



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

COURSE CODE/TITLE: ISL861: Ghazālī vs Ibn Rushd

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INTRODUCTION

ISL 861: Ghazali vs Ibn Rushd is a 3 credit unit course. It is a 500 level course available to Master Degree students. The course is also suitable for anyone who is interested in the study of Islamic Philosophy. The volume and content are designed in such a way that it attends to the need of an Islamic philosophy student who is aspiring to build a carrier in the field.

This course guide, as the name implies, gives you the preliminary information on how to gain the most out of this course material. It tells you briefly what the course is all about, what you are expected to know in each unit, what course materials you will be using and how you can work your way through these materials. It also emphasizes the need for tutor marked assignments. Detailed information on tutor marked assignments is found in the separate file, which will be sent to you later. There are periodic tutorial classes that are linked to the course

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS COURSE

The course consists of 16 units discussed under 3 modules. It exposes you to the struggle of Ghazali to correct philosophical diffusions into Islamic theology.

The great period of translation of Greek into Arabic, mostly through the intermediary of Christian Syrians, was between the years 750 and 850,

but already before that time there was an impact of Greek ideas on Muslim theology. A later generation of theologians, the Ash'arites, named after Al Ash'ari, born A. D. 873, are forced by the weight of evidence to admit a certain irrationality in theological concepts, and their philosophical speculations, largely based on Stoicism, are strongly mixed with Skeptical theories. They hold the middle way between the traditionalists who want to forbid all reasoning on religious matters and those who affirm that reason unaided by revelation is capable of attaining religious truths. Ghazali founds his attack against the philosophers on Ash'arite principles. The culmination of the philosophy of Islam was in the tenth and eleventh centuries. This was the age also of the great theologians. It was with Greek ideas, taken in part from Stoics and Sceptics that the theologians tried to refute the ideas of the philosophers. Ghazali, who was born in the middle of the eleventh century, is one of the most remarkable and at the same time most enigmatic figures in Islam. He is regarded as Islam's greatest theologian and, through some of his books, as a defender of Orthodoxy. It is generally believed that the Tahafut, the book in which he criticizes Philosophy, was written in the period of his doubts. In the introduction to his book Ghazali says that a group of people hearing the famous

names Socrates, Hippocrates, Plato, and Aristotle, and knowing what they had attained in such sciences as Geometry, Logic, and Physics, have left the religion of their fathers in which they were brought up to follow the philosophers.

Averroës was the last great philosopher in Islam in the twelfth century, and is the most scholarly and scrupulous commentator of Aristotle. The name of Ghazali's book in which he attacks the philosophers is Tahafut al Falasifa and the name of Averroës' book is Tahafut al Tahafu. In his book Ghazali attacks the philosophers on twenty points. Except for the last two points which are only slightly touched by Averroës, Averroës follows point for point the arguments Ghazali uses and tries to refute them. This Course Material only treated the theory of pre-eternity of the world which is the topic that consumed almost seventy percent of Ghazali's Tahafut al Falasifa.

COURSE AIMS

The overall aim of ISL 861: Ghazali vs Ibn Rushd is to introduce you to the Philosophical argument between Ghazli and the philosophers in one side, and and Ibn Rushds criticism of Ghazali arguments in defence of the philosophers in the other side. It also aims at making you to be aware of the sacrifice Ghazali in order to defend Islamic faith. Above all, you will also notice that Ibn Rushd despite his efforts to criticize Ghazali ideas through his well-organized philosophical proofs, he was not able to defeat him.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

To achieve the aims set out above there are overall set objectives. In addition, each unit also has specific objectives. The unit objectives are always included at its beginning. You will read them before you start working through the unit. You may want to refer to them during your study of the unit to check your progress. You should always look at the unit objectives after completing a unit. This way you can confirm whether you have done what was required of you by the unit.

Stated below are the wider objectives of this course as a whole. By meeting these objectives, you should have achieved the aims of the course as a whole.

On successful completion of the course, you should be able to:

- Discuss the importance of studying the theory of pre-eternity of the world.
- Differentiate between Ghazali's ideas and philosophers' ideas about pre-eternity of the world.
- Point out the replies of Ibn Rushd to the arguments of Ghazali.

WORKING THROUGH THIS COURSE

To complete this course, you are required to read the study units, read recommended books and read other materials provided by the National Open University of Nigeria (**NOUN**). Each unit contains self-assessment exercises, and at points in the course, you are required to submit assignments for assessment purposes. At the end of this course, there is a final examination. You will find below list of all the components of the course and what you have to do.

COURSE MATERIALS

Major components of the course are:

- 1 Course Guide
- 2 Study Units
- 3 Textbooks
- 4 Assignment File
- 5 Presentation Schedule

You must obtain a copy of the materials provided by the **NOUN**. You may contact your tutor if you have problems in obtaining the text-books.

SET TEXTBOOKS

1. Al-Ghazali, A. H, (1058-1111 CE), *Tahafut al-falasifa*. See the parallel English-Arabic edition, [hereafter *Tahafut*], translated, introduced and annotated by Michael E. Marmura (2000), Brigham Young University Press, Provo, Utah.
2. Al-Ghazali, A. H (1058-1111 CE), *Tahafut al-falasifa*. translated into English from Urdu Translation by Sabih Ahmad Kamali (1963), Pakistan Philosophical Congress.
3. Al-Ghazali, A. H, (1058-1111 CE), Deliverance from Error. (**Al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl**). Translated with related works, by Richard J. MCCARTHY, S.J., as. Freedom and Fulfillment.
4. Al-Ghazāl, A.H, (1058-1111 CE), The Book of Knowledge, Translated by Kenneth Honerkamp, Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae (2015).
5. Al-Ghazālī: (1058-1111 CE), the Principles of the Creed, Translated by Khalid Williams, Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2016.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISES (SAEs)

Each unit contains a number of self-tests. In general these self-tests examine you on the material just covered or require you to apply them in some ways and thereby, help you to evaluate your progress and performance in your assignments. The exercises will assist you in achieving the stated learning objectives of the individual units and of the course.

TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMAs)

This Course contains a number of tutor-marked assignments you need to submit. The best three (i.e. the highest three of the five marks) will be counted. They will constitute 30 %, of your total course mark.

You should be able to complete your assignments from the information and materials containing in your set textbooks, reading and study units. However, you are advised to use other references to broaden your view point and provide a deeper understanding of the subject.

When you have completed each assignment, send it together with Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA) form to your tutor. Make sure that each assignment reaches your tutor on or before the deadline given in the assignment file. If, however, you cannot complete your work in time, contact your tutor before the assignment is done to discuss the possibility of an examination.

FINAL ASSESSMENT

There are two types of assessments in the course. First are the Tutor-Marked Assignments while the second are the written examinations. In tackling the assignment, you are expected to apply information and knowledge acquired during this course. The assignments must be submitted to your tutor for formal assessment in accordance with the deadlines stated in the assignment file. The work you submit to your tutor for assessment will count for 30% of your total course mark.

At the end of the course, you will need to sit for a final two-hour

examination. This will also count for 70 % of your course mark.

FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING

The final examination of ARA283 will be of two hours' duration and 70% have a value of the total course grade. The examination will consist of questions which reflect the type of self-testing, practice exercise and tutor-marked problems you have come across. All areas of the course will be assessed.

You are advised to revise the entire course after studying the last unit before you sit for the examination. You will find it useful to review your tutor- marked assignments and the comments of your tutor on them before the final examination.

COURSE MARKING SCHEME

This table shows how the actual course marking is broken down.

Assessment	Marks
Tutor – Marked Assignment	Best three marks out of five count @ 10% each = 30% marks
Final Examination	70% of overall course marks
Total	100% of course marks

Table 1: Course Marking Scheme

PRESENTATION SCHEDULE/ COURSE OVERVIEW

The presentation Schedule given below gives you the important dates for the completion of tutor-marked assignments and attending

tutorials. Remember, you are required to submit all your assignments in good time. You should guard against being late in submitting your work.

Units	Title of work	Weeks activity	Assessment (end of unit)
1	The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world (the first argument.)	1	Assignment 1
2	The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world (the second argument.)	2	Assignment 2
3	The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world (the third argument)	3	Assignment 3
4	The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world (the fourth argument)	4	Assignment 4
5	The refutation of their belief in the everlasting nature of the world (first argument.	5	Assignment 5
6	The refutation of their belief in the everlasting nature of the world (second argument.)	6	Assignment 6
7	The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world (the second argument)	7	Assignment 7
8	The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world (the third argument)	8	Assignment 8

9	The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world (the fourth argument)	9	Assignment 9
10	The refutation of their belief in the everlasting nature of the world (The first argument.)	10	Assignment 10
11	The refutation of their belief in the everlasting nature of the world (The Second argument)	11	Assignment 11
12	The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world (the second argument)	12	Assignment 12
13	The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world (the third argument)	13	Assignment 13
14	The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world (the fourth argument)	14	Assignment 14
15	The refutation of their belief in the everlasting nature of the world (The first argument.)	15	Assignment 15
	The refutation of their belief in the everlasting nature of the world (The Second argument)	16	Assignment 16

HOW TO GET MOST FROM THIS COURSE

In distance learning the study units replace the university lecturer. This is one of the great advantages of distance learning; you can read and work through specially designed study materials at your own pace, and at a time and place that suit you best. Think of it as reading the lecture instead of listening to lecturer. In the same way that a lecturer might set you some reading to do, your study units provide exercises for you to do at appropriate points. Each of the study units follows a common format. The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do. When you have finished the units, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. If you make a habit of doing this, you will scientifically improve your chances of passing the course.

The main body of the units guides you through the required reading from other sources.

Reading Section

Remember that your tutor's job is to help you. When you need help, don't hesitate to call and ask your tutor to provide it.

- 1 Read this course guide thoroughly
- 2 Organize a study schedule. Refer to the 'course overview' for more details. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units. Whatever

method you choose to use, you should decide on and write in your own dates for working on each unit.

- 3 Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything you can to stick to it. The major reason that students fail is that they get behind with their course work. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please let your tutor know before it is too late for help
- 4 Turn on unit 1 and read the introduction and the objectives for the unit.
- 5 Assemble the study materials. Information about what you need for the unit is given in the "Overview" at the beginning of each unit. You will almost always need both the study unit you are working on and one of your set books on your desk at the same time.
- 6 Work through the unit itself has been arranged to provide a sequence for you to follow. As you work through the unit you will be instructed to read sections from your set books or other articles. Use the unit to guide your reading.
- 7 Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you are not sure about any of the objectives, review the study material or consult your tutor.
- 8 When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can then start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to face your study so that you keep yourself on schedule.
- 9 When you have submitted an assignment to your tutor for marking, do not wait for its return before starting on the next unit.

Keep to your schedule. When the assignment is returned, pay particular attention to your tutor's comments, both on the tutor-marked assignment from and also on what is written on the assignment. Consult your tutor as soon as possible if you have any questions or problems.

- 10 After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit) and the course objectives (listed in this course guide).

TUTORS AND TUTORIALS

There are 8 hours of tutorials provided in support of this course. You will be notified of the dates, times and location of these tutorials, together with the name and phone number of your tutor, as soon as you are allocated a tutorial group.

Your tutor will mark and comment on your assignments, keep a close watch on your progress and on any difficulties you might encounter. He will also provide assistance to you during the course. You must mail your tutor – marked assignments to your tutor well before the due date (at least two working days are required). They will be marked by your tutors and returned to you as soon as possible.

Do not hesitate to contact your tutor by telephone, e-mail, or discuss with him if you need help. The following might be circumstances in which you would find help necessary.

CONTACT YOUR TUTOR IF:

- You do not understand any part of the study units or the assigned readings.
- You have difficulty with the assessment exercises.

* You have a question or problems with an assignment, with your tutor's comments on an assignment or with the grading of an assignment.

You should try your best to attend the tutorials. This is the only chance to have face to face contact with your tutor and to ask questions which are answered instantly. You can raise any problem encountered in the course of your study. To gain the maximum benefit from course tutorials, prepare a questions list before attending them. You will learn a lot from participating in discussion actively.

SUMMARY

The theory of the eternity of the world is an Aristotelian one. Aristotle was, as he says himself, the first thinker who affirmed that the world in which we live, the universe as an orderly whole, a cosmos, is eternal. All the philosophers before him believed that the world had come into being either from some primitive matter or after a number of other worlds. At the same time Aristotle believes in the finitude of causes. For him it is impossible that movement should have started or can continue by itself. There must be a principle from which all movement derives.

Movement, however, by itself is eternal. It is the contradiction in the idea of an eternal creation which forms the chief argument of Ghazali in this book.

MODULE ONE

THE THEORY OF PRE-ETERNITY OF THE WORLD

UNIT 1: The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world (the first argument)

CONTENTS:

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
 - 3.1 Details of the theory (of the eternity of the world).
 - 3.2 The first argument.
 - 3.3 First Objection of the first argument.
- 4.0 Conclusion.
- 5.0 Summary.
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment.
- 7.0 Reference/Further Reading.

1.0 Introduction

Seen within the framework of his times, al-Ghazali's whole life seems to have been devoted to the revival of the Islamic polity in all aspects and most of all to the revival of the same pristine spirit of Islam that had once given birth to a civilization deeply conscious of its relationship with the Eternal and the Everlasting. This pronounced and oft-articulated concern in Ghazalian thought was in direct response to his times, rife as they were with powerful political, social and intellectual conflicts that threatened to annihilate the Islamic community as a cohesive community of believers.

Deeply concerned as he was with the overall well-being of the Islamic society, al-Ghazali felt compelled to classify and set limits of each science in as precise a manner as possible and with a clear aim of regulating the life of the community which, in his view, was at the brink of a major catastrophe.

For our discussion of Islam and science nexus, the most important work of al-Ghazali is his *Incoherence of the Philosophers (Tahafut al-falasifa)*, which marks a turning point in the intellectual history of medieval Islam. In this work of enduring interest, al-Ghazali refuted twenty philosophical doctrines which were considered to be essential features of the Islamic Neo-Platonism so painstakingly and thoroughly perfected by al-Farabi and Ibn Sina who became the main targets of al-Ghazali's attack. In particular, three propositions were singled out by al-Ghazali as particularly running against the faith tradition to which both he and the philosophers he condemned belonged. Note that the question here was not the faith of individual philosophers. In fact, it was generally accepted that their entire philosophical system was directed toward an affirmation of the existence of God, as opposed to some Hellenistic philosophers and furthermore, they tried to establish their system of thought in a manner as to affirm the uniqueness of one and only one God. The problem, as al-Ghazali saw it, was that their doctrines *forced* God to produce the world by necessity through a process of emanation, in more or less the same manner in which an inanimate object like the sun was said to produce its light by its very nature, by its essence, necessarily. Thus he found the three propositions—the eternity of the world, God's knowledge of universals only, and the denial of the resurrection of the body—particularly offensive because they reduced God's omnipotence and denied the divine attributes of Will, Power, and Knowledge. *Tahafut* achieved its high rank in the history of Islamic tradition because it was the first sustained, well-argued and thorough critique of the emanative metaphysics, causal theory and psychology of Ibn Sina which was built on a cohesive internal structure and which, in spite of its professed religious and theological aims, was ultimately philosophical.

2.0 Objectives.

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- a) Identify the causes of argument between al-Ghazali and the philosophers namely al-Farabi and Ibn Sina about the eternity of the world.
- b) Address the assertion of the philosophers that the world is eternal.
- c) Provide answers to the argument that a temporary being cannot proceed from the eternal.
- d) Provide answers to the argument that similar things cannot be differentiated.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Details of the theory (of the eternity of the world):

THE philosophers disagree among themselves as to the eternity of the world. But the majority of the philosophers - ancient as well as modern - agree upon its eternity, holding that it always coexisted with God (exalted be He) as His effect which was concurrent with Him in time – as concurrent as an effect is with the cause, e.g., light with the Sun - and that God's priority to the world is the priority of the cause to the effect - viz., priority in essence and rank, not in time. Plato is said to have maintained that the world began in time. But some people put different interpretations on his words, for they would not have him believe in the origin of the world. From Galen's book called "What Galen Believed" it appears that towards the end of his life he was inclined to be neutral on this question. He said that he did not know whether the world is eternal or originated. Often he would argue that the nature of the world could not be discovered - not because of any deficiency on his part, but because of the inherent difficulty of the problem which baffles all minds.

But such instances are few and far between. The consensus of opinion among the philosophers is that as a rule it is inconceivable that something which has a beginning in time should proceed from the eternal without there being any intermediary.

Exposition of their arguments

Ghazali say:

If I were to relate all the arguments (advanced by the philosophers) and the counter-arguments which have been handed down to us, I should have to devote innumerable pages to the problem. But prolixity is no good. Let us, therefore, omit such arguments that tend towards arbitrary and fanciful reasoning; for any observer will find it easy to deal with them. Our attention should be confined to those (arguments) which really appeal to the mind. It is such arguments which could possibly shake the faith of the most matured thinkers. As regards weaker minds, their faith can be shaken by the flimsiest thing.

Now, such arguments ("as really appeal to the mind") are three.

3.2 The first argument

The philosophers say:

The procession of a temporal (being) from an eternal (being) is absolutely impossible. For, if we suppose the Eternal at a stage when the world had not yet originated from Him, then the reason why it had not originated must have been that there was no determinant for its existence, and that the existence of the world was a possibility only. So, when later the world comes into existence, we must choose one of the two alternatives (to explain it) - namely, either that the determinant has, or that it has not, emerged. If the determinant did not emerge, the world should still remain in the state of bare possibility, in which it was before. But if it has emerged, then who is the originator of the determinant itself? And why does it come into being now, and did not do so before? Thus, the question regarding the origin of the determinant stands. In fact, since all the states of the Eternal are alike, either nothing shall originate from Him, or whatever originates shall continue to originate forever. For it is impossible that the state of leaving off should differ from the state of taking up.

To elucidate the point, it may be said: Why did He not originate the world before its origination? It is not possible to say: "Because of His inability to bring the world into existence"; nor could one say: "Because of the impossibility of the world coming into being." For this would mean that He changed from inability to ability (power), or that the world changed from impossibility to possibility. And both senses are absurd. Nor can it be said that, before the time of the origination of the world, there was no purpose and that a purpose emerged later. Nor is it

possible to ascribe (the non-origination of the world before it actually originated) to the lack of means at one stage, and to its existence at another. The nearest thing to imagine is to say that He had not willed the world's existence before. But from this it follows that one must also say: "The world is the result of His having become a Wilier of its existence - after not having been a Wilier." So the Will should have had a beginning in time. But the origination of the Will in the Divine being is impossible; for He is not subject to temporal events. And the origination of the Will not-in-His-being cannot make Him a Wilier.

Even if we give up the inquiry concerning the substratum in which the will originated, doesn't the difficulty regarding the very act of origination stand? Whence does the Will originate? Why does it originate now? Why did it not originate before? Does it now originate from a source other than God? If there can be a temporal existent which has not been brought into existence by anyone, then the world itself should be such an existent, so as to be independent of the Creator. For what is the difference between one temporal existent and another?

So, if the origin of the world is ascribed to God's action, the question remains: Why now and why not before? Was it due to the absence of means, or power, or purpose, or nature? If so, the transition from this stage to that of existence will revive the difficulty we had to face at the outset. And if it is said to have been due to the absence of Will, then one act of Will have to stand in need of another, and so on *ad infinitum*. From this it is absolutely clear that the procession of the temporal from the eternal is impossible, unless there were a change in the eternal in respect of power, or means, or time, or nature. And it is impossible to suppose a change in the states of the eternal. Because as a temporal event, that change would be like any other change (in non-eternal beings). Therefore (in case of the eternal), change of any kind whatsoever is impossible. And now that the world has been proved (always) to have existed, and the impossibility of its beginning in time has been shown, it follows that the world is eternal.

This is their most clever argument. Their discussion of all other metaphysical problems is less substantial than the discussion of this one. For here they have access to a variety of speculations which would not be available to them in any other problem. This is the reason why we began with this problem, and presented this their strongest argument at the very outset.

IBN RUSHD (AVERROSE):

I say: This argument is in the highest degree dialectical and does not reach the pitch of demonstrative proof. For its premises are common notions, and common notions approach the equivocal, whereas demonstrative premises are concerned with things proper to the same genus. For the term 'possible' is used in an equivocal way of the possible that happens more often than not, of the possible that happens less often than not, and of the possible with equal chances of happening, and these three types of the possible do not seem to have the same need for a new determining principle. For the possible that happens more often than not is frequently believed to have its determining principle in itself, not outside, as is the case with the possible which has equal chances of happening and not happening. Further, the possible resides sometimes in the agent, i.e. the possibility of acting, and sometimes in the patient, i.e. the possibility of receiving, and it does not seem that the necessity for a determining principle is the same in both cases. For it is well known that the possible in the patient needs a new determinant from the outside; this can be perceived by the senses in artificial things and in many natural things too, although in regard to natural things there is a doubt, for in most natural things the principle of their change forms part of them. Therefore it is believed of many natural things that they move themselves, and it is by no means self-evident that everything that is moved has a mover and that there is nothing that moves itself.; But all this needs to be examined, and the old philosophers have therefore done so. As concerns the possible in the agent, however, in many cases it is believed that it can be actualized without an external principle, for the transition in the agent from inactivity to activity is often regarded as not being a change which requires a principle; e.g. the transition in the geometer from non-geometrizing to geometrizing, or in the teacher from non-teaching to teaching. Further, those changes which are regarded as needing a principle of change can sometimes be changes in substance, sometimes in quality, or in quantity, or in place. In addition, 'eternal' is predicated by many of them as eternal-by-itself and the eternal-through-another. According to some, it is permissible to admit certain changes in the Eternal, for instance a new volition in the Eternal, according to the Karramites, and the possibility of generation and corruption which the ancients attribute to primary matter, although it is eternal. Equally, new concepts are admitted in the possible intellect although, according to most authors, it is eternal. But there are also changes which are

inadmissible, especially according to certain ancients, though not according to others. Then there is the agent who acts of his will and the agent which acts by nature and the manner of actualization of the possible act is not the same for both agents, i.e. so far as the need for a new determinant is concerned. Further, is this division into two agents complete, or does demonstration lead to an agent which resembles neither the natural agent nor the voluntary agent of human experience? All these are multifarious and difficult questions which need, each of them, a special examination, both in themselves and in regard to the opinions the ancients held about them. To treat what is in reality a plurality of questions as one problem is one of the well-known seven sophisms, and a mistake in one of these principles becomes a great error by the end of the examination of reality.

