criticism. We are told to have good feelings and intentions about others. We must be sure that if the scholar had made mistakes, they must have realized them and sought forgiveness in matters which they were highly criticized. In *Ihya ulum al-din*, al-Ghazali very clearly, highly admired and praised the Imams in the best possible words. Therefore, in the later writings of al-Ghazali, he had positive opinions and feelings about his peers and seniors and so, his earlier writings must not be taken into account in this regard. Al-Ghazali’s works must be judged without prejudice and with an open mind and his entire writings must be kept in mind. If this is not done in a non-prejudiced manner, it would be like betrayal of al-Ghazali’s trust. Scholars disagree with each others; this is a beauty of Islamic teachings and this is not a valid point to deny authorship of a book.
REFERENCES AND FOOTNOTES


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60. See Introduction on al-Ghazali’s *al-Mankhul min Ta’liqat al-Usul* by Muhammad Hassan Hito

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