3.3 First Objection of the first argument.

GHAZALI: Firstly, it may be said:

How will you disprove one who says that the world came into being because of the eternal Will which demanded its existence at the time at which it actually came into existence, and which demanded the non-existence (of the world) to last as long as it lasted, and (demanded) the existence to begin where it actually began?. So, on this view, existence of the world was not an object of the eternal Will, before the world actually existed; hence its non-actualization. And it was an object of the will at the time when it was actualized. What can prevent us from believing such a thing, and what is the contradiction involved in it?

IBN RUSHD (AVERROSE):

I say: This argument is sophistical; although it is not allowable for him to admit the possibility of the actual effect being delayed after the actual cause, and in a voluntary agent, after the decision to act, he regards it as possible that the effect should be delayed after the will of the agent. It is possible that the effect should be delayed after the will of the agent, but it's being delayed after the actual cause is impossible, and equally impossible is its being delayed after a voluntary agent's decision to act. The difficulty is thus unchanged, for he must of necessity draw one of these two conclusions: either that the act of the agent does not imply in him a change which itself would need an external principle of change, or that there are changes which arise by themselves, without the necessity

of an agent in whom they occur and who causes them, and that therefore there are changes possible in the Eternal without an agent who causes them. And his adversaries insist on these two very points: (1) that the act of the agent necessarily implies a change and that each change has a principle which causes it; (2) that the Eternal cannot change in any way. But all this is difficult to prove. The Ash'arites are forced to assume either a first agent or a first act of this agent, for they cannot admit that the disposition of the agent, relative to the effect, when he acts is the same as his disposition, when he does not act. This implies therefore a new disposition or a new relation, and this necessarily either in the agent, or in the effect, or in both? But in this case, if we posit as a principle that for each new disposition there is an agent, this new disposition in the first agent will either need another agent, and then this first agent was not the first and was not on his own account sufficient for the act but needed another, or the agent of the disposition which is the condition of the agent's act will be identical with the agent of the act. Then this act which we regarded as being the first act arising out of him will not be the first, but his act producing the disposition which is the condition of the effect will be anterior to the act producing the effect. This, you see, is a necessary consequence, unless one allows that new dispositions may arise in the agents without a cause. But this is absurd, unless one believes that there are things which happen at haphazard and by themselves, a theory of the old philosophers who denied the agent, the falsehood of which is self-evident. In Ghazali's objection there is confusion. For our expressions 'eternal will' and 'temporal will' are equivocal, indeed contrary.

For the empirical will is a faculty which possesses the possibility of doing equally one of the two contraries, and then receiving equally one of the two contraries willed. For the will is the desire of the agent towards action. When the agent acts, the desire ceases and the thing willed happens, and this desire and this act are equally related to both the contraries. But when one says: 'There is a Willer who wills eternally one of two contraries in Himself', the definition of the will is abandoned, for we have transferred its nature from the possible to the necessary. If it is objected that in an eternal will the will does not cease through the presence of the object willed, for as an eternal will has no beginning there is no moment in it which is specially determined for the realization of the object willed, we answer: this is not obvious, unless we say that demonstrative proof leads to the existence of an agent endowed with a power which is neither voluntary nor natural, which, however, the

Divine Law calls 'will', in the same way as demonstrative proof leads to middle terms between things which seemed at first sight to be contrary, without being really so, as when we speak of an existence which is neither inside nor outside the world.

Ghazali argued on behalf of the philosophers:

If it is said

The contradiction involved here is self-evident. For that which originates in time is an effect or a product. And just as it is impossible for an originated thing to be uncaused, so it is impossible for the cause to fail to produce its effect when all the conditions and factors requisite for the causal operation are complete and nothing else remains to be awaited. The existence, of the effect is necessary, when the cause is operative, and all causal conditions are complete. The postponement of the effect is as impossible as the existence of a temporal but uncaused thing.

Now, before the existence of the world, the Willer existed: the will existed, and the relation of the will to its object existed. The Willer did not have to make a new appearance: nor did the will emerge as a new acquisition, nor did it acquire a new relation to its object. For anything of this kind would amount to change. How, then, did the object of will emerge as something new? And what prevented it from emerging before it actually did? The state of its new-emergence cannot be distinguished from the preceding states in respect of anything or any factor or any state or any relation whatsoever; for all things remain as they were. If, in spite of all things remaining the same, the object of will is not produced at first, but comes into being later, the whole affair must be exceedingly contradictory.

IBN RUSHD (AVERROSE)

I say: This is perfectly clear, except for one who denies one of the premises we have laid down previously. But Ghazali passes from this proof to an example based upon convention,' and through this he confuses this defence of the philosophers.

GHAZALI argues:

Contradiction of this kind arises not only in case of evident and essential causes and effects, but also in case of those which are conventional and qualified. For instance, if a man pronounces divorce to his wife, and if separation is not the immediate result of the pronouncement, it is inconceivable that it should take effect afterwards. For, in accordance with convention and legal usage, the pronouncement is made the cause

of the judgment. Therefore, the postponement of the effect is unintelligible, unless the enforcement of the divorce should be bound up with, say, the coming of the next day, or entering into the house. Only then will the divorce take effect at the time of the coming of the next day, or the entering into the house, and not immediately; for the pronouncement is made a cause of divorce in relation to something which is yet awaited. Since the condition, i.e., the morrow or the entry is not present at the moment, the effect must be held over until the absent condition should become present. So the effect, i.e., the enforcement of the divorce, will not appear unless a new factor, viz., the morrow or the entry, emerges. But if the man desires - without binding up the effect with the appearance of something which is not present at the moment - to postpone the effect, it would not be an intelligible thing, notwithstanding the fact that he has the right to make the pronouncement, and is at liberty to choose whatever details he likes. Since it is not possible for us to arrange these conventional things as we like, and since our capricious determinations are bound to be unintelligible, it follows that an arbitrary arrangement should be still less intelligible in the sphere of essential, rational and self-evident causation.

Even in the case of morals, the object of our intention is not posterior to the intention, if the intention exists, and there is no hindrance. Therefore, with intention being coupled with power, and with all obstacles having been removed, it is unintelligible that the intended thing should be delayed. Such a thing is conceivable only in the case of inclination; for inclination by itself is not sufficient to bring about an action. For instance, the mere inclination to write does not produce writing, unless there emerges an intention, i.e., an inner agitation which as a new factor precedes an action.

So if the eternal will is to be likened to our intention, it is inconceivable that its object should be posterior to it. Unless there is a hindrance, there cannot be a gap between the intention and its object. It makes no sense to have an intention today that one would stand up tomorrow. One may only have an inclination to do so. But if the eternal will is like our inclination, it shall not by itself be sufficient to bring about the object of inclination. For it is indispensable that something else - viz., the inner agitation that is intention - should emerge to supplement inclination, so that the object of inclination may be produced. But the emergence of such a thing means a change in the Eternal.

And, then, the difficulty remains as it was. Namely, why does this agitation, or intention, or will, or whatever you may like to call it, originate now, and why did it not originate before? Thus, either one must posit a temporal event which is uncaused, or an infinite regress will follow.

The sum and substance of what has been said (by you) is this : That the Cause existed; that all the conditions of its efficiency were complete, so that nothing else remained to be awaited; that, in spite of all this, the origination of the effect was postponed over a length of time, the beginning of which cannot be imagined, and which could not be measured out even by millennia ; and that eventually the effect made its appearance all of a sudden, without a new factor coming into operation, or a new condition being realized. And such a thing is intrinsically impossible.

IBN RUSHD (AVERROSE)

I say: This example of divorce based on convention seems to strengthen the argument of the philosophers, but in reality it weakens it. For it enables the Ash'arites to say: In the same way as the actual divorce is delayed after the formula of divorce till the moment when the condition of someone's entering the house, or any other, is fulfilled, so the realization of the world can be delayed after God's act of creation until the condition is fulfilled on which this realization depends, i.e. the moment when God willed it. But conventional things do not behave like rational. The Literalists, comparing these conventional things to rational, say: This divorce is not binding and does not become effective through the realization of the condition which is posterior to the pronouncement of the divorce by the divorcer, since it would be a divorce which became effective without connexion with the act of the divorcer. But in this matter there is no relation between the concept drawn from the nature of things and that which is artificial and conventional.

Then Ghazali says, on behalf of the Ash'arites

The answer to the foregoing may be stated as follows:

How do you know the impossibility of ascribing the origin of something to an eternal will? Is it the self-evident rational necessity, or theoretical knowledge, which is the ground of your judgment? Or, to use the terms employed by you in Logic, are the two terms in your judgment joined by means of a middle term, or without a middle term? If you claim that they are joined by means of a middle term - *i.e.*, if your method is deductive - you must state what that term is. But if you claim that this

impossibility is known as a self-evident fact, why do not your opponents share this knowledge with you? People who believe in the temporal origin of the world are confined neither to a number nor within a city. And no one would suspect that, out of spite for reason, they believe in something which they know to be untrue. It is, therefore, necessary for you to prove, in accordance with the rules of Logic, that it is impossible to ascribe the origin of the world to the eternal will. All you have said so far only amounts to a suggestion of improbability, and to a comparison of the Divine will to our inclination or will. The comparison is false; for the eternal will *does not* resemble temporal intentions. And the mere suggestion of improbability, unsupported by an argument, is not enough.

IBN RUSHD (AVERROSE):

I say: This argument is one of those which have only a very feeble persuasive power. It amounts to saying that one who claims the impossibility of delay in an effect, when its cause with all its conditions is realized, must assert that he knows this either by a syllogism or from first principles; if through a syllogism, he must produce it-but there is none; if from first principles, it must be known to all adversaries and others alike. But this argument is mistaken, for it is not a condition of objective truth that it should be known to all. That anything should be held by all does not imply anything more than its being a common notion, just as the existence of a common notion does not imply objective truth.

Note: I think Ghazali is right when he said:” But if you claim that this impossibility is known as a self-evident fact, why do not your opponents share this knowledge with you?”, because every self-evident fact should be popularly known by concerned group or people, just like Muslims believe in oneness of God and the Christians believe in three-in-one. Such articles of faith are very popular among Christians and Muslims, just as oneness of God is self-evident, so also the self-evident fact of the Ash’arites should be known by their adversaries.

Ghazali argues on behalf of the Ash’arites and gives answer:

If it is said:

We know by rational necessity that, if all the conditions for causal operation are complete, it is inconceivable that the cause should fail to

produce the effect. He who admits the possibility of such a thing challenges the necessity of reason.

We will answer

But, then, what is the difference between you and your opponents who said to you

"We regard it as a self-evident truth that it is impossible to say that the one Divine being possesses the knowledge of all the universals - without this knowledge necessitating plurality: without its being additional to His essence; and without its multiplying in proportion to the multiplicity of the known things"?

This position, which has been criticized above, is actually what you believe with respect to Divine knowledge. Now, if it is judged by what applies to us and to our knowledge, it will be found to be utterly impossible. But you say that eternal knowledge cannot be conceived of on the analogy of temporal knowledge.

The impossibility involved in the above-mentioned theory was felt by certain people among you. Consequently, they said that He does not know anything but Himself, and that, therefore, knowledge, knower and the known thing are all one - viz., Himself.

To this, one might take an objection as follows:

"The impossibility of the union of knowledge, the knower and the known thing is a self-evident truth. It is evidently impossible to suppose a creator who does not know his creature. And if the Eternal (exalted be He far above the words of all perverse thinkers) does not know anything but Himself, He will not know His creature."

Note: The assertion of some of the Ash'arites that God knows nothing but Himself doesn't mean He doesn't know His creatures, rather it means that His creatures are part of His knowledge which they believe to be part of His essence in order to free themselves from believing in the temporal nature of the world i.e., everything in this world is the manifestation of God. Therefore, according to them, knowledge, knower and the known thing are all one – viz., Himself.

IBN RUSHD (AVERROSE):

I say This amounts to saying that the theologians do not gratuitously and without proof deny the admitted impossibility of a delay between the effect and its cause, but base themselves on an argument which leads

them to believe in the temporal creation of the world, and that they therefore act in the same way as the philosophers, who only deny the well-known necessary plurality of knowledge and known, so far as it concerns their unity in God, because of a demonstration which, according to them, leads them to their theory about Him. And that this is still truer of those philosophers who deny it to be necessary that God should know His own work, affirming that He knows only Himself. This assertion belongs to the class of assertions whose contrary is equally false. For there exists no proof which refutes anything that is evidently true, and universally acknowledged. Anything that can be refuted by a demonstrative proof is only supposed to be true, not really true. Therefore, if it is absolutely and evidently true that knowledge and known form a plurality, both in the visible and in the invisible world, we can be sure that the philosophers cannot have a proof of this unity in God; but if the theory of the plurality of knowledge and known is only a supposition, then it is possible for the philosophers to have a proof. Equally, if it is absolutely true that the effect of a cause cannot be delayed after the causation and the Ash'arites claim that they can advance a proof to deny it, then we can be absolutely sure that they cannot have such a proof. If there is a controversy about questions like this, the final criterion rests with the sound understanding' which does not base itself on prejudice and passion, when it probes according to the signs and rules by which truth and mere opinion are logically distinguished. Likewise, if two people dispute about a sentence and one says that it is poetry, the other that it is prose, the final judgment rests with the 'sound understanding' which can distinguish poetry from prose, and with the science of prosody. And as, in the case of metre, the denial of him who denies it does not interfere with its perception by him who perceives it, so the denial of a truth by a contradictor does not trouble the conviction of the men to whom it is evident. This whole argument is extremely inept and weak, and Ghazali ought not to have filled his book with such talk if he intended to convince the learned.

Note: The philosophical war between the philosophers and Ghazali was such that one has to come out with all his weapons to face his opponents. For the spread of true Islam then and there was hinged on his victory in the war. So it was not a matter of asserting the truth and leaving the Muslims chose which one to follow, rather it was a matter of convincing them to follow the true part after asserting the truth. Therefore, he needed to prove himself beyond any reasonable doubt. This informs why he had to speak lengthily and diversify in his proof.

Self-Assessment Test:

1. Why the philosophers do not accept that knowledge and the known form plurality?
2. Ibn Rushd said: "Ghazali ought not to have filled his book with such talk if he intended to convince the learned" How can you reply him?
3. What do you understand from the assertion of some of the Ash'arites that God knows nothing but Himself?

4.0 Conclusion.

The procession of a temporal (being) from an eternal (being) is absolutely impossible

For if the world had been created, there must have been something determining its existence at the moment it was created, otherwise it would have remained in the state of pure possibility it was in before. But if there was something determining its existence, this determinant must have been determined by another determinant and so on ad infinitum, or we must accept an eternal God in whom eternally new determinations may arise. But there cannot be any new determinations in an eternal God.

The argument in this form is found in Avicenna, but its elements are Aristotelian. In Cicero's *Academics* we have a fragment of one of Aristotle's earlier and more popular writings, the lost dialogue *De philosophia*, in which he says that it is impossible that the world could ever have been generated. For how could there have been a new decision, that is a new decision in the mind of God, for such a magnificent work? St. Augustine knows this argument from Cicero and he too denies that God could have a *novum consilium*. St. Augustine is well aware of the difficulty, and he says in his *De civitate dei* that God has always existed, that after a certain time, without having changed His will, He created man, whom He had not wanted to create before, this is indeed a fact too profound for us. It also belongs to Aristotle's philosophy that in all change there is a potentiality and all potentiality needs an actualizer which exists already. In the form this argument has in Avicenna it is, however, taken from a book by a late Greek Christian commentator of Aristotle, John Philoponus, *De aeternitate mundi*, which

was directed against a book by the great Neoplatonist Proclus who had given eighteen arguments to prove the eternity of the world. Plato himself believed in the temporal creation of the world not by God Himself but by a demiurge. But later followers of Plato differed from him on this point. Amongst the post-Aristotelian schools only the Stoics assumed a periodical generation and destruction of the world. Theophrastus had already tried to refute some of the Stoic arguments for this view, and it may well be that John Philoponus made use of some Stoic sources for his defence of the temporality of the world.

To this argument Ghazali gives the following answer, which has become the classic reply for this difficulty and which has been taken from Philoponus. One must distinguish, says Philoponus, between God's eternally willing something and the eternity of the object of His Will, or, as St. Thomas will say later, 'Deus voluit ab aeterno mundus esset sed non ut ab aeterno esset'. God willed, for instance, that Socrates should be born before Plato and He willed this from eternity, so that when it was time for Plato to be born it happened. It is not difficult for Averroës to refute this argument. In willing and doing something there is more than just the decision that you will do it. You can take the decision to get up tomorrow, but the actual willing to get up can be done only at the moment you do it, and there can be no delay between the cause and the effect. There must be added to the decision to get up the impulse of the will to get up. So in God there would have to be a new impulse, and it is just this newness that has to be denied. But, says Averroës, the whole basis of this argument is wrong for it assumes in God a will like a human will. Desire and will can be understood only in a being that has a need; for the Perfect Being there can be no need, there can be no choice, for when He acts He will necessarily do the best. Will in God must have another meaning than human will.

5.0 Summary.

1- The philosophers disagree among themselves as to the eternity of the world. But the majority of the philosophers agree upon its eternity, holding that it always coexisted with God as His effect and concurrent

with Him in time as an effect is with the cause, e.g., light with the Sun - and that God's priority to the world is the priority of the cause to the effect - viz., priority in essence and rank, not in time.

2- The world came into being because of the eternal Will which demanded its existence at the time at which it actually came into existence, and which demanded the non-existence (of the world) to last as long as it lasted, and (demanded) the existence to begin where it actually began?. So, on this view, existence of the world was not an object of the eternal Will, before the world actually existed; hence its non-actualization. And it was an object of the will at the time when it was actualized.

3- Before the existence of the world, the Willer existed: the will existed, and the relation of the will to its object existed. The Willer did not have to make a new appearance: nor did the will emerge as a new acquisition, nor did it acquire a new relation to its object. For anything of this kind would amount to change. How, then, did the object of will emerge as something new? And what prevented it from emerging before it actually did? The state of its new-emergence cannot be distinguished from the preceding states in respect of anything.

4- By rational necessity, if all the conditions for causal operation are complete, it is inconceivable that the cause should fail to produce the effect. He who admits the possibility of such a thing challenges the necessity of reason.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Explain what the philosophers mean by positing that the procession of a temporal (being) from an eternal (being) is absolutely impossible.
2. The philosophers believe that temporal cannot proceed from the Eternal otherwise the question of possibility of existence before the existence of the temporal will ensue. Explain how Ibn Rushed considered the question of possibility and determinant.
3. Explain the real problem with philosophers' theory of the eternity of the world?

7.0 References and Further Readings

Al-Ghazali, A. H, (1058-1111 CE), *Tahafut al-falasifa*. See the parallel English-Arabic edition, [hereafter *Tahafut*], translated, introduced and annotated by Michael E. Marmura (2000), Brigham Young University Press, Provo, Utah.

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UNIT 2: The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world (the first argument)

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3.0Main content

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6.0Tutor Marked Assignment.

7.0Reference/Further Reading.

1.0Introduction:

In the previous unit you learnt that majority of the philosophers - ancient as well as modern-agree upon the eternity of the world, holding that it always coexisted with God (exalted be He) as His effect which was concurrent with Him in time – as concurrent as an effect is with the cause, e.g., light with the Sun - and that God's priority to the world is the priority of the cause to the effect - viz., priority in essence and rank, not in time. In this you unit you are going to read about an argument that Ghazali put forward in refutation of eternity of the world. The argument says that the eternity of world is impossible because it leads to affirmation of infinite spherical revolution which are scientifically proved to be finite in accordance to their sizes and speeds.

2.0 Objectives:

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- a) Give your own opinion about the argument of Ghazali that eternity of the world leads to affirmation of infinite spherical revolutions.
- b) Present the answer of Ibn Rushd about question of Ghazali concerning whether spherical revolutions are even or odd or both or neither.
- c) State the reply of Ibn Rushd to the proposition of Ghazali that the soul is example of a creature which is neither even nor odd.

3.0 Main content

3.1 Continuation of the First Objection of the first argument.

IBN RUSHED

And drawing consequences which are irrelevant and beside the point,

Ghazali goes on to say:

But now to recur to the criticism of this question, we will say:

How will you disprove your opponents if they say: "The eternity of the world is impossible? Because it leads to the affirmation of spherical revolutions which are infinite in number, and consist of innumerable units. The fact is that these revolutions can be divided into one-sixth, or one-fourth, or a half. For instance, the sphere of the Sun completes one revolution in one year, while that of Saturn makes one in thirty years.

Therefore, the revolutions of Saturn are one-thirtieth of those of the Sun. And the revolutions of Jupiter are one-twelfth of those of the Sun, for Jupiter completes one revolution in twelve years"?

You maintain that, in spite of the fact that the revolutions of Saturn are one-thirtieth of the Sun, they are equally infinite. Nay, you would assert that the revolutions of the Stellar Sphere, each of which takes thirty-six thousand years, are as infinite as the East-West movement of the Sun, which takes only a day and night. If someone says that this is an impossible thing, and that its impossibility is self-evident, how will you silence his criticism?

Even so, one might ask whether the number of these revolutions is odd or even, or both, or neither. If you say that it is both odd and even, or that it is neither odd nor even, it will be an evidently absurd thing. But if you say that it is even, the addition of one would make the even odd. How could it be that that which is infinite lacked just one? If you say that it is odd, again the addition of one would make the odd even. How could it be that that which is infinite lacked just one which would have made it even? It follows that you are bound to hold that the number is neither odd nor even.

IBN RUSHD

I say: This is in brief that, if you imagine two circular movements in one and the same finite time and imagine then a limited part of these movements in one and the same finite time, the proportion between the parts of these two circular movements and between their wholes will be the same. For instance, if the circular movement of Saturn in the period which we call a year is a thirtieth of the circular movement of the sun in this period, and you imagine the whole of the circular movements of the sun in proportion to the whole of the circular movements of Saturn in one and the same period, necessarily the proportion between their wholes and between their parts will be the same. If, however, there is no proportion between two movements in their totality, because they are both potential, i.e. they have neither beginning nor end but there exists a proportion between the parts, because they are both actual, then the proportion between the wholes is not necessarily the same as the proportion between the parts-although many think so, basing their proof on this prejudice -for there is no proportion between two magnitudes or quantities which are both taken to be infinite. When, therefore, the ancients believed that, for instance, the totality of the movements of the sun and of Saturn had neither beginning nor end,

there could be no proportion between them, for this would have implied the finitude of both these totalities, just as this is implied for the parts of both. This is self-evident. Our adversaries believe that, when a proportion of more and less exists between parts, this proportion holds good also for the totalities, but this is only binding when the totalities are finite. For where there is no end there is neither 'more' nor 'less'. The admission in such a case of the proportion of more and less brings with it another absurd consequence, namely that one infinite could be greater than another. This is only absurd when one supposes two things actually infinite, for then a proportion does not exist between them. When, however, one imagines things potentially infinite, there exists no proportion at all. This is the right answer to this question, not what Ghazali says in the name of the philosophers. And through this are solved all the difficulties which beset our adversaries on this question, of which the greatest is that which they habitually formulate in this way: If the movements in the past are infinite, then no movement in the actual present can take place, unless an infinite number of preceding movements is terminated. This is true, and acknowledged by the philosophers, once granted that the anterior movement is the condition for the posterior movements taking place, i.e. once granted that the existence of one single movement implies an infinite number of causes. But no philosopher allows the existence of an infinite number of causes, as accepted by the materialists, for this would imply the existence of an effect without cause and a motion without mover. But when the existence of an eternal prime mover had been proved, whose act cannot be posterior to his being, it followed that there could as little be a beginning for his act as for his being; otherwise his act would be possible, not necessary, and he would not be a first principle.' The acts of an agent who has no beginning have a beginning as little as his existence, and therefore it follows necessarily that no preceding act of his is the condition for the existence of a later, for neither of them is an agent by itself and their sequence is accidental. An accidental infinite, not an essential infinite, is admitted by the philosophers; nay, this type of infinite is in fact a necessary consequence of the existence of an eternal first principle., And this is not only true for successive or continuous movements and the like, but even where the earlier is regarded as the cause of the later, for instance the man who engenders a man like himself. For it is necessary that the series of temporal productions of one individual man by another should lead upwards to an eternal agent, for whom there is no beginning either of his existence or

of his production of man out of man. The production of one man by another ad infinitum is accidental, whereas the relation of before and after in it is essential. The agent, who has no beginning either for his existence or for those acts of his which he performs without an instrument, has no first instrument either to perform those acts of his without beginning which by their nature need an instrument. But since the theologians mistook the accidental for the essential, they denied this eternal agent; the solution of their problem was difficult and they believed this proof to be stringent. But this theory of the philosophers is clear, and their first master Aristotle has explained that, if motion were produced by motion, or element by element, motion and element could not exist. For this type of infinite the philosophers admit neither a beginning nor an end, and therefore one can never say of anything in this series that it has ended or has begun, not even in the past, for everything that has an end must have begun and what does not begin does not end. This can also be understood from the fact that beginning and end are correlatives. Therefore one who affirms that there is no end of the celestial revolutions in the future cannot logically ascribe a beginning to them, for what has a beginning has an end and what has no end has no beginning, and the same relation exists between first and last; i.e. what has a first term has also a last term, and what has no first term has no last term, and there is in reality neither end nor beginning for any part of a series that has no last term, and what has no beginning for any of its parts has no end for any of them either. When, therefore, the theologians ask the philosophers if the movements which precede the present one are ended, their answer is negative, for their assumption that they have no beginning implies their endlessness. The opinion of the theologians that the philosophers admit their end is erroneous; for they do not admit an end for what has no beginning.' It will be clear to you that neither the arguments of the theologians for the temporal creation of the world of which Ghazali speaks, nor the arguments of the philosophers which he includes and describes in his book, suffice to reach absolute evidence or afford stringent proof. And this is what we have tried to show in this book. The best answer one can give to him who asks where in the past is the starting-point of His acts, is: The starting-point of His acts is at the starting point of His existence; for neither of them has a beginning. And here is the passage of Ghazali in which he sets forth the defence of the philosophers against the argument built on the difference in speed of the celestial spheres, and his refutation of their argument.

Ghazali speaks on behalf of the philosophers and provides Answer:

If it is said:

The finite alone is described as odd or even. That which is infinite cannot be so described.

We will answer:

If there is totality which is composed of units, and which-as we saw above-can be divided into one-sixth, one tenth, etc. ; and if still it cannot be described as odd or even, then we must call it a self-evident absurdity, to prove which point we need not advance any rational argument. How will you answer this criticism?

IBN RUSHD

And here is the passage of Ghazali in which he sets forth the defence of the philosophers against the argument built on the difference in speed of the celestial spheres, and his refutation of their argument.

Ghazali speaks on behalf of the philosophers and provides Answer:

If it is said:

Error lies in your words: 'A totality composed of units.' As a matter of fact, the revolutions of the sphere are nonexistent. Those which took place in the past are gone; while those which will take place in the future are yet to be produced. The word "Totality" points to beings which are present here and now. But in this case no such being is to be found.

We will answer:

A number is bound to be either odd or even. It is impossible that it should fall outside these two categories regardless of the fact whether the numbered thing is a being which exists, or has perished. For instance, if we suppose a number of horses, we are bound to believe that it is either an odd or an even number. It makes no difference whether we suppose the horses to be existing, or not to be existing. Or, if the horses perished after having existed, this judgment would not be changed.

IBN RUSHD (AVERROSE):

I say: This is the end of his argument. But this argument-that the numbered thing must be judged as even or uneven, whether it exists or not-is only valid so far as it concerns external things or things in the soul

that have a beginning and an end. For of the number which exists only potentially, i.e. which has neither beginning nor end, it cannot truly be said that it is even or uneven, or that it begins or ends; it happens neither in the past nor in the future, for what exists potentially falls under the law of non-existence. This is what the philosophers meant when they said that the circular movements of the past and the future are non-existent. The upshot of this question is: Everything that is called a limited aggregate with a beginning and an end is so called either because it has a beginning and end in the world exterior to the soul, or because it is inside, not outside, the soul. Every totality, actual and limited in the past, whether inside or outside the soul, is necessarily either even or uneven. But an unlimited aggregate existing outside the soul cannot be other than limited so far as it is represented in the soul, for the soul cannot represent unlimited existence. Therefore also this unlimited aggregate, as being limited in the soul, can be called even or uneven; in so far, however, as it exists outside the soul, it can be called neither even nor uneven. Equally, past aggregates which are considered to exist potentially outside the soul, i.e. which have no beginning, cannot be called even or uneven unless they are looked upon as actual, i.e. as having beginning and end. No motion possesses totality or forms an aggregate, i.e. is provided with a beginning or an end, except in so far as it is in the soul, as is the case with time.' And it follows from the nature of circular movement that it is neither even nor uneven except as represented in the soul. The cause of this mistake is that it was believed that, when something possesses a certain quality in the soul, it must possess this quality also outside the soul, and, since anything that has happened in the past can only be represented in the soul as finite, it was thought that everything that has happened in the past must also be finite outside the soul. And as the circular movements of the future are regarded by the imagination as infinite, for it represents them as a sequence of part after part, Plato and the Ash'arites believed that they might be infinite, but this is simply a judgement based on imagination, not on proof. Therefore, those who believe-as many theologians have done that- if the world is supposed to have begun, it must have an end, are truer to their principles and show more consistency.

3.2 Ghazali uses the absurdity of Philosophers opinion about the soul against them

Ghazali says after this:

Besides, we will say to them: Even according to your own principles, it is not impossible that there should be discrete individual existents, who are infinite in number and describable, each by itself. The souls of men whom death has separated from the body are such beings. And they are beings whose number is not described as odd or even. How will you disprove a man who says that such a thing is a self-evident absurdity? How can you show that this criticism is different from your own rejection, on grounds of rational necessity, of the explanation of the temporal origin of the world by reference to the eternal will? And this opinion about the souls is the one adopted by Ibn Sina; and perhaps it is Aristotle's view, too.

IBN RUSHD (AVERROSE):

I say: This argument is extremely weak. It says, in brief, 'You philosophers need not refute our assertion that what is a logical necessity for you is not necessary, as you consider things possible which your adversaries consider impossible by the necessity of thought. That is to say, just as you consider things possible which your adversaries consider impossible, so you consider things necessary which your adversaries do not consider so. And you cannot bring a criterion for judging the two claims.' It has already been shown in the science of logic that this is a weak rhetorical or sophistical kind of argument. The answer is that what we claim to be necessarily true is objectively true, whereas what you claim as necessarily absurd is not as you claim it to be. For this there is no other criterion than immediate intuitive apprehension, just as, when one man claims that a line is rhythmical and another denies it, the criterion is the intuition of the sound understanding. As for the thesis of a numerical plurality of immaterial souls, this is not a theory acknowledged by the philosophers, for they regard matter as the cause of numerical plurality and form as the cause of congruity in numerical plurality. And that there should be a numerical plurality without matter, having one unique form, is impossible. For in its description one individual can only be distinguished from another accidentally, as there is often another individual who participates in this descriptions but only through their matter do individuals differ in reality. And also this: the impossibility of an actual infinite is an acknowledged axiom in philosophical theory, equally valid for material and immaterial things. We do not know of anyone who makes a distinction here between the spatial and the non-spatial, with the single exception of Avicenna. I do not know of any other philosopher who affirms this, it does not correspond with any of their principles and it makes no sense, for the

philosophers deny the existence of an actual infinite equally for material and for immaterial things, as it would imply that one infinite could be greater than another. Perhaps Avicenna wanted only to satisfy the masses, telling them what they were accustomed to hear about the soul. But this theory is far from satisfactory. For if there were an actual infinite and it were divided in two, the part would equal the whole; e.g. if there were a line or a number actually infinite in both directions and it were divided in two, both the parts and the whole would be actually infinite; and this is absurd. All this is simply the consequence of the admission of an actual and not potential infinite.

Ghazali says:

If it is said:

The true opinion about the souls is the one held by Plato. Plato thought that the soul is eternal: that, although one by nature, it gets divided when it is related to bodies; and that, after its separation from bodies, it returns to its original character, and is reunified.

We will answer:

This is even more obnoxious; and there is greater reason why it should be rejected as contrary to rational necessity. Let us say: Is the soul of Zayd identical with that of 'Amr, or other than it? If it is identical, it would be a self-evident absurdity. For each one of the two is conscious of himself, knowing that he is not the same as any other. If the souls were the same, they would be equal in respect of cognitions which are the essential attributes of the souls, and which enter into all the relations of the soul. But if you say that the soul of Zayd is other than that of 'Amr, and that the duality is the result of the division necessitated by the relation of the two souls to bodies, we will say: The division of that which is - one, and which possesses no magnitude or quantity, is evidently impossible. How can that which is one become two, nay, a thousand, and then regain its oneness? Such a thing is conceivable in the case of that which has magnitude and quantity. For instance, the water of the ocean is divided into streams and rivers, and then returns to the ocean. But how can that which has no quantity be divided?

The purpose of all this is to show that they cannot render it untenable for their opponents to believe in the origination of the world by the eternal will, unless they claim that such a thing is contrary to rational

necessity. But when a similar claim is made by their critics to refute their own beliefs, it will not be possible for them to silence that criticism. And this is, therefore, an inescapable position.

IBN RUSHD:

I say: Zaid and Amr are numerically different, but identical in form. If, for example, the soul of Zaid were numerically different from the soul of Amr in the way Zaid is numerically different from Amr, the soul of Zaid and the soul of Amr would be numerically two, but one in their form, and the soul would possess another soul. The necessary conclusion is therefore that the soul of Zaid and the soul of Amr are identical in their form. An identical form inheres in a numerical, i.e. a divisible, multiplicity, only through the multiplicity of matter. If then the soul does not die when the body dies, or if it possesses an immortal element, it must, when it has left the bodies, form a numerical unity. But this is not the place to go deeper into this subject. His argument against Plato is sophistical. It says in short that the soul of Zaid is either identical with the soul of Amr or different from it; but that the soul of Zaid is not identical with the soul of Amr and that therefore it is different from it. But 'different' is an equivocal term, and 'identity' too is predicated of a number of things which are also called 'different'. The souls of Zaid and Amr are one in one sense and many in another; we might say, one in relation to their form, many in relation to their substratum. His remark that division can only be imagined of the quantitative is partially false; it is true of essential division, but not of accidental division, i.e. of those things which can be divided, because they exist in the essentially divisible. The essentially divisible is, for example, body; accidental division is, for instance, the division of whiteness, when the bodies in which it is present are divided, and in this way the forms and the soul are accidentally divisible, i.e. through the division of the substrate. The soul is closely similar to light: light is divided by the division of illuminated bodies, and is unified when the bodies are annihilated, and this same relation holds between soul and bodies. To advance such sophistical arguments is dishonest, for it may be supposed that he is not a man to have overlooked the points mentioned. What he said, he said only to flatter the masses of his times, but how far removed is such an attitude from the character of those who seek to set forth the truth! But perhaps the man may be forgiven on account of the time and place in

which he lived; and indeed he only proceeded in his books in a tentative way.

And as these arguments carry no evidence whatsoever,

Ghazali says:

We want to show by all this that the philosophers cannot shake the conviction of their adversaries that the eternal Will is connected with temporal creation, by claiming its absurdity by the necessity of thought, and that therefore they do not distinguish themselves from the theologians, who make the same claim against the philosophical doctrines opposed to theirs. And out of this there is no issue.

IBN RUSHD: I say:

When someone denies a truth of which it is absolutely certain that it is such-and-such, there exists no argument by which we can come to an understanding with him; for every argument is based on known premises about which both adversaries agree. When each point advanced is denied by the adversary, discussion with him becomes impossible, but such people stand outside the pale of humanity and have to be educated. But for him who denies an evident truth, because of a difficulty which presents itself to him there is a remedy, i.e. the solution of this difficulty. He who does not understand evident truth, because he is lacking in intelligence, cannot be taught anything, nor can he be educated. It is like trying to make the blind imagine colours or know their existence

Ghazali says:

If it is said

This may be turned against you. For, it might be asked: Did God have the power, before the creation of the world, to create it one year or two years earlier than he did? Since His power is infinite, it appears that He held Himself in patience, and did not create the world. But when at last He created it, are we to call the period of not-creating finite, or infinite? If you say that it was finite, it will follow that the being of the Creator was at first measurable in terms of finitude. But if you say that it was infinite, you will have ignored the fact that this period which contained infinite possibilities did come to an end.

We will answer:

We believe that periods (of time) and time (itself) are created. However, when we deal with their second argument, we will show what the real answer to this (objection) is.

IBN RUSHD (AVERROSE):

I say: Most people who accept a temporal creation of the world believe time to have been created with it. Therefore his assertion that the duration of His inactivity was either limited or unlimited is untrue. For what has no beginning does not finish or end. And the opponent does not admit that the inactivity has any duration at all. What one has to ask them about the consequences of their theory is: Is it possible, when the creation of time is admitted, that the term of its beginning may lie beyond the real time in which we live? If they answer that it is not possible, they posit a limited extension beyond which the Creator cannot pass, and this is, in their view, shocking and absurd. If, however, they concede that its possible beginning may lie beyond the moment of its created term, it may further be asked if there may not lie another term beyond this second. If they answer in the affirmative-and they cannot do otherwise-it will be said: Then we shall have here a possible creation of an infinite number of durations, and you will be forced to admit-according to your argument about the spherical revolutions-that their termination is a condition for the real age which exists since them. If you say what is infinite does not finish, the arguments you use about the spherical revolutions against your opponents your opponents will use against you on the subject of the possibility of created durations. If it is objected that the difference between those two cases is that these infinite possibilities belong to extensions which do not become actual, whereas the spherical revolutions do become actual, the answer is that the possibilities of things belong to their necessary accidents and that it does not make any difference, according to the philosophers, if they precede these things or are simultaneous with them, for of necessity they are the dispositions of things. If it is impossible that before the existence of the present spherical revolution there should have been infinite spherical revolutions, then the existence of infinite possible revolutions is equally impossible. If one wants to avoid these consequences, one can say that the age of the world is a definite quantity and cannot be longer or shorter than it is, in conformity with the philosophical doctrine about the size of the world. Therefore these arguments are not stringent, and the safest way for him who accepts the temporal creation of the world is to regard time as of a definite extension and not to admit a possibility which precedes the possible;

and to regard also the spatial extension of the world as finite. Only, spatial extension forms a simultaneous whole; not so time. Ghazali expounds a certain kind of argument attributed to the philosophers on this subject against the theologians when they denied that the impossibility of delay in the Creator's act after His existence is known by primitive intuition.

Ghazali says:

If it is said

How will you disprove one who gives up the argument from rational necessity, and tries to prove (the eternity of the world) from another point of view - namely, that all the moments being equal with respect to the possibility of the relation of the eternal will to them, there cannot be anything to distinguish one particular moment from all those before and after it?

Maybe, it is not impossible for priority or posteriority to have been an object of will, but how about white and black, or motion and rest? You say that white owes its origin to the eternal will, and that the substratum which actually receives whiteness was equally capable of receiving blackness. Now, why does the eternal will take whiteness, as set over against blackness? What is there to distinguish one of the two contingent things from the other, so that it should be taken by the eternal will?

We know it as a self-evident fact that nothing can be distinguished from its like, unless there be something which gives it a special character. If without such a thing a distinction between two like things were possible, then it would follow that in the case of the world, which was possible of existence as well as of non-existence, the balance could be tilted in favour of existence - notwithstanding the fact that non-existence possessed an equal measure of possibility, and that there was nothing to give existence a special character. If you say that the will (itself) produced the special character, the question will be: Why did it acquire the capacity to produce it? If you say that in the case of an eternal thing the question: Why? Cannot be asked, then let the world be such an eternal thing. Do not look for the Creator or the cause of the world; for it is eternal, and in the case of an eternal thing the question: Why? is not to be asked.

If it were possible for the Eternal to acquire a special relation to one of the two contingencies, then it would be absolutely untenable to say that the world, - which has a particular shape at present, could possibly have some other shape instead of the present one. For then one might say "This (shape) has come into being by chance"; even as you might say that the will makes by chance the choice of only one moment of time, or of only one shape. If you say that such a question is irrelevant because it might be asked in the case of anything willed or determined by Him, we will say that it must be faced precisely because it arises in any event, and will necessarily present itself to our opponents, whatever their supposition may be.

We will answer:

The (eternal) will produced the world as it is, wherever it is, and whatever it is like. As regards the will, it is an attribute of which the function is to distinguish something from its like. If it had no such function, then power would have had to be regarded as an adequate principle. But since power bears an equal relation to two opposite things, and since it becomes necessary to posit a cause which gives one of these two things a special character, therefore, it must be said that, over and above power, the Eternal has an attribute whose function is to distinguish something from its like. Therefore, if one asks: "Why did the will choose one of two like things?" it will be like asking: "Why does knowledge require the encompassing of the object of knowledge as such?" As the answer to the last question is: "Knowledge is an attribute of which this is the function," so the answer to the first question should be "Will is an attribute of which the function - rather, nature - is to distinguish something from its like."

If it is said

It is unintelligible - rather, self-contradictory - to speak of an attribute of which the function is to distinguish something from its like. For by likeness is meant that there is no distinction; and by distinction is meant that there is no likeness. It is not proper to imagine that two black things in two different places are like each other in all respects, for 'This' is in one place, and 'That' is in another place; hence the necessity for the distinction between the two. Nor can two black things in the same place but at different times be absolutely like each other. For 'This' is separated from 'That' in time; how, therefore, can the two be equal in all

respects? When we say: "Two black things like each other," we mean that they are alike only in respect of the particular attribute of blackness. We do not mean that they are so in an unqualified sense. For if that were the meaning, and if the identity of time and place had left no dissimilarity, then the two black things would not be intelligible, and their duality would be absolutely irrational.

The question will be settled when it is seen that the word 'will' is derived by analogy from our own will. And our will cannot conceivably distinguish something from its like. If a thirsty man has before him two glasses of water, which are equal in all respects as far as his purpose is concerned, he cannot take either of the two, unless he thinks that one of the two is prettier, or lighter, or nearer to his right hand (he presumably being a man who habitually uses his right hand), or has some other cause - apparent or invisible - which gives it a special character. Otherwise, the choice of something as distinguished from another exactly like it would in no event be conceivable.

Self-Assessment Test:

1. Differentiate between power and will according to the philosophers.
2. What is wrong with philosophers understanding of Will according to Ghazli.
3. What is the source of the argument between the philosopher and Ghazli about the presence of an attribute of which the function is to distinguish something from its like.

4.0 Conclusion:

We shall conclude this unit in the way Ibn Rushd concluded it. For he said that what Ghazali relates in this section of the proofs of the philosophers for the impossibility of a temporal proceeding from an eternal agent is that in God there cannot be a will. The philosophers could only arrive at this argument after granting to their opponents that all opposites in time like anterior and posterior, as well as those in quality, like white and black-are equivalent in relation to the eternal Will. And also non-existence and existence are, according to the theologians, equivalent in relation to the Divine Will. And having granted their opponents this premise, although they did not acknowledge its truth, they said to them: It is of the nature of will that it cannot give preponderance to one thing rather than to a similar one, except through a differentiating principle and a cause which only exist in one of these

two similar things; if not, one of the two would happen by chance-and the philosophers argued for the sake of discussion, as if they had conceded that, if the Eternal had a will, a temporal could proceed from an eternal. As the theologians were unable to give a satisfactory answer, they took refuge in the theory that the eternal Will is a quality the nature of which is to differentiate between two similar things, without there being for God a differentiating principle which inclines Him to one of two similar acts; that the eternal Will is thus a quality like warmth which gives heat or like knowledge which comprehends the knowable. But their opponents, the philosophers, answered: It is impossible that this should happen, for two similar things are equivalent for the willer, and his action can only attach itself to the one rather than to the other through their being dissimilar, i.e. through one's having a quality the other has not. When, however, they are similar in every way and when for God there is no differentiating principle at all, His Will will attach itself to both of them indifferently and, when this is the case-His will being the cause of His act-the act will not attach itself to the one rather than to the other, it will attach itself either to the two contrary actions simultaneously or to neither of them at all, and both cases are absurd. The philosophers, therefore, began their argument, as if they had it granted to them that all things were equivalent in relation to the First Agent, and they forced them to admit that there must be for God a differentiating principle which precedes Him, which is absurd. When the theologians answered that Will is a quality the nature of which is to differentiate the similar from the similar, in so far as it is similar, the philosophers objected that this is not understood or meant by the idea of Will. They therefore appear to reject the principle which they granted them in the beginning.' This is in short the content of this section. It waves the argument from the original question to the problem of the will; to shift one's ground; however, is an act of sophistry.

5.0Summary

1- Ghazali ask a question: "How will you disprove your opponents if they say: "The eternity of the world is impossible? Because it leads to the affirmation of spherical revolutions which are infinite in number, and consist of innumerable units." But is like Ibn Rushd didn't have an answer to this question as he concentrates on the second question which says: "Even so, one might ask whether the number of these revolutions is odd or even, or both, or neither?"

2- Ibn Rushd replies: "This is only absurd when one supposes two things actually infinite, for then a proportion does not exist between them. When, however, one imagines things potentially infinite, there exists no proportion at all. This is the right answer to this question"

3- Ghazali: A number is bound to be either odd or even. It is impossible that it should fall outside these two categories regardless of the fact whether the numbered thing is a being which exists, or has perished."

4- Ibn Rushd: "But this argument-that the numbered thing must be judged as even or uneven, whether it exists or not-is only valid so far as it concerns external things or things in the soul that have a beginning and an end. For of the number which exists only potentially, i.e. which has neither beginning nor end, it cannot truly be said that it is even or uneven."

5- Ghazali: "The souls of men whom death has separated from the body are such beings. And they are beings whose number is not described as odd or even. How will you disprove a man who says that such a thing is a self-evident absurdity?"

6- Ibn Rushd: "As for the thesis of a numerical plurality of immaterial souls, this is not a theory acknowledged by the philosophers, for they regard matter as the cause of numerical plurality and form as the cause of congruity in numerical plurality. And that there should be a numerical plurality without matter, having one unique form, is impossible."

7- Ghazali: "Did God have the power, before the creation of the world, to create it one year or two years earlier than he did?"

8- ibn rushd: "Most people who accept a temporal creation of the world believe time to have been created with it. Therefore his assertion that the duration of His inactivity was either limited or unlimited is untrue. For what has no beginning does not finish or end."

6.0Tutor Marked Assignment.

1. Why did the opponents of the philosophers posit that eternity is impossible?
2. "For where there is no end there is neither 'more' nor 'less'." Explain what Ibn Rushd mean by this statement.
3. Ghazali said: "Error lies in your words: 'A totality composed of units.'" Which error did he refer to?

7.0 References and Further Readings

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UNIT 3: The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world (the first argument)

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1.0 Introduction

In the previous unit you read about an argument that Ghazali put forward in refutation of eternity of the world. The argument says that the eternity of world is impossible because it leads to affirmation of infinite spherical revolution which are scientifically proved to be finite in accordance to their sizes and speeds. In this unit, you will learn how Ghazali was able to defend the theological doctrine of the Divine Will as postulated by the theologians.

2.0 Objectives

By the end of this unit you will be able to:

- a) Summarize the two points raised by Ghazali in defence of the Divine Will.
- b) Criticize the viewpoints raised by Ghazali.
- c) Summarise Ibn Rushd counter viewpoints.

3.0 Main content

3.1 Defence of the theological doctrine of the Divine Will:

3.1.1 The First Point of View:

Ghazali answers in defence of the theological doctrine of the Divine Will:

Objection to this from two points of view:

Firstly, is your assertion that such a thing is inconceivable based on self-evident facts, or on theoretical investigations? In fact, it is not possible for you to make either claim. Your comparison of the Divine to human will is as false an analogy as that between the Divine and human knowledge. The Divine knowledge is different from ours in respect of things which we have established. Why, therefore, should it be improbable for a similar difference to exist in the case of will? Your assertion is like one's saying: "A being which is neither outside the world nor inside it: neither connected with it nor disconnected from it is unintelligible; for if such qualities were attributed to us, we would not understand them." To such a person the answer would be: "This is the work of your imagination. Actually, rational proof has compelled the intelligent to assent to that doctrine." How, therefore, will you disprove one who says that rational proof also compels one to affirm an attribute of God (exalted be He) of which the function is to distinguish something from its like? If the word 'Will' cannot name this attribute, let us use another name, for names are not at issue at the moment. We had used the word 'will' on the authority of the Sacred Law. Etymologically, however, 'will' signifies something directed towards a purpose. In the case of God, we cannot speak of a purpose. What, however, we are concerned with is the meaning, and not the words.

Besides, we do not admit that even our will cannot conceivably make a distinction between two like things. Let us suppose that there are two equal dates before a man who is fond of them, but who cannot take both of them at once. So he will take only one of them; and this, obviously, will be done - by an attribute of which the function is to distinguish something from its like! As regards the causes of a special character being possessed by the object of actual choice - viz., the causes mentioned by you, such as prettiness, or nearness, or handiness - we can suppose their absence; and still the possibility of one of the two dates being taken will remain. Here you will have to choose one of the two things:

(i) Either you can say that the equal relation of a man's purpose to the two dates is inconceivable. But that is nonsense; for the equality can be supposed.

(ii) Or you might say that, the equality having been supposed, the excited man will keep fondly and helplessly gazing on forever, and will not be able to take either date by mere will or choice which is devoid of purpose. But this is also impossible; and the absurdity of such an assumption is self-evident.

From all this it follows that whoever discusses the nature of volitional action - whether with reference to empirical facts, or on theoretical grounds - will have to affirm an attribute of which the function should be to distinguish something from its like.

IBN RUSHD (AVERROSE):

I say: This objection can be summarized in two parts: In the first Ghazali concedes that the human will is such that it is unable to differentiate one thing from a similar one, in so far as it is similar, but that a rational proof forces us to accept the existence of such a quality in the First Agent. To believe that such a quality cannot exist would be like believing that there cannot exist a being who is neither inside nor outside the world. According to this reasoning, will, which is attributed to the First Agent and to man, is predicated in an equivocal way, like knowledge and other qualities which exist in the Eternal in a different way from that in which they exist in the temporal, and it is only through the prescription of the Divine Law that we speak of the Divine Will. It is clear that this objection cannot have anything more than a dialectical value. For a proof that could demonstrate the existence of such a quality, i.e. a principle determining the existence of one thing rather than that of a similar, would have to assume things willed that are similar; things willed are, however, not similar, but on the contrary opposite, for all opposites can be reduced to the opposition of being and not being, which is the extreme form of opposition; and opposition is the contrary of similarity. The assumption of the theologians that the things to which the will attaches itself are similar is a false one, and we shall speak of it later. If they say: we affirm only that they are similar in relation to the First Wilier, who in His holiness is too exalted to possess desires, and it is through desires that two similar things are actually differentiated, we answer: as to the desires whose realization contributes to the perfection of the essence of the wilier, as happens with our desires, through which our will attaches itself to the things willed-those desires are impossible in God, for the will which acts in this way is longing for perfection when there is an imperfection in the essence of the wilier; but as to the desires which belong to the essence of the things willed, nothing new comes to

the willer from their realization. It comes exclusively to the thing willed, for instance, when a thing passes into existence from non-existence, for it cannot be doubted that existence is better for it than non-existence. It is in this second way that the Primal Will is related to the existing things, for it chooses for them eternally the better of two opposites, and this essentially and primally. This is the first part of the objection contained in this argument.

In the second part he no longer concedes that this quality cannot exist in the human will, but tries to prove that there is also in us, in the face of similar things, a will which distinguishes one from the other; of this he gives examples. For instance, it is assumed that in front of a man there are two dates, similar in every way, and it is supposed that he cannot take them both at the same time. It is supposed that no special attraction need be imagined for him in either of them, and that nevertheless he will of necessity distinguish one of them by taking it. But this is an error. For, when one supposes such a thing, and a willer whom necessity prompts to eat or to take the date, then it is by no means a matter of distinguishing between two similar things when, in this condition, he takes one of the two dates. It is nothing but the admission of equivalence of two similar things; for whichever of the two dates he may take, his aim will be attained and his desire satisfied. His will attaches itself therefore merely to the distinction between the fact of taking one of them and the fact of leaving them altogether; it attaches itself by no means to the act of taking one definite date and distinguishing this act from the act of leaving the other (that is to say, when it is assumed that the desires for the two are equal); he does not prefer the act of taking the one to the act of taking the other, but he prefers the act of taking one of the two, whichever it may be, and he gives a preference to the act of taking over the act of leaving.' This is self-evident. For distinguishing one from the other means giving a preference to the one over the other, and one cannot give a preponderance to one of two similar things in so far as it is similar to the other-although in their existence as individuals they are not similar since each of two individuals is different from the other by reason of a quality exclusive to it. If, therefore, we assume that the will attaches itself to that special character of one of them, then it can be imagined that the will attaches to the.-one rather than the other because of the element of difference existing in both. But then the will does not attach itself to two similar objects, in so far as they are similar. This is, in short, the meaning of Ghazali's first objection. Then he gives his second objection against

those who deny the existence of a quality, distinguishing two similar objects from one another.

Ghazali says: The second objection is that we say: You in your system also are unable to do without a principle differentiating between two equals, for the world exists in virtue of a cause which has produced it in its peculiar shape out of a number of possible distinct shapes which are equivalent; why, then, has this cause differentiated some of them? If to distinguish two similar things is impossible, it is irrelevant whether this concerns the act of God, natural causality, or the logical necessity of ideas. Perhaps you will say: the universal order of the world could not be different from what it is; if the world were smaller or bigger than it actually is, this order would not be perfect, and the same may be asserted of the number of spheres and of stars. And perhaps you will say: The big differs from the small and the many from the few, in so far as they are the object of the will, and therefore they are not similar but different; but human power is too feeble to perceive the modes of Divine Wisdom in its determination of the measures and qualities of things; only in some of them can His wisdom be perceived, as in the obliquity of the ecliptic in relation to the equator, and in the wise contrivance of the apogee and the eccentric sphere.' In most cases, however, the secret is not revealed, but the differences are known, and it is not impossible that a thing should be distinguished from another, because the order of the world depends on it; but certainly the times are absolutely indifferent in relation to the world's possibility and its order, and it cannot be claimed that, if the world were created one moment later or earlier, this order could not be imagined; and this indifference is known by the necessity of thought.- But then we answer: Although we can employ the same reasoning against your argument in the matter of different times, for it might be said that God created the world at the time most propitious for its creation, we shall not limit ourselves to this refutation, but shall assume, according to your own principle, a differentiation in two points about which there can be no disagreement: (1) the difference in the direction of spherical movement; (2) the definite place of the poles in relation to the ecliptic in spherical movement. The proof of the statement relating to the poles is that heaven is a globe, moving on two poles, as on two immovable points, whereas the globe of heaven is homogeneous and simple, especially the highest sphere, the ninth, which possesses no stars at all, and these two spheres move on two poles, the north and the south. We now say: of all the opposite points, which are infinite, according to you philosophers, there is no pair

one could not imagine as poles. Why then have the two points of the north and south pole been fixed upon as poles and as immovable; and why does the ecliptic not pass through these two poles, so that the poles would become the opposite points of the ecliptic? And if wisdom is shown in the size and shape of heaven, what then distinguishes the place of the poles from others, so that they are fixed upon to serve as poles, to the exclusion of all the other parts and points? And yet all the points are similar, and all parts of the globe are equivalent. And to this there is no answer. One might say: Perhaps the spot in which the point of the poles is, is distinguished from other points by a special quality, in relation to its being the place of the poles and to its being at rest, for it does not seem to change its place or space or position or whatever one wishes to call it; and all the other spots of the sphere by turning change their position in relation to the earth and the other spheres and only the poles are at rest; perhaps this spot was more apt to be at rest than the others. We answer: If you say so, you explain the fact through a natural differentiation of the parts of the first sphere; the sphere, then, ceases to be homogeneous, and this is in contradiction with your principle, for one of the proofs by which you prove the necessity of the globular shape of heaven, is that its nature is simple, homogeneous, and without differentiation, and the simplest shape is the globe; for the quadrangle and the hexagon and other figures demand a salience and a differentiation of the angles,' and this happens only when its simple nature is added to. But although this supposition of yours is in contradiction with your own theory, it does not break the strength of your opponents' argument; the question about this special quality still holds good, namely, can those other parts accept this quality or not? If the answer is in the affirmative, why then is this quality limited to a few only of those homogeneous parts? If the answer is negative, we reply: the other parts, in so far as they constitute bodies, receiving the form of bodies, are homogeneous of necessity, and there is no justification for attributing this special quality to this spot exclusively on account of its being a part of a body and a part of heaven, for the other parts of heaven participate in this qualification. Therefore its differentiation must rest on a decision by God, or on a quality whose nature consists in differentiating between two similars. Therefore, just as among philosophers the theory is upheld that all times are equivalent in regard to the creation of the world, their opponents are justified in claiming that the parts of heaven are equivalent for the reception of the quality

through which stability in position becomes more appropriate than a change of position. And out of this there is no issue.

IBN RUSHD (AVERROSE):

I say: This means in brief that the philosophers must acknowledge that there is a quality in the Creator of the world which differentiates between two similars, for it seems that the world might have had another shape and another quantity than it actually has, for it might have been bigger or smaller. Those different possibilities are, therefore, equivalent in regard to the determination of the existence of the world. On the other hand, if the philosophers say that the world can have only one special shape, the special quantity of its bodies and the special number of them it actually has, and that this equivalence of possibilities can only be imagined in relation to the times of temporal creation—since for God no moment is more suitable than another for its creation—they may be told that it is possible to answer this by saying that the creation of the world happened at its most propitious moment. But we, the theologians say, want to show the philosophers two equivalent things of which they cannot affirm that there exists any difference between them; the **first** is the particular direction of the spherical movement and the **second** the particular position of the poles, relative to the spheres; for any pair whatever of opposite points, united by a line which passes through the centre of the sphere, might constitute the poles. But the differentiation of these two points, exclusive of all other points which might just as well be the poles of this identical sphere cannot happen except by a quality differentiating between two similar objects. If the philosophers assert that it is not true that any other place on the sphere might be the seat for these poles, they will be told: such an assertion implies that the parts of the spheres are not homogeneous and yet you have often said that the sphere is of a simple nature and therefore has a simple form, viz. the spherical. And again, if the philosophers affirm that there are spots on the sphere which are not homogeneous, it will be asked how these spots came to be of a heterogeneous nature; is it because they are a body or because they are a celestial body? But the absence of homogeneity cannot be explained in this way.

Therefore-Ghazali says just as among philosophers the theory is upheld that all times are equivalent in regard to the creation of the world, the theologians are justified in claiming that the parts of heaven are equivalent in regard to their serving as poles, and that the poles do not seem differentiated from the other points through a special position or

through their being in an immovable place, exclusive of all other places. This then in short is the objection; it is, however, a rhetorical one, for many things which by demonstration can be found to be necessary seem at first sight merely possible.' The philosophers' answer is that they assert that they have proved that the world is composed of five bodies: a body neither heavy nor light, i.e. the revolving spherical body of heaven and four other bodies, two of which are earth, absolutely heavy, which is the centre of the revolving spherical body, and fire, absolutely light, which is seated in the extremity of the revolving sphere; nearest to earth is water, which is heavy relatively to air, light relatively to earth; next to water comes air, which is light relatively to water, heavy relatively to fire. The reason why earth is absolutely heavy is that it is farthest away from the circular movement, and therefore it is the fixed centre of the revolving body; the reason why fire is absolutely light is that it is nearest to the revolving sphere; the intermediate bodies are both heavy and light, because they are in the middle between the two extremes, i.e. the farthest point and the nearest. If there were not a revolving body, surely there would be neither heavy nor light by nature, and neither high nor low by nature, and this whether absolutely or relatively; and the bodies would not differ by nature in the way in which, for instance, earth moves by nature to its specific place and fire moves by nature to another place, and equally so the intermediary bodies. And the world is only finite, because of the spherical body, and this because of the essential and natural finiteness of the spherical body, as one single plane circumscribes it.' Rectilinear bodies are not essentially finite, as they allow of an increase and decrease; they are only finite because they are in the middle of a body that admits neither increase nor decrease, and is therefore essentially finite. And, therefore, the body circumscribing the world cannot but be spherical, as otherwise the bodies would either have to end in other bodies, and we should have an infinite regress, or they would end in empty space, and the impossibility of both suppositions has been demonstrated. He who understands this knows that every possible world imaginable can only consist of these bodies, and that bodies have to be either circular-and then they are neither heavy nor light-or rectilinear-and then they are either heavy or light, i.e. either fire or earth or the intermediate bodies; that these bodies have to be either revolving, or surrounded by a revolving periphery, for each body either moves from, towards, or round the centre; that by the movements of the heavenly bodies to the right and to the left all bodies are constituted and all that is produced from

opposites is generated; and that through these movements the individuals of these four bodies never cease being in a continual production and corruption. Indeed, if a single one of these movements should cease, the order and proportion of this universe would disappear, for it is clear that this order must necessarily depend on the actual number of these movements-for if this were smaller or greater, either the order would be disturbed, or there would be another order-and that the number of these movements is as it is, either through its necessity for the existence of this sublunary world, or because it is the best. Do not ask here for a proof for all this, but if you are interested in science, look for its proof, where you can find it. Here, however, listen to theories which are more convincing than those of the theologians and which, even if they do not bring you complete proof, will give your mind an inclination to lead you to proof through scientific speculation. You should imagine that each heavenly sphere is a living being, in so far as it possesses a body of a definite measure and shape and moves itself in definite directions, not at random. Anything of this nature is necessarily a living being; i.e. when we see a body of a definite quality and quantity move itself in space, in a definite direction, not at random, through its own power, not through an exterior cause, and move in opposite directions at the same time, we are absolutely sure that it is a living being, and we said only 'not through an exterior cause' because iron moves towards a magnet when the magnet is brought to it from the outside-and besides, iron moves to a magnet from any direction whatever., The heavenly bodies, therefore, possess places which are poles by nature, and these bodies cannot have their poles in other places, just as earthly animals have particular organs in particular parts of their bodies for particular actions, and cannot have them in other places, e.g. the organs of locomotion, which are located in definite parts. The poles represent the organs of locomotion in animals of spherical form, and the only difference in this respect between spherical and non-spherical animals is that in the latter these organs differ in both shape and power, whereas in the former they only differ in power. For this reason it has been thought on first sight that they do not differ at all, and that the poles could be in any two points on the sphere. And just as it would be ridiculous to say that a certain movement in a certain species of earthly animal could be in any part whatever of its body, or in that part where it is in another species, because this movement has been localized in each species in the place where it conforms most to its nature, or in the only place where this animal can perform the

movement, so it stands with the differentiation in the heavenly bodies for the place of their poles. For the heavenly bodies are not one species and numerically many, but they form a plurality in species, like the plurality of different individuals of animals where there is only one individual in the species. Exactly the same answer can be given to the question why the heavens move in different directions: that, because they are animals, they must move in definite directions, like right and left, before and behind, which are directions determined by the movements of animals, and the only difference between the movements of earthly animals and those of heavenly bodies is that in the different animals these movements are different in shape and in power, whereas in the heavenly animals they only differ in power. And it is for this reason that Aristotle thinks that heaven possesses the directions of right and left, before and behind, high and low. The diversity of the heavenly bodies in the direction of their movements rests on their diversity of species, and the fact that this difference in the directions of their movements forms the specific differentia of their species is something proper to them. Imagine the first heaven as one identical animal whose nature obliges it-either by necessity or because it is for the best-to move with all its parts in one movement from east to west. The other spheres are obliged by their nature to have the opposite movement. The direction which the body of the universe is compelled to follow through its nature is the best one, because its body is the best of bodies and the best among the moving bodies must also have the best direction. All this is explained here in this tentative way, but is proved apodictically in its proper place. This is also the manifest sense of the Divine Words, 'There is no changing the words of God', and 'There is no altering the creation of God'. If you want to be an educated man, proceeding by proof, you should look for the proof of this in its proper place. Now, if you have understood all this, it will not be difficult for you to see the faults in Ghazali's arguments here, about the equivalence of the two opposite movements in relation to each heavenly body, and to the sublunary world. On first thoughts it might be imagined that the movement from east to west might also belong to other spheres besides the first, and that the first sphere might equally well move from west to east. You might as well say that the crab could be imagined as having the same direction of movement as man. But, as a matter of fact, such a thought will not occur to you about men and crabs, because of their difference in shape, whereas it might occur to you about the heavenly spheres, since they agree in shape. He who contemplates a product of art does not

perceive its wisdom if he does not perceive the wisdom of the intention embodied in it, and the effect intended. And if he does not understand its wisdom, he may well imagine that this object might have any form, any quantity, any configuration of its parts, and any composition whatever. This is the case with the theologians in regard to the body of the heavens, but all such opinions are superficial. He who has such beliefs about products of art understands neither the work nor the artist, and this holds also in respect of the works of God's creation. Understand this principle, and do not judge the works of God's creation hastily and superficially-so that you may not become one of those about whom the Qur'an says: 'Say, shall we inform you of those who lose most by their works, those who erred in their endeavour after the life of this world and who think they are doing good deeds?' May God make us perspicacious and lift from us the veils of ignorance; indeed He is the bounteous, the generous! To contemplate the various actions of the heavenly bodies is like contemplating the kingdom of heaven, which Abraham contemplated, according to the words of the Qur'an: 'Thus did we show Abraham the kingdom of heaven and of the earth that he should be of those who are sure.' And let us now relate Ghazali's argument about the movements.

3.1.2 The Second Point of view

Ghazali says: The second point in this argument concerns the special direction of the movement of the spheres which move partially from east to west, partially in the opposite direction, whereas the equivalence of the directions in relation to their cause is exactly the same as the equivalence of the times. If it is said: If the universe revolved in only one direction, there would never be a difference in the configuration of the stars, and such relations of the stars as their being in trine, in sextile, and in conjunction would, never arise, but the universe would remain in one unique position without any change; the difference of these relations, however, is the principle of all production in the world-we answer: Our argument does not concern the difference in direction of movement; no, we concede that the highest sphere moves from east to west and the spheres beneath it in the opposite direction, but everything that happens in this way would happen equally if the reverse took place, i.e. if the highest sphere moved from west to east and the lower spheres in the opposite direction. For all the same differences in configuration would arise just as well. Granted that these movements are circular and in opposite directions, both directions are equivalent; why then is the one distinguished from the other, which is similar to it?' If it is said: as

the two directions are opposed and contrary, how can they be similar?- we answer: this is like saying 'since before and after are opposed in the existing world, how could it be claimed that they are equivalent?' Still, it is asserted by you philosophers that the equivalence of times, so far as the possibility of their realization and any purpose one might imagine in their realization is concerned, is an evident fact. Now, we regard it as equally evident that spaces, positions, situations, and directions are equivalent so far as concerns their receiving movement and any purpose that might be connected with it. If therefore the philosophers are allowed to claim that notwithstanding this equivalence they are different, their opponents are fully justified in claiming the same in regard to the times.

IBN RUSHD:

I say: From what I have said previously, the speciousness of this argument and the way in which it has to be answered will not be obscure to you. All this is the work of one who does not understand the exalted natures of the heavenly bodies and their acts of wisdom for the sake of which they have been created, and who compares God's knowledge with the knowledge of ignorant man.

Ghazali says: If it is said: as the two directions are opposed and contrary, how can they be similar?-we answer: this is like saying 'since before and after in the existing world are opposed, how could it be claimed that they are equivalent?' Still, it is asserted by you philosophers that the equivalence of times so far as the possibility of their realization, and any purpose one might imagine in their realization is concerned, is an evident fact. Now, we regard it as equally evident that spaces, positions, situations, and directions are equivalent so far as concerns their receiving the movement and any purpose that might be connected with it.

IBN RUSH:

I say: The falsehood of this is self-evident. Even if one should admit that the possibilities of man's existence and non-existence are equivalent in the matter out of which he has been created, and that this is a proof for the existence of a determining principle which prefers his existence to his nonexistence, still it cannot be imagined that the possibilities of seeing and not seeing are equivalent in the eye. Thus no one can claim that the opposite directions are equivalent, although he may claim that the substratum for both is indifferent, and that therefore out of both directions similar actions result. And the same holds good for before and

after: they are not equivalent, in so far as this event is earlier and that event later; they can only be claimed to be equivalent so far as their possibility of existence is concerned. But the whole assumption is wrong: for essential opposites also need essentially opposite substrata and a unique substratum giving rise to opposite acts at one and the same time is impossibility. The philosophers do not believe that the possibilities of a thing's existence and of its non-existence are equivalent at one and the same time; no, the time of the possibility of its existence is different from the time of the possibility of its non-existence, time for them is the condition for the production of what is produced, and for the corruption of what perishes. If the time for the possibility of the existence of a thing and the time for the possibility of its non-existence were the same, that is to say in its proximate matter, its existence would be vitiated, because of the possibility of its non-existence, and the possibility of its existence and of its non-existence would be dependent only on the agent, not on the substratum. Thus he who tries to prove the existence of an agent in this way gives only persuasive, dialectical arguments, not apodictic proof. It is believed that Farabi and Avicenna followed this line to establish that every act must have an agent, but it is not a proof of the ancient philosophers, and both of them merely took it over from the theologians of our religion. In relation, however, to the temporal creation of the world-for him who believes in it before and after cannot even be imagined, for before and after in time can only be imagined in relation to the present moment, and as, according to the theologians, there was before the creation of the world no time, how could there be imagined something preceding the moment when the world was created? A definite moment cannot be assigned for the creation of the world, for either time did not exist before it, or there was an infinite time, and in neither case could a definite time be fixed to which the Divine could attach itself. Therefore it would be more suitable to call this book 'Incoherence' without qualification rather than 'The Incoherence of the Philosophers', for the only profit it gives the reader is to make him incoherent.

Ghazali says: If, therefore, the philosophers are allowed to claim that, notwithstanding this equivalence, they are different, their opponents are fully justified in claiming the same in regard to times.

IBN RUSHD:

I say: He wants to say: If the philosophers are justified in claiming a difference in the direction of movement, the theologians have the right

to assert a difference in times, notwithstanding their belief in their equivalence. This is only a verbal argument, and does not refer to the facts themselves, even if one admits an analogy between the opposite directions and the different times, but this is often objected to, because there is no analogy between this difference in times and directions. Our adversary, however, is forced to admit that there is an analogy between them, because they are both claimed to be different, and both to be equivalent! These, therefore, are one and all only dialectical arguments.

Ghazali says: The second objection against the basis of their argument is that the philosophers are told: 'You regard the creation of a temporal being by an eternal as impossible, but you have to acknowledge it too, for there are new events happening in the world and they have causes. It is absurd to think that these events lead to other events ad infinitum, and no intelligent person can believe such a thing. If such a thing were possible, you need not acknowledge a creator and establish a necessary being on whom possible existences depend. If, however, there is a limit for those events in which their sequence ends, this limit will be the eternal and then indubitably you too acknowledge the principle that a temporal can proceed from an eternal being.'

IBN RUSHD (AVERROSE):

I say: If the philosophers had introduced the eternal being into reality from the side of the temporal by this kind of argument, i.e. if they had admitted that the temporal, in so far as temporal, proceeds from an eternal being, there would be no possibility of their avoiding the difficulty in this problem. But you must understand that the philosophers permit the existence of a temporal which comes out of a temporal being ad infinitum in an accidental way, when this is repeated in a limited and finite matter-when, for instance, the corruption of one of two things becomes the necessary condition for the existence of the other. For instance, according to the philosophers it is necessary that man should be produced from man on condition that the anterior man perishes so as to become the matter for the production of a third. For instance, we must imagine two men of whom the first produces the second from the matter of a man who perishes; when the second becomes a man himself, the first perishes, then the second man produces a third man out of the matter of the first, and then the second perishes and the third produces out of his matter a fourth, and so we can imagine in two matters an activity continuing ad infinitum, without

any impossibility arising. And this happens as long as the agent lasts, for if this agent has neither beginning nor end for his existence, the activity has neither beginning nor end for its existence, as it has been explained before. And in the same way you may imagine this happening in them in the past: When a man exists, there must before him have been a man who produced him and a man who perished, and before this second man a man who produced him and a man who perished, for everything that is produced in this way is, when it depends on an eternal agent, of a circular nature in which no actual totality can be reached. If, on the other hand, a man was produced from another man out of infinite matters, or there were an infinite addition of them, there would be impossibility, for then there could arise an infinite matter and there could be an infinite whole. For if a finite whole existed to which things were added ad infinitum without any corruption taking place in it, an infinite whole could come into existence, as Aristotle proved in his *Physics*. For this reason the ancients introduce an eternal absolutely unchanging being, having in mind not temporal beings, proceeding from him in so far as they are temporal, but beings proceeding from him as being eternal generically, and they hold that this infinite series is the necessary consequence of an eternal agent, for the temporal needs for its own existence only a temporal cause. Now there are two reasons why the ancients introduce the existence of an eternal numerically unique being which does not suffer any change. The first is that they discovered that this revolving being is eternal, for they discovered that the present individual is produced through the corruption of its predecessor and that the corruption of this previous individual implies the production of the one that follows it, and that it is necessary that this everlasting change should proceed from an eternal mover and an eternal moved body, which does not change in its substance, but which changes only in place so far as concerns its parts, and approaches certain of the transitory things and recedes from certain of them, and this is the cause of the corruption of one half of them and the production of the other half. And this heavenly body is the being that changes in place only, not in any of the other kinds of change, and is through its temporal activities the cause of all things temporal; and because of the continuity of its activities which have neither beginning nor end, it proceeds from a cause which has neither beginning nor end. The second reason why they introduce an eternal being absolutely without body and matter is that they found that all the kinds of movement depend on spatial movement, and that spatial movement depends on a being moved essentially by a

prime mover, absolutely unmoved, both essentially and accidentally, for otherwise there would exist at the same time an infinite number of moved movers, and this is impossible. And it is necessary that this first mover should be eternal, or else it would not be the first. Every movement, therefore, depends on this mover and its setting in motion essentially, not accidentally. And this mover exists simultaneously with each thing moved, at the time of its motion, for a mover existing before the thing moved-such as a man producing a man-sets only in motion accidentally, not essentially; but the mover who is the condition of man's existence from the beginning of his production till its end, or rather from the beginning of his existence till its end, is the prime mover. And likewise his existence is the condition for the existence of all beings and the preservation- of heaven and earth and all that is between them. All this is not proved here apodictically, but only in the way we follow here and which is in any case more plausible for an impartial reader than the arguments of our opponents. If this is clear to you, you certainly are in no need of the subterfuge by which Ghazali in his argument against the philosophers tries to conciliate them with their adversaries in this matter; indeed these artifices will not do, for if you have not understood how the philosophers introduce an eternal being into reality, you have not understood how they settle the difficulty of the rise of the temporal out of the eternal; they do that, as we said, either through the medium of a being eternal in its essence but generable and corruptible in its particular movements, not, however, in its universal circular movement, or through the medium of what is generically eternal i.e. has neither beginning nor end-in its acts.

Ghazali answers in the name of the philosophers: The philosophers may say, 'we do not consider it impossible that any temporal being, whatever it may be, should proceed from an eternal being, but we regard it as impossible that the first temporal should proceed from the eternal, as the mode of its procession does not differ from that which precedes it, either in a greater inclination towards existence or through the presence of some particular time, or through an instrument, condition, nature, accident, or any cause whatever which might produce a new mode. If this therefore is not the first temporal, it will be possible that it should proceed from the eternal, when another thing proceeds from it, because of the disposition of the receiving substratum, or because the time was propitious or for any other reason.

Having given this reply on the part of the philosophers, Ghazali answers it: This question about the actualization of the disposition, whether of

the time and of any new condition which arises in it, still holds good, and we must either come to an infinite regress or arrive at an eternal being out of which a first temporal being proceeds.

IBN RUSHD (AVEROSE):

I say: This question is the same question all over again as he asked the philosophers first,' and this is the same kind of conclusion as he made them draw then, namely that a temporal proceeds from an eternal, and having given as their answer something which does not correspond with the question, i.e. that it is possible that a temporal being should proceed from the Eternal without there being a first temporal being, he turns the same question against them again. The correct answer to this question was given above: the temporal proceeds from the First Eternal, not in so far as it is temporal but in so far as it is eternal, i.e. through being eternal generically, though temporal in its parts. For according to the philosophers an eternal being out of which a temporal being proceeds essentially' is not the First Eternal, but its acts, according to them, depend on the First Eternal; i.e. the actualization of the condition for activity of the eternal, which is not the First Eternal, depends on the First Eternal in the same way as the temporal products depend on the First Eternal and this is a dependence based on the universal, not on individuals. After this Ghazali introduces an answer of the philosophers, in one of the forms in which this theory can be represented, which amounts to this: A temporal being proceeding from an eternal can only be represented by means of a circular movement which resembles the eternal by not having beginning or end and which resembles the temporal in so far as each part of it is transient, so that this movement through the generation of its parts is the principle of temporal things, and through the eternity of its totality the activity of the eternal.

Then Ghazali argues against this view, according to which in the opinion of the philosophers the temporal proceeds from the First Eternal, and says to them: Is this circular movement temporal or eternal? If it is eternal, how does it become the principle for temporal things? And if it is temporal, it will need another temporal being and we shall have an infinite regress. And when you say that it partially resembles the eternal, partially the temporal, for it resembles the eternal in so far as it is permanent and the temporal in so far as it arises anew, we answer: Is it the principle of temporal things, because of its permanence, or because of its arising anew? In the former case, how can a temporal proceed from something because of its permanence? And in the latter case, what

arises anew will need a cause for its arising anew, and we have an infinite regress.

IBN RUSHD (AVERROSE):

I say: This argument is sophistical. The temporal does not proceed from it in so far as it is eternal, but in so far as it is temporal; it does not need, however, for its arising anew a cause arising anew, for its arising anew is not a new fact, but is an eternal act, i.e. an act without a beginning or end. Therefore its agent must be an eternal agent, for an eternal act has an eternal agent, and a temporal act a temporal agent. Only through the eternal element in it can it be understood that movement has neither beginning nor end, and this is meant by its permanence, for movement itself is not permanent, but changing. And since Ghazali knew this, he said: In order to elude this consequence the philosophers have a kind of artifice which we will expose briefly.

4.0 Conclusion.

Aristotle believes in the finitude of causes. For him it is impossible that movement should have started or can continue by itself. There must be a principle from which all movement derives. Movement, however, by itself is eternal. It seems to me that this whole conception is untenable. If the world is eternal there will be an infinite series of causes and an infinite series of movers; there will be an infinite series, for instance, of fathers and sons, of birds and, we will never reach a first mover or cause: a first father or a first bird. Aristotle, in fact, defends the two opposite theses of Kant's first antinomy. He holds at the same time that time and movement are infinite and that every causal series must be finite.

The Muslim philosophers see in God, not only as Aristotle did, the First Mover of the movement of the universe, but that they regard Him, under the influence of the Plotinian theory of emanation, as the Creator of the universe from whom the world emanates eternally.

5.0 Summary

"The eternity of the world is impossible? Because it leads to the affirmation of spherical revolutions which are infinite in number, and consist of innumerable units.

But Ibn Rushd addressed this issue when he said that "this is only absurd when one supposes two things actually infinite, for then a proportion does not exist between them. When, however, one imagines things potentially infinite, there exists no proportion at all. This is the right answer to this question"

This can also be understood from the fact that beginning and end are correlatives. Therefore one who affirms that there is no end of the celestial revolutions in the future cannot logically ascribe a beginning to them, for what has a beginning has an end and what has no end has no beginning, and the same relation exists between first and last; i.e. what has a first term has also a last term, and what has no first term has no last term, and there is in reality neither end nor beginning for any part of a series that has no last term, and what has no beginning for any of its parts has no end for any of them either. When, therefore, the theologians ask the philosophers if the movements which precede the present one are ended, their answer is negative, for their assumption that they have no beginning implies their endlessness.

Ghazali said that "even according to your own principles, it is not impossible that there should be discrete individual existents, who are infinite in number and describable, each by itself. The souls of men whom death has separated from the body are such beings. And they are beings whose number is not described as odd or even. How will you disprove a man who says that such a thing is a self-evident absurdity? How can you show that this criticism is different from your own rejection, on grounds of rational necessity, of the explanation of the temporal origin of the world by reference to the eternal will? Ibn Rushed replied: "As for the thesis of a numerical plurality of immaterial souls, this is not a theory acknowledged by the philosophers, for they regard matter as the cause of numerical plurality and form as the cause of congruity in numerical plurality. And that there should be a numerical plurality without matter, having one unique form, is impossible" The

purpose of all this, according to Ghazali, is to show that they cannot render it untenable for their opponents to believe in the origination of the world by the eternal will, unless they claim that such a thing is contrary to rational necessity. But when a similar claim is made by their critics to refute their own beliefs, it will not be possible for them to silence that criticism. And this is, therefore, an inescapable position.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. In view of theory of cause and effect, what is the contradiction involved in saying that existence of the world was not an object of the eternal will, before the world actually existed; hence its non--actualization. And that it was an object of the eternal will at the time when it was actualized?
2. How al-Ghazali did answer the question posited by the philosophers about the impossibility of postponing an effect, at the presence of a cause with all conditions intact, to time without measure, and its sudden appearance without mediation?
3. How can your clarify the objection that it is unintelligible - rather, self-contradictory to speak of an attribute of which the function is to distinguish something from its like. For by likeness is meant that there is no distinction; and by distinction is meant that there is no likeness?

7.0 References and Further Readings

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UNIT 4: The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world (the first argument)

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1.0Introduction

2.0Objectives

3.0Main content

3.1 Second Objection of the First argument.

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1.0 Introduction

In the last unit you read how Ghazali was able to defend the theological doctrine of the Divine Will as postulated by the theologians, and the reply of Ibn Rushd to the two viewpoints raised by Ghazali. In this unit, which is a continuation of the previous unit, you will about the position of the theologians on Divine will as a cause to the creation of the world

and the assumption of the philosophers about impossibility of distinction between two things its implication to existence of the world.

2.0 Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- a) Summarize the discussion between Ghazali and the philosophers concerning the possibility of distinction between like things.
- b) Criticize the argument of Ibn Rushd on this matter.
- c) Give your own view on the issue.

3.0 Main content:

3.1 The Second Proof of the Philosophers Concerning this Problem

Ghazali says:

In the second place, the objection may be stated as follows

In your own theories, you have not been able to avoid the assumption of a distinction between two like things. For if the world is produced by a cause which necessitates for it a certain shape as set over against other shapes like it, the question arises: Why was this particular choice made? The rule that a distinction between like things is impossible cannot differ in different cases, e.g., an action, or something which follows by nature or by rational necessity.

If you say

The entire system of the world could not have been produced in any other way than that in which it has been produced. If the world were smaller or larger than it is, the system would not be perfect. The same is true of the number of the spheres and the stars. You assert that the Great is opposed to the Small, and the Much to the Little, of whatever they may be predicated. Therefore, in the case of the universal system, largeness and smallness would not be like each other, but different things. It is true that man's powers are too weak to comprehend the wisdom which lies in the quantities and details of the spheres. (In some cases the wisdom can be discerned - e.g., in the case of the declination of the Sphere of the Zodiac Signs from the Equator: or in the case of the Apogee, or in the case of the eccentric sphere.) But, although in most

cases the secret of these things cannot be discovered, still their differences are known very well. Therefore, it is not improbable that something should be distinguished from what is opposed to it (as an alternative possibility) because of its relation to the system of things. But the moments of time are, on the contrary, absolutely similar in respect of the relation each bears to possibility and to the system of things. For this reason it is not possible to maintain that, if the creation of the world had been earlier or later by a single instant than it was, the system of things would not take shape. And the similarity of the temporal states is a self-evident truth.

We will answer:

Had we so desired, we could have shown that the temporal states can be treated in the same way as space filling things. For people have said that He created the world at a time which was the fittest for creation. But we will not confine our attention to this comparison. Let us, therefore, proceed to show that, fundamentally, a distinction between two like things - i.e., two like positions - is acceptable to you. Of these two instances, in each of which absolutely no difference can be supposed to exist between two like things, one is the difference of the direction of spherical movement; and the other is the definite position of the poles in relation to the ecliptic in spherical movement.

As regards the poles, the philosophers give the following description

The heaven is a round body which moves on two poles, which are, as it were, fixed and constant. And the round body of the heaven has similar parts, for it is simple. Particularly so is the highest, i.e., the ninth, sphere which has no stars. And both these (spheres) move on two, i.e., the northern and southern, poles.

Now, let us say, out of what they would call an infinite number of opposite points, any two could conceivably be the poles. Why, therefore, did the two points in north and south happen finally to be chosen as the poles? Why did the ecliptic not pass through some other (two) points, so that as opposite points on the ecliptic they should have been the poles? There may be wisdom latent in the size or the shape of heaven. But what is it that distinguished the place of the pole from any other place? What caused one particular point, as set over against all

other points and parts, to be chosen as the pole? Are not all the points similar; are not all the parts of a round body equal? The philosophers cannot find a way out of this difficulty.

If it is said:

Perhaps the position of the point of the poles is distinct from other points by virtue of a property which is suited to that point's being the point of the pole. This property being permanent, the point of the pole does not depart from its particular place (or space, or position, or whatever name may be supposed to be applicable in this case). In the course of celestial revolutions, all the positions on the sphere, which determine its relation to the Earth and to other spheres, are changed; but the position of the poles is constant. Presumably, therefore, this position was fitter than any other position to remain constant.

we will answer:

This amounts to an explicit admission of dissimilarity in nature among the parts of the primary round body. If you would have us believe that all the parts of heaven are not similar, you will contradict your own principles. For one of the arguments, by which you tried to prove that the heaven must of necessity be round in shape, was this:

The nature of heaven is simple; for heaven is not heterogeneous, but homogeneous. And the simplest shape is the round shape. For four-sided, or six-sided, etc., figures require angularity and the difference (of parts), which requirements cannot be met, unless something should be added to simple nature.

Now, even at the expense of consistency, this position does not render our objection invalid. For the question concerning the 'property' remains unanswered. Were other parts also capable of receiving this property, or were they not? If you say Yes, the next question will be: Why does this property belong in particular to only a few of many similar things? But if they say: "This property can reside only in *this* position; other parts of the sphere are incapable of receiving it," we will say: All the parts of the sphere are, *qua* body which receives forms, evidently similar. This property cannot be claimed by *this* position, merely because of the latter's being body or heaven. For that character is shared in common by all the parts of heaven. So there can be only two explanations: Either it was for some arbitrary reason that a special character was conferred

upon *this* position, or there had come into operation an attribute whose function was to distinguish something from its like. If neither of these two hypotheses is adopted, then, just as they cling to the theory that all the moments are equally capable of receiving the occurrence of the world, so will their opponents cling to the contention that all the parts of heaven are equally capable of receiving the character which renders fixity, rather than changeableness, the fittest thing? And again, the philosophers will not be able to find a way out of this difficulty.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This means in brief that the philosophers must acknowledge that there is a quality in the Creator of the world which differentiates between two similars, for it seems that the world might have had another shape and another quantity than it actually has, for it might have been bigger or smaller. Those different possibilities are, therefore, equivalent in regard to the determination of the existence of the world. On the other hand, if the philosophers say that the world can have only one special shape, the special quantity of its bodies and the special number of them it actually has, and that this equivalence of possibilities can only be imagined in relation to the times of temporal creation—since for God no moment is more suitable than another for its creation—they may be told that it is possible to answer this by saying that the creation of the world happened at its most propitious moment. But we, the theologians, want to show the philosophers two equivalent things of which they cannot affirm that there exists any difference between them; the first is the particular direction of the spherical movement and the second the particular position of the poles, relative to the spheres; for any pair whatever of opposite points, united by a line which passes through the centre of the sphere, might constitute the poles. But the differentiation of these two points, exclusive of all other points which might just as well be the poles of this identical sphere cannot happen except by a quality differentiating between two similar objects. If the philosophers assert that it is not true that any other place on the sphere might be the seat for these poles, they will be told: such an assertion implies that the parts of the spheres are not homogeneous and yet you have often said that the sphere is of a simple nature and therefore has a simple form, viz. the spherical. And again, if the philosophers affirm that there are spots on the sphere which are not homogeneous, it will be asked how these spots came to be of a heterogeneous nature; is it because they are a body or

because they are a celestial body? But the absence of homogeneity cannot be explained in this way. Therefore-Ghazali says just as among philosophers the theory is upheld that all times are equivalent in regard to the creation of the world, the theologians are justified in claiming that the parts of heaven are equivalent in regard to their serving as poles, and that the poles do not seem differentiated from the other points through a special position or through their being in an immovable place, exclusive of all other places.

This then in short is the objection; it is, however, a rhetorical one, for many things which by demonstration can be found to be necessary seem at first sight merely possible.' The philosophers' answer is that they assert that they have proved that the world is composed of five bodies: a body neither heavy nor light, i.e. the revolving spherical body of heaven and four other bodies, two of which are earth, absolutely heavy, which is the centre of the revolving spherical body, and fire, absolutely light, which is seated in the extremity of the revolving sphere; nearest to earth is water, which is heavy relatively to air, light relatively to earth; next to water comes air, which is light relatively to water, heavy relatively to fire. The reason why earth is absolutely heavy is that it is farthest away from the circular movement, and therefore it is the fixed centre of the revolving body; the reason why fire is absolutely light is that it is nearest to the revolving sphere; the intermediate bodies are both heavy and light, because they are in the middle between the two extremes, i.e. the farthest point and the nearest. If there were not a revolving body, surely there would be neither heavy nor light by nature, and neither high nor low by nature, and this whether absolutely or relatively; and the bodies would not differ by nature in the way in which, for instance, earth moves by nature to

its specific place and fire moves by nature to another place, and equally so the intermediary bodies. And the world is only finite, because of the spherical body, and this because of the essential and natural finiteness of the spherical body, as one single plane circumscribes it.' Rectilinear bodies are not essentially finite, as they allow of an increase and decrease; they are only finite because they are in the middle of a body that admits neither increase nor decrease, and is therefore essentially finite. And, therefore, the body circumscribing the world cannot but be spherical, as otherwise the bodies would either have to end in other bodies, and we should have an infinite regress, or they would end in empty space, and the impossibility of both suppositions has been demonstrated. He who understands this knows that every possible

world imaginable can only consist of these bodies, and that bodies have to be either circular-and then they are neither heavy nor light-or rectilinear-and then they are either heavy or light, i.e. either fire or earth or the intermediate bodies; that these bodies have to be either revolving, or surrounded by a revolving periphery, for each body either moves from, towards, or round the centre; that by the movements of the heavenly bodies to the right and to the left all bodies are constituted and all that is produced from opposites is generated; and that through these movements the individuals of these four bodies never cease being in a continual production and corruption. Indeed, if a single one of these movements should cease, the order and proportion of this universe would disappear, for it is clear that this order must necessarily depend on the actual number of these movements-for if this were smaller or greater, either the order would be disturbed, or there would be another order-and that the number of these movements is as it is, either through its necessity for the existence of this sublunary world, or because it is the best

Do not ask here for a proof for all these, but if you are interested in science, look for its proof, where you can find it. Here, however, listen to theories which are more convincing than those of the theologians and which, even if they do not bring you complete proof, will give your mind an inclination to lead you to proof through scientific speculation. You should imagine that each heavenly sphere is a living being, in so far as it possesses a body of a definite measure and shape and moves itself in definite directions, not at random. Anything of this nature is necessarily a living being; i.e. when we see a body of a definite quality and quantity move itself in space, in a definite direction, not at random, through its own power, not through an exterior cause, and move in opposite directions at the same time, we are absolutely sure that it is a living being, and we said only 'not through an exterior cause' because iron moves towards a magnet when the magnet is brought to it from the outside-and besides, iron moves to a magnet from any direction whatever., The heavenly bodies, therefore, possess poles which are poles by nature, and these bodies cannot have their poles in other places, just as earthly animals have particular organs in particular parts of their bodies for particular actions, and cannot have them in other places, e.g. the organs of locomotion, which are located in definite parts. The poles represent the organs of locomotion in animals of spherical form, and the only difference in this respect between spherical and non-spherical animals is that in the latter these organs differ in both shape

and power, whereas in the former they only differ in power. For this reason it has been thought on first sight that they do not differ at all, and that the poles could be in any two points on the sphere. And just as it would be ridiculous to say that a certain movement in a certain species of earthly animal could be in any part whatever of its body, or in that part where it is in another species, because this movement has been localized in each species in the place where it conforms most to its nature, or in the only place where this animal can perform the movement, so it stands with the differentiation in the heavenly bodies for the place of their poles. For the heavenly bodies are not one species and numerically many, but they form a plurality in species, like the plurality of different individuals of animals where there is only one individual in the species.

Exactly the same answer can be given to the question why the heavens move in different directions: that, because they are animals, they must move in definite directions, like right and left, before and behind, which are directions determined by the movements of animals, and the only difference between the movements of earthly animals and those of heavenly bodies is that in the different animals these movements are different in shape and in power, whereas in the heavenly animals they only differ in power. And it is for this reason that Aristotle thinks that heaven possesses the directions of right and left, before and behind, high and low. The diversity of the heavenly bodies in the direction of their movements rests on their diversity of species, and the fact that this difference in the directions of their movements forms the specific differentia of their species is something proper to them. Imagine the first heaven as one identical animal whose nature obliges it-either by necessity or because it is for the best-to move with all its parts in one movement from east to west. The other spheres are obliged by their nature to have the opposite movement. The direction which the body of the universe is compelled to follow through its nature is the best one, because its body is the best of bodies and the best among the moving bodies must also have the best direction. All this is explained here in this tentative way, but is proved apodictically in its proper place. This is also the manifest sense of the Divine Words, 'There is no changing the words of God', and 'There is no altering the creation of God'. If you want to be an educated man, proceeding by proof, you should look for the proof of this in its proper place.

Now if you have understood all this, it will not be difficult for you to see the faults in Ghazali's arguments here about the equivalence of the two opposite movements in relation to each heavenly body and to the sublunary world. On first thoughts it might be imagined that the movement from east to west might also belong to other spheres besides the first, and that the first sphere might equally well move from west to east. You might as well say that the crab could be imagined as having the same direction of movement as man. But, as a matter of fact, such a thought will not occur to you about men and crabs, because of their difference in shape, whereas it might occur to you about the heavenly spheres, since they agree in shape. He who contemplates a product of art does not perceive its wisdom if he does not perceive the wisdom of the intention embodied in it, and the effect intended. And if he does not understand its wisdom, he may well imagine that this object might have any form, any quantity, any configuration of its parts, and any composition whatever. This is the case with the theologians in regard to the body of the heavens, but all such opinions are superficial. He who has such beliefs about products of art understands neither the work nor the artist, and this holds also in respect of the works of God's creation. Understand this principle, and do not judge the works of God's creation hastily and superficially-so that you may not become one of those about whom the Qur'an says: 'Say, shall we inform you of those who lose most by their works, those who erred in their endeavour after the life of this world and who think they are doing good deeds?' May God make us perspicacious and lift from us the veils of ignorance; indeed He is the bounteous, the generous! To contemplate the various actions of the heavenly bodies is like contemplating the kingdom of heaven, which Abraham contemplated, according to the words of the Qur'an: 'Thus did we show Abraham the kingdom of heaven and of the earth that he should be of those who are sure.'

3.2 The second point on which the philosophers' criticism of the distinction between like things involves a contradiction:

Ghazali says:

Why is it that, in spite of the similarity of directions, the movements of the spheres - in some cases, from East to West; in others, vice versa-are specifically determined? Obviously, the similarity of directions is like the similarity of movements. There cannot be any difference between the two instances.

If it is said

If the universe revolved in only one direction, it could not have varied spatial relations, nor the configurations of the stars which result from their three-fold or six-fold relations, or from their conjunction. So the universe would have one and the same (spatial) relation, and there would be no variety. In point of fact, however, these configurations of the stars are the principle of events in the world.

We will answer

We do not object to the difference in the directions of movements. What we say is this: The highest sphere moves from East to West; and the one below it, vice versa. Now, whatever is the result of the roles of the two spheres might be obtained even if the roles were reversed - i.e., if the highest sphere moved from West to East, and the one below it in the opposite manner. So the roles would still remain dissimilar. The movements of the spheres having been recognized to be rotatory and opposed to each other, the directions of these movements must be equal. Why, therefore, was one direction distinguished from another like it?

If it is said

The two directions are opposed to each other as contraries. How can they be equal?

We will answer

This is like one's saying: "Priority and posteriority of the existence of the world are also opposed to each other as contraries. How can it be claimed that they are similar?" But the philosophers assert that the similarity of the moments of time is known by reference to the possibility of existence, and by reference to any purpose which might conceivably be served by existence. If the philosophers' claim of difference in spite of this similarity is a warranted claim, their opponents' claim of a difference in the case of temporal states and stages will be equally warranted.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

From what I have said previously, the speciousness of this argument and the way in which it has to be answered will not be obscure to you. All this is the work of one who does not understand the exalted natures of the heavenly bodies and their acts of wisdom for the sake of which they have been created, and who compares God's knowledge with the knowledge of ignorant man.

Ghazali says:

If it is said: as the two directions are opposed and contrary, how can they be similar?-we answer: this is like saying 'since before and after in the existing world are opposed, how could it be claimed that they are equivalent?' Still, it is asserted by you philosophers that the equivalence of times so far as the possibility of their realization, and any purpose one might imagine in their realization is concerned, is an evident fact. Now, we regard it as equally evident that spaces, positions, situations, and directions are equivalent so far as concerns their receiving the movement and any purpose that might be connected with it.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

The falsehood of this is self-evident. Even if one should admit that the possibilities of man's existence and non-existence are equivalent in the matter out of which he has been created, and that this is a proof for the existence of a determining principle which prefers his existence to his nonexistence, still it cannot be imagined that the possibilities of seeing and not seeing are equivalent in the eye. Thus no one can claim that the opposite directions are equivalent, although he may claim that the substratum for both is indifferent, and that therefore out of both directions similar actions result. And the same holds good for before and after: they are not equivalent, in so far as this event is earlier and that event later; they can only be claimed to be equivalent so far as their possibility of existence is concerned. But the whole assumption is wrong: for essential opposites also need essentially opposite substrata and a unique substratum giving rise to opposite acts at one and the same time is an impossibility. The philosophers do not believe that the possibilities of a thing's existence and of its non-existence are equivalent at one and the same time; no, the time of the possibility of its existence is different from the time of the possibility of its non-existence, time for them is the condition for the production of what is produced, and for the corruption of what perishes. If the time for the possibility of the existence of a thing and the time for the possibility of its non-existence were the same, that is to say in its proximate matter, its existence would be vitiated, because of the possibility of its non-existence, and the possibility of its existence and of its non-existence would be dependent only on the agent, not on the substratum.

Thus he who tries to prove the existence of an agent in this way gives only persuasive, dialectical arguments, not apodictic proof. It is believed

that Farabi and Avicenna followed this line to establish that every act must have an agent, but it is not a proof of the ancient philosophers, and both of them merely took it over from the theologians of our religion. In relation, however, to the temporal creation of the world-for him who believes in it before and after cannot even be imagined, for before and after in time can only be imagined in relation to the present moment, and as, according to the theologians, there was before the creation of the world no time, how could there be imagined something preceding the moment when the world was created? A definite moment cannot be assigned for the creation of the world, for either time did not exist before it, or there was an infinite time, and in neither case could a definite time be fixed to which the Divine could attach itself. Therefore it would be more suitable to call this book 'Incoherence' without qualification rather than 'The Incoherence of the Philosophers', for the only profit it gives the reader is to make him incoherent.

Ghazali says:

If, therefore, the philosophers are allowed to claim that, notwithstanding this equivalence, they are different, their opponents are fully justified in claiming the same in regard to times.

IBN RUSHD

I say:

He wants to say: If the philosophers are justified in claiming a difference in the direction of movement, the theologians have the right to assert a difference in times, notwithstanding their belief in their equivalence. This is only a verbal argument, and does not refer to the facts themselves, even if one admits an analogy between the opposite directions and the different times, but this is often objected to, because there is no analogy between this difference in times and directions. Our adversary, however, is forced to admit that there is an analogy between them, because they are both claimed to be different, and both to be equivalent! These, therefore, are one and all only dialectical arguments.

4.0Conclusion.

The theologians believe in the similarity of time with regard to God and that He has the Will to differentiate between two similar things, while the philosophers maintain that there is not such will to differentiate between two similar things in as much as they remain similar in all

ramifications. The fact is that God is cable of doing anything. But whether he created the world accidentally according to the philosophers or He had the will to make the world to exist or not exist but His Will inclined toward making the world to exist is a bone of contention between Ghazali and the philosophers.

5.0Summary.

Ghazali agreed with the philosophers about the theory which upheld that all times are equivalent in regard to the creation of the world, and that the theologians are justified in claiming that the parts of heaven are equivalent in regard to their serving as poles, and that the poles do not seem differentiated from the other points through a special position or through their being in an immovable place, exclusive of all other places. This, to Ghazali is a proof that there is a quality in the Creator of the world which differentiates between two similar. But Ibn Rushd tried to prove to Ghazali that the philosophers belief in existence of disparity in the creature of the world saying that the philosophers assert that they have proved that the world is composed of five bodies: a body neither heavy nor light, i.e. the revolving spherical body of heaven and four other bodies, two of which are earth, absolutely heavy, which is the centre of the revolving spherical body, and fire, absolutely light, which is seated in the extremity of the revolving sphere; nearest to earth is water, which is heavy relatively to air, light relatively to earth; next to water comes air, which is light relatively to water, heavy relatively to fire.

6.0Tutor Marked Assignment.

1. What is the contention between Ghazali and the philosophers on the issue of two similarities?
2. with which example did Ghazali try to explain the possibility of differentiating between to similar objects?
3. How did Ibn Rushd explain the belief of philosophers in disparity in the creature of the world.
4. Do you support the philosophers viewpoint or Ghazalis? Prove it.

7.0 References and Further Readings

Al-Ghazali, A. H, (1058-1111 CE), *Tahafut al-falasifa*. See the parallel English-Arabic edition, [hereafter *Tahafut*], translated, introduced and annotated by Michael E. Marmura (2000), Brigham Young University Press, Provo, Utah.

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UNIT 5: The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world (the first argument).

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1.0 Introduction

In the last unit you read about the position of the theologians on Divine will as a cause to the creation of the world and the assumption of the philosophers about impossibility of distinction between two things and its implication to existence of the world. In this unit, you will read about the arguments of the philosophers and Imam Al-Gazali about the procession of a temporal from an eternal being.

2.0 Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to

- a) Summarize the philosophers' viewpoints on the procession of a temporal from an eternal being.
- b) By the end of this lesson, you will be able to summarize the viewpoints of Imam Al-Gazali on the procession of a temporal from an eternal being.
- c) Discuss both viewpoints and give your judgment.

3.0 Main content

3.1 The Second Objection to the Original Argument:

Ghazali says:

It may be said: You reject as impossible the procession of a temporal from an eternal being. But you will have to admit its possibility. For there are temporal phenomena in the world, and some other phenomena are the causes of those phenomena. Now, it is impossible that one set of temporal phenomena should be caused by another, and that the series should go on *ad infinitum*. No intelligent person can believe such a thing. If it had been possible, you would not have considered it obligatory on your part to introduce the Creator (into your theories), or affirm the Necessary Being in Whom all the possible things have their Ground.

So, if there is a limit at which the series of temporal phenomena stops, let this limit be called the Eternal.

And this proves how the possibility of the procession of a temporal from an eternal being can be deduced from their fundamental principles.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

If the philosophers had introduced the eternal being into reality from the side of the temporal by this kind of argument, i.e. if they had admitted that the temporal, in so far as temporal, proceeds from an eternal being, there would be no possibility of their avoiding the difficulty in this problem. But you must understand that the philosophers permit the existence of a temporal which comes out of a temporal being ad infinitum in an accidental way, when this is repeated in a limited and finite matter-when, for instance, the corruption of one of two things becomes the necessary condition for the existence of the other. For instance, according to the philosophers it is necessary that man should be produced from man on condition that the anterior man perishes so as to become the matter for the production of a third. For instance, we must imagine two men of whom the first produces the second from the matter of a man who perishes; when the second becomes a man himself, the first perishes, then the second man produces a third man out of the matter of the first, and then the second perishes and the third produces out of his matter a fourth, and so we can imagine in two matters an activity continuing ad infinitum, without any impossibility arising. And this happens as long as the agent lasts, for if this agent has neither beginning nor end for his existence, the activity has neither beginning nor end for its existence, as it has been explained before. And in the same way you may imagine this happening in them in the past: When a man exists, there must before him have been a man who produced him and a man who perished, and before this second man a man who produced him and a man who perished, for everything that is produced in this way is, when it depends on an eternal agent, of a circular nature in which no actual totality can be reached. If, on the other hand, a man were produced from another man out of infinite matters, or there were an infinite addition of them, there would be an impossibility, for then there could arise an infinite matter and there could be an infinite whole. For if a finite whole existed to which things were added ad infinitum without any corruption taking place in it, an infinite whole could come into existence, as Aristotle proved in his Physics. For this reason the ancients introduce an eternal absolutely unchanging being, having in mind not temporal beings, proceeding from

him in so far as they are temporal, but beings proceeding from him as being eternal generically, and they hold that this infinite series is the necessary consequence of an eternal agent, for the temporal needs for its own existence only a temporal cause. Now there are two reasons why the ancients introduce the existence of an eternal numerically unique being which does not suffer any change. The first is that they discovered that this revolving being is eternal, for they discovered that the present individual is produced through the corruption of its predecessor and that the corruption of this previous individual implies the production of the one that follows it, and that it is necessary that this everlasting change should proceed from an eternal mover and an eternal moved body, which does not change in its substance, but which changes only in place so far as concerns its parts, and approaches certain of the transitory things and recedes from certain of them, and this is the cause of the corruption of one half of them and the production of the other half. And this heavenly body is the being that changes in place only, not in any of the other kinds of change, and is through its temporal activities the cause of all things temporal; and because of the continuity of its activities which have neither beginning nor end, it proceeds from a cause which has neither beginning nor end. The second reason why they introduce an eternal being absolutely without body and matter is that they found that all the kinds of movement depend on spatial movement, and that spatial movement depends on a being moved essentially by a prime mover, absolutely unmoved, both essentially and accidentally, for otherwise there would exist at the same time an infinite number of moved movers, and this is impossible. And it is necessary that this first mover should be eternal, or else it would not be the first. Every movement, therefore, depends on this mover and its setting in motion essentially, not accidentally. And this mover exists simultaneously with each thing moved, at the time of its motion, for a mover existing before the thing moved-such as a man producing a man-sets only in motion accidentally, not essentially; but the mover who is the condition of man's existence from the beginning of his production till its end, or rather from the beginning of his existence till its end, is the prime mover. And likewise his existence is the condition for the existence of all beings and the preservation- of heaven and earth and all that is between them. All this is not proved here apodictically, but only in the way we follow here and which is in any case more plausible for an impartial reader than the arguments of our opponents.

If this is clear to you, you certainly are in no need of the subterfuge by which Ghazali in his argument against the philosophers tries to conciliate them with their adversaries in this matter; indeed these artifices will not do, for if you have not understood how the philosophers introduce an eternal being into reality, you have not understood how they settle the difficulty of the rise of the temporal out of the eternal; they do that, as we said, either through the medium of a being eternal in its essence but generable and corruptible in its particular movements, not, however, in its universal circular movement, or through the medium of what is generically eternal i.e. has neither beginning nor end-in its acts.

Ghazali answers in the name of the philosophers:

If it is said

We do not say that the procession of a temporal being, whatever it is, from an eternal being is inadmissible. What we call inadmissible is the procession of the first temporal being from the Eternal. For the moment of the appearance (of the first temporal being) cannot be distinguished from preceding moments by virtue of a greater aptitude for existence, which might have been demonstrated through such a thing as the presence of (suitable) circumstances, or the acquisition of an instrument or some other condition, or the development of a certain nature or a purpose, or some other cause of this kind. If the temporal being which proceeds from the Eternal is not the first one, then its procession would be admissible - inasmuch as it had been rendered possible by the appearance of a new factor, e.g., the (newly acquired) capacity of the receptive substratum, or the presence of the suitable time and circumstances, or some other thing of this kind.

Having given this reply on the part of the philosophers, Ghazali answers it:

We will answer

That raises a question concerning the acquisition of the capacity, or the presence of the time or whatever may be supposed to have emerged as new in this case. So either the series will go on to infinity, or it will stop at an eternal being from which the first temporal being should have originated.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This question is the same question all over again as he asked the philosophers first,' and this is the same kind of conclusion as he made

them draw then, namely that a temporal proceeds from an eternal, and having given as their answer something which does not correspond with the question, i.e. that it is possible that a temporal being should proceed from the Eternal without there being a first temporal being, he turns the same question against them again. The correct answer to this question was given above: the temporal proceeds from the First Eternal, not in so far as it is temporal but in so far as it is eternal, i.e. through being eternal generically, though temporal in its parts. For according to the philosophers an eternal being out of which a temporal being proceeds essentially' is not the First Eternal, but its acts, according to them, depend on the First Eternal; i.e. the actualization of the condition for activity of the eternal, which is not the First Eternal, depends on the First Eternal in the same way as the temporal products depend on the First Eternal and this is a dependence based on the universal, not on individuals.

After this Ghazali introduces an answer of the philosophers, in one of the forms in which this theory can be represented, which amounts to this: A temporal being proceeding from an eternal can only be represented by means of a circular movement which resembles the eternal by not having beginning or end and which resembles the temporal in so far as each part of it is transient, so that this movement through the generation of its parts is the principle of temporal things, and through the eternity of its totality the activity of the eternal.

3.2 Ghazali argues the opinion of the philosophers that the temporal proceeds from the First Eternal:

Then Ghazali argues against this view, according to which in the opinion of the philosophers the temporal proceeds from the First Eternal, and says to them:

Is this circular movement temporal or eternal? If it is eternal, how does it become the principle for temporal things? And if it is temporal, it will need another temporal being and we shall have an infinite regress. And when you say that it partially resembles the eternal, partially the temporal, for it resembles the eternal in so far as it is permanent and the temporal in so far as it arises anew, we answer: Is it the principle of temporal things, because of its permanence, or because of its arising anew? In the former case, how can a temporal proceed from something because of its permanence? And in the latter case, what arises anew will need a cause for its arising anew, and we have an infinite regress.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This argument is sophistical. The temporal does not proceed from it in so far as it is eternal, but in so far as it is temporal; it does not need, however, for its arising anew a cause arising anew, for its arising anew is not a new fact, but is an eternal act, i.e. an act without beginning or end. Therefore its agent must be an eternal agent, for an eternal act has an eternal agent, and a temporal act a temporal agent. Only through the eternal element in it can it be understood that movement has neither beginning nor end, and this is meant by its permanence, for movement itself is not permanent, but changing.

And since Ghazali knew this, he said:

In order to elude this consequence the philosophers have a kind of artifice which we will expose briefly

If it is said

Matters, which receive forms, accidents and qualities, are not temporal at all. And the temporal qualities are the movement of the spheres - i.e., rotatory motion - and the relative attributes of that movement which emerge in course of time. (Such attributes are the three-fold, six-fold, fourfold, etc., relations of some parts of the sphere or the stars to each other - or to the Earth - e.g., the consequences of sunrise, or daylight, or the decline of a star from the highest point of elevation, or its distance from the Earth - because of its being at the Apogee - or its nearness to the Earth - because of its being at the Perigee - or its tending away from some regions - because of its being in north or south.) So, evidently, these relations inevitably belong to rotatory motion; for it is that motion itself which necessitates them.

And the temporal things in what is surrounded by the concave of the sphere of the Moon - i.e., the Elements and their affections, such as generation and corruption, or mingling and parting, or transformation from one quality to another - they are all traceable one to another in a manner which it would take one too long to describe. Ultimately, however, their primary causes are to be found in the rotatory celestial Motion, and in the relations of the stars to each other or to the Earth.

The outcome of all this is that the perpetual and everlasting rotatory motion is the source of all the temporal events. And this rotatory motion of the heaven is derived by the heaven from the souls of heavens. For these souls are living things which play the same part as our souls do in

relation to our bodies. And they are eternal. It, therefore, follows that rotatory motion, which is caused by the souls of heavens, must be eternal as well. The states of the souls being similar - because of their eternity - the states of the movements caused by them are also similar - i.e., these movements are everlasting.

For these reasons it is inconceivable that a temporal being should proceed from an eternal being, unless it were through the intermediacy of the everlasting rotatory motion. This motion resembles the Eternal in one respect - namely, that it is perpetual and everlasting. But it resembles a temporal being in another respect - namely, that every conceivable part of it comes into being after not having been. So, *qua* temporal by virtue of its parts and relations, it is the principle of all temporal phenomena. But, *qua* everlasting and having similar states, it is something which proceeds from the eternal soul(s) (of heavens). This shows that, if there are temporal events in the world, they must of necessity be connected with rotatory motion. And, since actually there *are* temporal events, the everlasting rotatory motion is thereby proved.

We will say

These lengthy details will not avail you. Because the question remains: Is this rotatory motion, which is the source of temporal events, temporal or eternal? If eternal, how did it become the principle of the first temporal being? If temporal, it should stand in need of another temporal being, and therefore an infinite regress should follow. You say that it resembles the Eternal in one respect, and the temporal in another. That is to say, it is something permanent which, nevertheless, emerges and re-emerges in course of time. In other words, it is permanently renewable, or renewably permanent. Now, let us ask: Is it the principle of temporal phenomena by virtue of its being permanent, or by virtue of its being renewable? If by virtue of its being permanent, how was it that something proceeded from a permanent being, whose states were similar, at a particular moment, as set over against all other moments? But if (it is the principle of temporal phenomena) by virtue of its being renewable, then what is the cause of the renewable character itself? And whatever that cause may be, it will need another cause, and thereby an infinite regress will follow.

This concludes our objections, which have by this time been placed on a secure basis. The philosophers employ many a clever device in order to

get rid of these objections. But we propose to postpone the consideration of these devices to some other problems, lest the discussion of this one should lengthen out, and our attention should be diverted from the main question to its side-issues. Later on; we propose to show that rotatory motion is not fit to be the principle of temporal events, and that; in fact, all the temporal events have been contrived by God. In that context, we will also refute the philosophers' theory that the heaven is a living thing which moves by choice, and whose movement is psychic like our movements.

Self-Assessment Test:

1. It is not improbable that something should be distinguished from what is opposed to it (as an alternative possibility) because of its relation to the system of things. But the moments of time are, on the contrary, absolutely similar in respect of the relation each bears to possibility and to the system of things. Explain in view of the theory of differentiation between two similarities.
2. Why did the philosophers accept the possibility of the procession of *a* temporal being, whatever it was, from an eternal being, but rejected the procession of the first temporal being from the Eternal?

4.0 Conclusion.

The philosophers disagree among themselves as to the eternity of the world. But the majority of the philosophers - ancient as well as modern - agree upon its eternity, holding that it always coexisted with God (exalted be He) as His effect which was concurrent with Him in time –as concurrent as an effect is with the cause, e.g., light with the Sun -and that God's priority to the world is the priority of the cause to the effect - viz., priority in essence and rank, not in time. This is owing to the consensus of opinion among the philosophers that, as a rule, it is inconceivable that something which has a beginning in time should proceed from the eternal without there being any intermediary. This holding by the philosophers is rooted in the biblical saying from the Genesis that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the water. Then God said, "let there be light"; and there was light. And so on until everything was created by His word. And in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.

The holding of al-Ghazali is drawn from the verse of the Quran which says that verily His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, "Be!"- And it is!

While the philosophers asserted that the relation between the world and its creator was through intermediaries, which are His word and His spirit, hence the eternity of the world as God, al-Ghazali maintained that such relation was the will of God only. For him, the doctrine of an eternal world means the denial of the divine attribute of will, putting an arbitrary limitation on God's absolute power.

5.0 Summary

1. The majority of the philosophers - ancient as well as modern-agree upon its eternity.
2. The consensus of opinion among the philosophers is that as a rule it is inconceivable that something which has a beginning in time should proceed from the eternal without there being any intermediary.
3. The procession of a temporal (being) from an eternal (being) is absolutely impossible. For, if we suppose the Eternal at a stage when the world had not yet originated from Him, then the reason why it had not originated must have been that there was no determinant for its existence, and that the existence of the world was a possibility only. So, when later the world comes into existence, we must choose one of the two alternatives (to explain it) - namely, either that the determinant has, or that it has not, emerged. If the determinant did not emerge, the world should still remain in the state of bare possibility, in which it was before. But if it has emerged, who is the originator of the determinant itself? And why does it come into being now, and did not do so before? Thus, the question regarding the origin of the determinant stands. In fact, since all the states of the Eternal are alike, either nothing shall originate from Him, or whatever originates shall continue to originate forever. For it is impossible that the state of leaving off should differ from the state of taking up.
4. How will you disprove one who says that the world came into being because of the eternal will which demanded its existence at the time at which it actually came into existence, and which demanded the non-existence (of the world) to last as long as it lasted, and (demanded) the existence to begin where it actually began ? . So, on this view, existence of the world was not an object of the eternal will, before the world

actually existed; hence its non-actualization. And it was an object of the will at the time when it actualized.

5. For that which originates in time is an effect or a product. And just as it is impossible for an originated thing to be uncaused, so it is impossible for the cause to fail to produce its effect when all the conditions and factors requisite for the causal operation are complete and nothing else remains to be awaited. The existence, of the effect is necessary, when the cause is operative, and all causal conditions are complete. The postponement of the effect is as impossible as the existence of a temporal but uncaused thing.

Now, before the existence of the world, the Willer existed: the will existed, and the relation of the will to its object existed. The Willer did not have to make a new appearance: nor did the will emerge as a new acquisition, nor did it acquire a new relation to its object. For anything of this kind would amount to change. How, then, did the object of will emerge as something new? And what prevented it from emerging before it actually did?

6. How do you know the impossibility of ascribing the origin of something to an eternal will? Is it the self-evident rational necessity, or theoretical knowledge, which is the ground of your judgment? Or, to use the terms employed by you in Logic, are the two terms in your judgment joined by means of a middle term, or without a middle term? If you claim that they are joined by means of a middle term - *i.e.*, if your method is deductive - you must state what that term is. But if you claim that this impossibility is known as a self-evident fact, why do not your opponents share this knowledge with you? It is, therefore, necessary for you to prove, in accordance with the rules of Logic, that it is impossible to ascribe the origin of the world to the eternal will. All you have said so far only amounts to a suggestion of improbability, and to a comparison of the Divine will to our inclination or will. The comparison is false; for the eternal will *does not* resemble temporal intentions. And the mere suggestion of improbability, unsupported by an argument, is not enough.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. It is unintelligible - rather, self-contradictory - to speak of an attribute of which the function is to distinguish something from its like. For by likeness it's meant that there is no distinction; and by distinction it's meant that there is no likeness. The question will be settled when it is

seen that the word 'will' is derived by analogy from our own will. And our will cannot conceivably distinguish something from its like.

How did al-Gazali address this assertion from the philosophers?

2. Why is it obnoxious; and contrary to rational necessity to say that the soul is eternal: that, although one by nature, it gets divided when it is related to bodies; and that, after its separation from bodies, it returns to its original character, and is reunified?

3. How will you disprove one who gives up the argument from rational necessity, and tries to prove (the eternity of the world) from another point of view - namely, that all the moments being equal with respect to the possibility of the relation of the eternal will to them, there cannot be anything to distinguish one particular moment from all those before and after it?

7.0 References and Further Readings

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UNIT 6: The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world (the second argument)

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2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main content

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3.1.1 Objection of the second argument.

3.2 The theologians' objection to the argument of the philosophers

3.3 Ghazali's answer to the philosophers

- 3 Conclusion.
- 4 Summary.
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1.0 Introduction

This problem is a corollary of the preceding one whereby the philosophers disagree among themselves as to the eternity of the world. But the majority of the philosophers - ancient as well as modern - agree upon its eternity, holding that it always coexisted with God (exalted be He) as His effect which was concurrent with Him in time – as concurrent as an effect is with the cause, e.g., light with the Sun -and that God's priority to the world is the priority of the cause to the effect - viz., priority in essence and rank, not in time. The application of this causal theory in their analysis of God's act of creation is the bone of contention between al-Ghazali and al-Farabi and Ibn Sina who became the main targets of al-Ghazali's attack. Therefore, in this unit we shall attend to the second argument of the philosophers about the priority of God to the world or posterity of the world to God, and the consequent al-Ghazali's objections to it.

2.0 Objectives.

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- a) Identify the causes of argument between al-Ghazali and the philosophers namely al-Farabi and Ibn Sina about the eternity of the world.
- b) Address the assertion of the philosophers that the world is eternal.
- c) Provide answers to the argument that a temporary being cannot proceed from the eternal.
- d) Shed light on the assertion of the philosophers about impossibility of the origination of time.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 The second argument

Ghazali says

In their second argument on this question, the philosophers assert:

He, who believes that the world is posterior to God, or that God is prior to the world, is bound to adopt one of two explanations: (a) He may mean by it that God is prior in essence, not in time, as one is prior to two. For one is prior to two by nature, although it is possible that both should co-exist in time. Or, God's priority will, on this view, be like the priority of the cause to the effect - e.g., the priority of the movement of a person to the movement of the shadow which follows him, or the priority of the movement of a hand to the movement of the ring on it, or the priority of the movement of a hand in water to the movement of the water. Both the movements in each one of these instances are simultaneous; and yet one is the cause, while the other is the effect. For it is said that the shadow moves because of the movement of the person; and water, because of the movement of the hand in water. And, in spite of the fact that the two movements are simultaneous, no one says that the person moves because of the movement of the shadow; or the hand, because of the movement of the water. If this is what God's priority to the world means, it will be necessary that both should be either eternal or temporal. It will be impossible for one to be eternal, while the other is temporal.

But, if God's priority means (b) that He is prior to the world in time, not in essence, then it follows that, before the existence of the world and time, there was a time when the world did not exist. For in that (pre-existing) time, the world must have been non-existent, as its non-existence preceded its existence. And, therefore, God must have preceded the world during a period which came to an end, but which had never begun. On this view, accordingly, there must be an infinite time before time. But that is self-contradictory. And for this reason it is impossible to believe in the origination of time. Finally, the eternity of time - i.e., the measure of motion - being necessary, it follows that the eternity of motion is also necessary. And hence the eternity of that which is in motion and the perpetuity of whose motion makes time itself perpetual.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

The mode of their reasoning which he reproduces does not constitute a proof. It amounts to saying that the Creator, if He is prior to the world, must either be prior not in time, but in causation, like the priority of a man to his shadow, or prior in time, like a builder to a wall. If He is prior in the same way as the man is prior to his shadow, and if the Creator is eternal, then the world too is eternal. But if He is prior in time, then He must precede the world by a time which has no beginning, and time will be eternal, for if there is a time before the actual, its starting-point cannot be imagined. And if time is eternal, movement too is eternal, for time cannot be understood without motion. And if motion is eternal, the thing in motion will be eternal, and its mover will necessarily be eternal too. But this proof is unsound, for it is not of the nature of the Creator to be in time, whereas it belongs to the nature of the world to be so; and for this very reason it is not true that He is either simultaneous with it or prior to it in time or in causation.

3.1.2 Objection of the second argument.

Ghazali says:

Objection may be taken to the foregoing by saying:

Time did have a beginning; and it was created. And before time, there was no time whatsoever. When we say "God is prior to the world and time," we mean that He was and the world was not; and that, afterwards, He was and the world was together with Him. And the meaning of our words: ". . . He was, and the world was not . . .," is limited to the presence of the Creator's being (essence) and the absence of the world's being (essence). Similarly, the meaning of our words: "He was, and the world was together with Him," is limited to the presence of two beings (essences). By His priority we mean that His being was the only being (before the existence of the world). The world may be compared to a man. Thus, for instance, if we say: "God was and Jesus was not; and, afterwards, God was and Jesus was together with Him," the statement will signify, first, the presence of one being and the absence of another; and, in the second stage, (it will signify) the presence of two beings (essences). In order to understand this statement, it will not be necessary to suppose any third thing. If the Imagination does not refrain from supposing any third thing, let no heed be paid to the blunders of the imagination(s).

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

These words are erroneous and mistaken, for we have already proved that there are two kinds of existence: one in the nature of which there is motion and which cannot be separated from time; the other in the nature of which there is no motion and which is eternal and cannot be described in terms of time. The first is known by the senses and by reason; the existence of the second-in the nature of which there is neither motion nor change-is known by proof to everyone who acknowledges that each motion needs a mover and each effect a cause, and that the causes which move each other do not regress infinitely, but end in a first cause which is absolutely unmoved. And it has also been established that the entity in the nature of which there is no movement is the cause of the entity in the nature of which there is movement. And it has been proved also that the entity in the nature of which there is motion cannot be separated from time, and that the entity in the nature of which there is no movement is entirely free from time. Therefore the priority of the one entity over the other is based neither on a priority in time, nor on the priority of that kind of cause and effect, which belongs to the nature of things in motion, like the priority of a man to his shadow. For this reason anyone who compares the priority of the unmoved being to the thing in motion to the priority existing between two things in motion is in error; since it is only true of each one in pairs of moving things that, when it is brought in relation to the other, it is either simultaneous with it or prior or posterior in time to it. It is the later philosophers of Islam who made this mistake, since they enjoyed but slight comprehension of the doctrine of the ancients. So the priority of this one being to the other is the priority of the unchanging timeless existence to the changing existence which is in time, and this is an altogether different type of priority. It is therefore not true of these existences that they are simultaneous, or that the one precedes the other, and Ghazali's observation that the priority of the Creator to the world is not a temporal priority is true. But the posteriority of the world to the Creator, since He does not precede the world in time, can only be understood as the posteriority of effect to cause,' for posteriority and priority are opposites which are necessarily in one genus, as has been shown in the sciences.' Since therefore this priority is not in time, the posteriority also cannot be in time, and we have the same difficulty all over again: how can the effect be delayed after the cause when the conditions of acting are fulfilled? The philosophers, however, since they

do not recognize a beginning in the totality of this existence in motion, are not touched by this difficulty, and it is possible for them to indicate in what way the temporal beings proceed from the eternal. One of their proofs that existence in motion has no beginning, and that in its totality it does not start, is that, when it is assumed to start, it is assumed to exist before its existence, for to start is a movement, and movement is of necessity in the thing in motion, equally whether the movement is regarded as taking place in time or at an instants. Another proof is that everything that becomes has the potentiality of becoming before it actually becomes, although the theologians deny this (a discussion with them on this point will follow); now potentiality is a necessary attribute of being in motion, and it follows necessarily that, if it were assumed to become, it would exist before its existence. What we have here are only dialectical arguments; they have, however, a much greater plausibility than what the theologians advance.

As for Ghazali's words:

If we should say, for instance, that God existed without Jesus, and then He existed with Jesus, these words contain nothing but, first, the existence of an essence and the nonexistence of an essence, then, the existence of two essences, and there is no need to assume here a third essence, namely time.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This is true, provided that Jesus' posteriority is not regarded as an essential temporal posteriority, but, if there is a posteriority, it is an accidental posteriority, for time precedes this posterior entity, i.e. it is a necessity of Jesus' existence that time should precede Him and that His existence should have begun, but the world is not subject to such a necessity, except in so far as it is a part of a moving existence beyond which time extends in two directions,' as happens to Jesus and other transitory individuals. Nothing of this is proved here; here it is simply explained that the objection is not valid. In addition, what he says afterwards of the proofs of the philosophers is untrue.

Answering in the name of the philosophers, Ghazali says:

If it is said

If we say that God was and the world was not, there will be a third thing implied in the statement, besides the presence of the Divine being and the absence of that of the world. This can be proved as follows: If we

suppose the future non-existence of the world, the presence of one being and the absence of another will be established. But in that case it will not be correct to say: "God was, and the world was not." On the contrary, the correct thing to say will be: "God will be, and the world will not be." For "God was, and the world was not" can be said only when it refers to the past. There is a difference between "Was" and "Will be"; and the two words are not interchangeable. So let us see what this difference amounts to. Undoubtedly, the two words do not differ in respect of the presence of the Divine being, and the absence of that of the world. But there is a third sense in respect of which they do differ. For since 'Was' belongs to the past, if we say: "God was, and the world was not" of the future, then it will be pointed out that our words are inaccurate, for 'Was' is said only of the past. This shows that there is a third thing which is expressed by the word 'Was' - namely, the - past. And, viewed in itself, the past is time; while, by reference to other things, it is motion, which passes with the passage of time. Therefore, it is evident that before the existence of the world there was time, which passed and finally expired when the existence of the world began.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

In this in brief he shows that when it is said 'such-and-such was without such-and-such' and then 'such-and-such was with such-and-such' a third entity is understood, namely time. The word 'was' shows this, because of the difference in the meaning of this concept in the past and in the future, for if we assume the existence of one thing with the non-existence of another in the past, we say 'such a thing existed without such a thing', but when we assume the non-existence of the one with the existence of the other in the future, we say 'such a thing will exist without such a thing', and the change in meaning implies that there is here a third entity. If in our expression 'such-and-such existed without such-and-such' the word 'existed' did not signify an entity, the word 'existed' would not differ from 'will exist'. All this is self-evident, but it is only unquestionable in relation to the priority and posteriority of things which are by nature in time. Concerning the timeless the word 'was' and the like indicate in such a proposition nothing but the copula between predicate and subject, when we say, for example, 'God was indulgent and compassionate'; and the same holds when either predicate or subject is timeless, e.g. when we say 'God was without the world, then God was with the world'. Therefore for such existents the time-relation

to which he refers does not hold. This relation is, however, unquestionably real when we compare the nonexistence of the world with its existence, for if the world is in time, the nonexistence of the world has to be in time too. And since the non-existence and the existence of the world cannot be in one and the same time, the non-existence must precede; the non-existence must be prior and the world posterior to it, for priority and posteriority in the moving can only be understood in this relation to time. The only flaw in this argument is to assume this relation between God and the world. Only in this point is the argument which Ghazali relates faulty and fails to constitute a proof.

3.2 The theologians' objection to this argument of the philosophers:

Ghazali says:

We will answer

The original sense of the two words 'Was' and 'Will be' in this case includes only the existence of one being and the non-existence of another. The third thing in respect of which they differ is only a relation, which is, however, necessary from our point of view. This can be proved as follows: If we suppose the future non-existence of the world, and then suppose our own existence as subsequent to it, then we will be able to say: "God was, and the world was not." And it will be right to say so, regardless of the fact whether we mean thereby the first non-existence (which preceded the existence of the world), or the second one *after* it.

So the relative character of the past and the future is demonstrated by the fact that the future may itself become the past, and may, consequently, be spoken of in terms of the past tense. And all these result from the inability of the Imagination to apprehend the commencement of a being without supposing something before it. This 'before,' which occurs to the Imagination so inevitably, is assumed to be a veritable existent - viz., time. And the inability of the Imagination in this case is like its inability to suppose a finite body, say, at the upper level, without something above its surface. Hence its assumption that beyond the world there is space - i.e., either a plenum or a void. When, therefore, it is said that there is nothing above the surface of the world or beyond its extent, the Imagination cannot accept such a thing - just as it is unable to accept the idea that there is nothing in the nature of a verifiable being before the existence of the world.

Now, it is possible to deny the truth of the Imagination's supposition of (a) void space or (b) infinite extension above the world, by saying that (a)

void space is not in itself meaningful, and (b) that extension follows the body whose sides are extended. If the body is finite, extension which follows it must also be finite. And this shows that occupied or empty space (which is not related to bodies) can have no meaning. So it is proved that, notwithstanding the Imagination's inability to accept such an idea, there is neither a plenum nor a void beyond the world.

Similarly, it may be said that just as extension in space follows body, so does extension in time follow motion. For *this* is the going - on of motion, just as *that* is the spreading-out of the sides of body. Just as the demonstration of the finitude of the sides of body prevents one from affirming spatial extension beyond it, so should the demonstration of the finitude of motion in either direction prevent one from supposing temporal extension beyond it. And one should be prevented from making this supposition, although the Imagination clings to this fantastic supposition, and is unwilling to give it up.

There is no distinction between temporal extension - which is described, in terms of its relations, as 'before' and 'after'-and spatial extension - which is described, in terms of its relations, as 'above' and 'below.' If it is possible to have an 'above' - less 'above,' it should also be possible to have a 'before' - less 'before.' (No doubt, the pre-existing 'before' may be, as the 'above' unrelated to body is, an imaginary and unreal thing.) This comparison is inevitable, and it should be considered carefully; for the philosophers are all agreed that beyond the world there is neither occupied nor empty space.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

There are two parts to this objection; the first is that, when we imagine the past and the future, i.e. the prior and the posterior, they are two things existing in relation to our imagination, because we can imagine a future event as becoming past and a past event as having been future. But if this is so, past and future are not real things in themselves and do not possess existence outside the soul; they are only constructs of the soul. And when movement is annihilated, the relation and measure of time will not have sense any more.

The answer is that the necessary connexion of movement and time is real and time is something the soul constructs in movement, but neither movement nor time is annihilated: they are only abolished in those things which are not subject to motion, but in the existence of moving things or in their possible existence time inheres necessarily. For there

are only two kinds of being, those that are subject to motion and those that are not, and the one kind cannot be converted into the other, for otherwise a conversion of the necessary into the possible would become possible. For if movement were impossible and then afterwards occurred, the nature of things which are not subject to motion would have changed into the nature of things subject to motion, and this is impossible. This is a consequence of the fact that motion inheres necessarily in a substratum. If movement were possible before the existence of the world, the things which are subject to movement would be necessarily in time, for movement is only possible in what is subject to rest,' not in absolute non-existence, for in absolute non-existence there is no possibility whatever, or one would have to admit that absolute non-existence could be converted into existence. Therefore, the non-existence or privation which necessarily precedes the occurrence of a thing has to be connected with a substratum, and will be disconnected from it when the substratum actually receives this occurrence, as happens with all contraries. For instance, when a warm thing becomes cold, the essence of warmth does not change into coldness; it is only the receptacle and the substratum of warmth that exchange their warmth for coldness.

The second part of this objection-and it is the most important of these objections-is sophistical and malicious. It amounts to saying that to imagine something before the beginning of this first movement (which is not preceded by any moving body) is like the illusion that the end of the world, for example, its highest part, ends necessarily either in another body or in empty space, for extension is a necessary attribute of body, as time is a necessary attribute of movement. And if it is impossible that there should be an infinite body, it is impossible that there should be an infinite extension, and, if it is impossible that there should be infinite extension, it is impossible that everybody should end in another body or in something which has the potentiality of extension, i.e. for instance, emptiness, and that this should continue without end. And the same applies to movement which has time as a necessary attribute, for if it is impossible that there should be infinite past movements and there exists therefore a first movement with a finite initial term, it is impossible that there should exist a 'before' before it, for, if so, there would be another movement before the first.

This objection is, as we said, malicious, and belongs to the class of sophistical substitutions-you will recognize what I mean if you have read the book on sophistic refutations. In other words, Ghazali treats the

quantity which has no position and does not form a totality, i.e. time and motion, as the quantity which possesses position and totality, i.e. body. He makes the impossibility of endlessness in the latter a proof of its impossibility in the former, and he deals with the act of the soul when it imagines an increase in the one quantity which is assumed to be actual, i.e. body, as if it concerned both quantities. This is a manifest error. For to imagine an increase in actual spatial magnitude, so that it must end in another actual spatial magnitude, is to imagine something which does not exist in the essence and definition of spatial magnitude, but to imagine priority and posteriority in a movement that occurs is to imagine something that belongs to its essence. For a movement can only occur in time, i.e. time has to pass beyond its beginning. For this reason one cannot represent a time the initial term of which is not the final term of another time, for the definition of 'the instant' is that it is the end of the past and the beginning of the future,' for the instant is the present which necessarily is the middle between the past and the future, and to represent a present which is not preceded by a past is absurd. This, however, does not apply to the point, for the point is the end of the line and exists at the same time as the line, for the line is at rest. Therefore one can imagine a point which is the beginning of a line without its being the end of another line, but the instant cannot exist without the past and the future, and exists necessarily after the past and before the future, and what cannot subsist in itself cannot exist before the existence of the future without being the end of the past. The cause of this error is the comparison of the instant with the point. The proof that each movement which occurs is preceded by time is this: everything must come to exist out of a privation, and nothing can become in the instant-of which it can be truly said that its becoming is a vanishing-and so it must be true that its privation must be in another moment than that in which it itself exists, and there is time between each pair of instants, because instant is not continuous with instant, nor point continuous with point. This has been proved in the sciences. Therefore before the instant in which the movement occurs there must necessarily be a time, because, when we represent two instants in reality, there must necessarily be time between them.

And what is said in this objection that 'higher' resembles 'before' is not true, nor does the instant resemble the point, nor the quantity which possesses position the quantity which does not possess position.' He who allows the existence of an instant which is not a present, or of a present which is not preceded by a past, denies time and the instant, for

he assumes an instant as having the description which we have mentioned, and then assumes a time which has no beginning-which is a self-contradictory assumption. It is, therefore, wrong to ascribe to an act of imagination the fact that there is a prior event for every occurrence, for he who denies priority denies the event in time. The contrary is the case with the man who denies the real character of the high, for he denies the absolutely high and, when he denies the absolutely high, he denies also the absolutely low,' and when these two are denied, also the heavy and the light are denied', and the act of the imagination that a body with straight dimensions must end in another body is not false; no, this is a necessary truth, for the body with straight dimensions has the possibility of increasing, and what has this possibility is not limited by nature. Therefore the body with straight surfaces must end in the circumscribing circular body, since this is the perfect body which is liable neither to increase nor to decrease. Therefore when the mind seeks to imagine that the circular body must end in another body, it imagines the impossible. These are all matters of which the theologians and those who do not start their inquiry in the proper scientific order are unaware.

Further, the relation between time and motion is not the same as that between spatial limit and spatial magnitude, for the spatial limit is an attribute of spatial magnitude, in so far as it inheres in it, in the way that the accident inheres in its substratum and is individualized by the individuality of its substratum and is indicated by pointing at its substratum and by its being in the place in which its substratum is. But this is not the case with the necessary relation between time and motion. For the dependence of time on motion is much like the dependence of number on the thing numbered: just as number does not become individualized through tire individuation of the thing numbered, nor pluralized through its plurality, so it stands with the relation between time and movement. Time, therefore, is unique for all movement and for each thing moving, and exists everywhere, so that if we should suppose people confined from youth in a cave in the earth, still we should be sure that they would perceive time, even if they did not perceive any of the movements which are perceived in the world. Aristotle therefore thought that the existence of movements in time is much like the existence of the things numbered in numbers for number is not pluralized through the plurality of the things numbered, nor is it localized through the individuation of the places numbered. He thought, therefore, that its specific quality was to mesasure the movements and to measure the existence of moving things, in so far as they are moving, as

number counts the individual moving things, and therefore Aristotle says in his definition of time that it is the number of movement according to the relations of anterior and posterior.' Therefore, just as the supposition that a thing numbered occurs does not imply that number comes into existence, but it is a necessary condition for the occurrence of a thing numbered that number should exist before it, so the occurrence of movement implies that there was time before it. If time occurred with the occurrence of any individual movement whatever, time would only be perceived with that individual movement. This will make you understand how different the nature of time is from the nature of spatial magnitude.

Ghazali answers on behalf of the philosophers:

If it is said:

This is a devious comparison. For the world has no 'above' or 'below.' It is a round body, and a round body has no 'above' and 'below.' Even so, if you call one direction - e.g., the one corresponding to your head - 'above,' and another - e.g., the one corresponding to your foot 'below,' then these will be names applicable to it insofar as it is related to you. The direction which is 'below' in relation to you is 'above' in relation to some other person, whom you might suppose to be standing on the other side of the Globe, so that the sole of his foot is opposite the sole of your foot. The parts of heaven supposed to be above you in daytime are those very parts which are below the Earth in night. For that which is below the Earth comes above it in the course of spherical revolutions. But the beginning of the world's existence cannot conceivably become its end. Suppose there is a piece of wood one of whose ends is thick, while the other is thin. Let us agree to call the direction of thinness, as far as it may go, the 'above,' and call the other the 'below.' Now, this will not bring about an essential difference among the parts of the world. For the names we have applied will differ in consequence of the difference of the position of that stick. If, for instance, the stick is turned upside down, the names will have to be interchanged - and this will not mean that there has been a change in the world. For 'above' and 'below' are purely relations to you, whereby the parts and planes of the world do not become different.

But the non-existence which preceded the existence of the world and the original limit of the existence of the world must be essential entities; and it is inconceivable that one of them should change so as to become the other. Nor can the non-existence supposed to follow the annihilation

of the world become the one which preceded the existence of the world. The two limits of the existence of the world - one of them being the First, and the other the Last - are essential and immutable limits. Unlike 'above' and 'below,' these limits cannot be rendered interchangeable by changing relations. Therefore, it is possible for us to say that the world has no 'above' and 'below.' But it is not possible for you to say that the existence of the world has no 'before' and 'after.' And now that 'before' and 'after' have been proved, time has no other meaning than that it is what 'before' and 'after' signify.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This answer given in the name of the philosophers is extremely unsound. It amounts to saying that 'above' and 'below' are relative to us and that therefore imagination can treat them as an infinite sequence, but that the sequence of 'before' and 'after' does not rest on imagination-for there is here no subjective relation-but it is a purely rational concept. This means that the order of above and below in a thing may be reversed in imagination, but that the privation before an event and the privation after an event, its before and its after, are not interchangeable for imagination. But by giving this answer the problem is not solved, for the philosophers think that in there exists a natural above; to which light things move and a natural below to which heavy things move, or else the heavy and the light would be relative and exist by convention, and they hold that in imagination the limit of a body, having by nature its place above, may end either in occupied or in empty space. And this argument is in-valid as a justification of the philosophers for two reasons. First, that the philosophers assume an absolute above and an absolute below, but no absolute beginning and no absolute end; secondly that their opponents may object that it is not the fact of their being relative that causes the imagination to regard the sequence of low and high as an infinite series, but that this happens to the imagination because it observes that every spatial magnitude is continuous with another spatial magnitude, just as any event is preceded by another event. Therefore Ghazali transfers the question from the words 'above' and 'below' to 'inside' and 'outside's.

3.3 Ghazali`s answer to the philosophers

Ghazali says:

We will say:

There is no difference between 'before' and 'after' on the one hand, and 'above' and 'below' on the other. But, since it will serve no purpose to stick to the words 'above' and 'below,' let us use such words as 'beyond' or 'outside' instead. Thus, we will say: The world does have an inside and an outside. Now, is there any occupied or empty space outside the world? Their answer will be: "There is neither an occupied nor an empty space beyond the world. If you mean by the 'outside' (of the world) the uppermost surface of the world itself, the world has an 'outside.' But if you mean anything else, the world has no 'outside.'" Similarly, when we are asked whether the world has a 'before,' we may answer: If that means whether the existence of the world has a beginning - i.e., one of its own limits at which it began - it has a 'before.' And this is analogous to the theory that the world has an 'outside,' if the 'outside' is interpreted to mean an uncovered limit or the boundary of surface. But if you mean by the 'before' something else, then the world has no 'before' - just as it is said not to have an 'outside,' if that means something over and above its own surface. If you say: "The commencement of an existence, -which had no 'before', is unintelligible," the rejoinder will be: The existence of a finite body, which has no 'outside,' is unintelligible. If you say: "Its 'outside' is its own surface whereby it is bounded off. It has nothing external to it which could be called its 'outside,'" we will say: In like manner, it's 'before' is the beginning of its existence whereby it is limited (in that direction). It has nothing external to it which could be called it's 'before.'

It remains for us to say that God had an existence, while the world was not with Him. This much does not necessitate the affirmation of anything else. What proves that such an affirmation would be an act of the Imagination is that it is related to space and time in particular. (Although our opponent believes in the eternity of body, yet his Imagination is sometimes agreeable to the supposition of its temporal origin. And although we believe in the temporal origin of body, yet our Imagination is sometimes agreeable to the supposition of its eternity. But this is so only in the case of body.) When we resume the discussion of time, the opponent is unable to suppose the beginning of time which had no 'before: The contrary of what is believed can be posited in the Imagination, as a hypothesis or a supposition; but this, like space, is something which cannot be posited (even) in the Imagination. Both he who does and he who does not believe in the finitude of body are unable to suppose a body beyond which there is neither a plenum nor a void. Indeed, the Imagination cannot accept such an idea. But it is said

"The clear evidence of reason does not disallow demonstratively the existence of finite body. Let no heed be paid to the Imagination." Similarly, therefore, (it may be said that) the clear evidence of reason does not disallow an existence which opened up, and yet had nothing before it. If the Imagination is unable to suppose such an existence, let no heed be paid to the Imagination. For, in the case of space, the Imagination - having found no finite body which did not have by its side some other body or air (which was imagined to be void space) - assumed that the same thing would be true of non-empirical reality. Similarly, in the case of time, when it found that every event followed another event, it refused to accept' an Event which had no 'before' - viz., an existing thing which might have run its course before that Event.

This, then, is the cause of error. And the comparison we have drawn here has enabled us to refute the philosophers.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

Through this transference, by his comparing the time-limit with the spatial limit in his argument against the philosophers, this argument becomes invalid and we have already shown the error through which it is specious and the sophistical character of the argument, and we need not repeat ourselves.

Self-Assessment Test:

1. How can you prove that between the priority of God and posterity of the world there was time?
2. What are the adoptable explanations to the assertion that the world is posterior to God or that God is prior to the world?

4.0 Conclusion.

When we have read the long discussions between the philosophers and theologians we may come to the conclusion that it is sometimes more the formula than the essence of things which divides them. Both philosophers and theologians agree that God creates or has created the world. For the philosophers, since the world is eternal, this creation is eternal. Is there, however, any sense in calling created what has been eternally? For the theologians God is the creator of everything including time, but does not the term 'creation' assume already the concept of time? Both the philosophers and theologians apply to God the theory that His will and knowledge differ from human will and knowledge in that they are creative principles and essentially beyond understanding; both

admit that the Divine cannot be measured by the standards of man. But this, in fact, implies an avowal of our complete ignorance in face of the Mystery of God. Still, for both parties God is the supreme Artifex who in His wisdom has chosen the best of all possible worlds; for although the philosophers affirm also that God acts only by natural necessity, their system, like that of their predecessors, the Platonists, Peripatetics, and Stoics, is essentially teleological. As to the problem of possibility, both parties commit the same inconsistencies and hold sometimes that the world could, sometimes that it could not, have been different from what it is. Finally, both parties believe in God's ultimate Unity

5.0 Summary.

The philosophers have a convincing argument for the eternity of the world. Suppose the world had a beginning, then before the world existed there was empty time; but in an empty time, in pure emptiness, there cannot be a motive for a beginning and there could be nothing that could decide God to start His creation.

Ghazali's answer is that God's will is completely undetermined. His will does not depend on distinctions in outside things, but He creates the distinctions Himself. But Averroës has the following argument: If God creates the world arbitrarily, if His Will establishes the distinctions without being determined by any reason, neither wisdom nor goodness can be attributed to Him. We have here a difficulty the Greeks had seen already. Either God is beyond the laws of thought and of morals and then He is neither good nor wise, or He Himself stands under their dominion and then He is not omnipotent.

Another argument for the eternity of the world is based on the eternity of time: God cannot have a priority to time, as the theologians affirm, because priority implies time and time implies movement. For the philosophers God's priority to the world consists solely in His being its simultaneous cause. Both parties, however, seem to hold that God's existence does not imply time, since He exists in timeless eternity. But in this case, what neither of the parties has seen, no causal relation between God and the world can exist at all, since all causation implies a simultaneous time.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment.

- 1. Ghazali says:**” the beginning of the world's existence cannot conceivably become its end”. Explain what he means by that?
- 2.** What is the proof that each movement which occurs is preceded by time?
- 3.** The philosophers say: “He, who believes that the world is posterior to God, or that God is prior to the world, is bound to adopt one of two explanations” Mention the two explanations?
- 4.** What are the consequences of Gods priority to the World in causation or in time according to Ibn Rushd.

7.0 Reference/Further Reading.

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MODULE TWO

THE THEORY OF PRE-ETERNITY OF THE WORLD TWO

UNIT 1: The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world (the second argument)

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1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main content

3.1 The philosophers restate their argument for the necessity of times eternity in another form.

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4.0 Conclusion.

5.0 Summary.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment.

7.0 Reference/Further Reading.

1.0 Introduction:

This unit is a continuation of the previous one in which we studied about the nature of Gods priority to the world and the posteriority of the world to God. If Gods priority to the World is in essence like the priority of man to his shadow where man is the cause and the shadow the effect then it will be necessary that both should be either eternal or temporal. It will be impossible for one to be eternal, while the other is temporal.

But, if God's priority means that He is prior to the world in time, not in essence, then it follows that, before the existence of the world and time, And, therefore, God must have preceded the world during a period which came to an end, but which had never begun. On this view, accordingly, there must be an infinite time before time. But that is self-contradictory. And for this reason it is impossible to believe in the origination of time. Finally, the eternity of time - i.e., the measure of motion - being necessary, it follows that the eternity of motion is also necessary. And hence the eternity of that which is in motion and the perpetuity of whose motion makes time itself perpetual. But according to the theologians the word 'years' could be applied *only* when the

sphere and its revolutions had come into being, which signifies the nature of a created world, then the philosophers decide to give up the word “years” and restate the argument in a different form which we are going to read now.

2.0 Objectives:

By the end of this unit, you will be able to

- a) State the viewpoints of both the philosophers and Ghazali concerning the priority of God to the World.
- b) Explain the answer of Ibn Rushd to Ghazali assertion on behalf of the philosophers
- c) Discuss the new form in which the philosophers restated their argument.

3.1 The philosophers restate their argument for the necessity of times eternity in another form.

Ghazali says:

The philosophers have a second way of forcing their opponents to admit the eternity of time. They say: There is no doubt that, from your point of view, God had the power to create the world in a year, or a hundred years, or a thousand years before He did. Now, these hypothetical measures differ in quantity. Therefore, it is necessary for you to affirm something - before the existence of the world - which had a quantitative or measurable nature, and some parts of which would be greater in quantity or size than others.

If you say that the word 'years' could be applied *only* when the sphere and its revolutions had come into being, then we will give up the word, and restate the argument in a different form. Thus, we will say: Supposing that since the beginning of the world till now its sphere has made one thousand revolutions, did God have the power to create before this world another world which would have made eleven hundred revolutions by this time? If you say No, then it would mean a change of the Eternal from inability to power, or a change of the world from impossibility to possibility. But if you say: Yes (which is an unavoidable answer in this case), the next question will be: Did He have the power to create a third world which would have made twelve

hundred revolutions by this time? Again, the answer must be **yes**. Now, let us ask: Could what we call the third world (we call it so because that is its position in our hypothesis, although it is the earliest one) be created together with what we call the second world? And would it still be possible for the two worlds to have made twelve hundred and eleven hundred revolutions respectively (they are supposed to have started at the same time and to have moved at an equal speed)? If the answer is **yes**, it will be an absurdity; for it is impossible for two movements, which have an equal speed and terminate at the same time, to differ in number. But if you say:

"The third world, which has made twelve hundred revolutions, could not have been created together with the second one which has made eleven hundred revolutions. Nay, it is necessary that the creation of the former should precede that of the latter by just as much as the creation of the latter itself will precede that of the first world. (The first world is called so, because it is the nearest to our imagination, as in our supposition we ascend from our own time upwards)," then the quantity of one possibility will be double of that of another. And there must be yet another possibility which is double of the whole. And this quantitatively determined or measurable possibility, some parts of which are longer than others to an ascertainable extent, can in reality be nothing other than time. For these hypothetical quantities cannot form an attribute of the Divine essence, which stands above all quantitative determinations. Nor can they be an attribute of the non-existence of the world. For non-existence is nothing; hence the possibility of any quantitative determination of it. But quantity is an attribute, which presupposes something of which it is the quantity. This 'something' is motion. And the 'quantity' is time, which is the measure of motion. Therefore, on your view, there must have been before the existence of the world something whose quantities should vary - that is, there must have been time. So you must believe that there was time before the existence of the world.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

The summary of this argument is that, when we imagine a movement, we find with it an extension which measures it, as if it were its measurement, while reciprocally the movement measures the extension, and we find that we can assume in this measure and this extension a movement longer than the first supposed movement, and

we affirm through the corresponding and congruous units of this extension that the one movement is longer than the other.' If therefore for you theologians the world has a certain extension from its beginning till now-let us suppose, for instance, a thousand years and since God according to you is able to create before this world another world, we may suppose that the extension He can give it will be longer than the extension of the first world by a certain definite quantity, and that He can likewise create a third world before this second and that the existence of each of them must be preceded by an extension through which its existence can be measured. If this is true, and there is an infinite regress of this possibility of anterior worlds, there is an extension which precedes all these worlds. And this extension which measures all of them cannot be absolute nonexistence, for non-existence cannot measure; it has, therefore, to be a quantity, for what measures a quantity has to be quantity itself, and the measuring quantity is that which we call time. And it is clear that this must precede in existence anything we imagine to occur, just as the measure must precede the measured in existence. If this extension which is time were to occur at the occurrence of the first movement, then it would have to be preceded by an extension which could measure it, in which it could occur, and which could be like its measurement. And in the same way any world which could be imagined would have to be preceded by an extension which measures it. Therefore this extension has no beginning, for if it had a beginning it would have to have an extension which measured it, for each event which begins has an extension which measures it and which we call time.

This is the most suitable exposition of this argument, and this is the method by which Avicenna proves infinite time, but there is a difficulty in understanding it, because of the problem that each possible has one extension and each extension is connected with its own possible and this forms a point of discussion;' or one must concede that the possibilities prior to the world are of the same nature as the possible inside the world, i.e. as it is of the nature of this possible inside the world that time inheres in it, so also with the possible which is prior to the world. This is clear concerning the possible inside the world, and therefore the existence of time may be imagined from it.

3.2 The Objection

Ghazali says:

All this is the work of the Imagination. The aptest way of counteracting it is to compare time and space. So, we will say: Did God have the power to create the highest sphere as larger by a cubit than the size He has actually created? If they say No, that will show God's inability. But if they say **yes**, then two cubits will be equally admissible, and then three and an infinite regress will follow. And in this, we will say, there is the affirmation of extension beyond the world which has a quantity, and which can be measured. For that which is occupied by the larger-by-two-cubits is not the same thing as that which is occupied by the larger-by-one. Accordingly, there must be Quantity beyond the world. And quantity presupposes something of which it is the quantity - viz., body or empty space. Therefore, there must be occupied or empty space beyond the world. What is the answer to this?

Similarly, did God have the power to create the round body of the world as smaller by a cubit, or two, than the size He has created? Would there not be a difference between the two suppositions (of size) - a difference caused by the elimination of plenitude or place - occupation? For the occupied space which disappears through the loss of two cubits is greater than that which disappears through the loss of only one. Therefore, void space will have to be regarded as something measurable. But void space is nothing; how can it be measured?

So our answer to the fantastic supposition by the Imagination of temporal possibilities before the existence of the world is the same as your answer to its fantastic supposition of spatial possibilities beyond the world. There is no difference.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This consequence is true against the theory which regards an infinite increase in the size of the world as possible, for it follows from this theory that a finite thing proceeds from God which is preceded by infinite quantitative possibilities. And if this is allowed for possibility in space, it must also be allowed in regard to the possibility in time, and we should have a time limited in both directions, although it would be preceded by infinite temporal possibilities. The answer is, however, that

to imagine the world to be bigger or smaller does not conform to truth but is impossible. But the impossibility of this does not imply that to imagine the possibility of a world before this world is to imagine an impossibility, except in case the nature of the possible were already realized and there existed before the existence of the world only two natures, the nature of the necessary and the nature of the impossible? But it is evident that the judgement of reason concerning the being of these three natures is eternal, like its judgement concerning the necessary and the impossible.

This objection, however, does not touch the philosophers, because they hold that the world could not be smaller or bigger than it is,

If it were possible that a spatial magnitude could infinitely increase, then the existence of a spatial magnitude without end would be possible and a spatial magnitude, actually infinite, would exist, and this is impossible and Aristotle has already shown the impossibility of this.' But against the man who believes in this possibility, because the contrary would imply a denial of God's power, this argument is valid, for this spatial possibility is just as much a purely rational concept as the possibility of temporal anteriority according to the philosophers. Therefore, he who believes in the temporal creation of the world and affirms that all body is in space, is bound to admit that before the creation of the world there was space, either occupied by body, in which the production of the world could occur, or empty, for it is necessary that space should precede what is produced.' The man who denies empty space and affirms the finiteness of body-like certain later Ash'arites who, however, separated themselves from the principles of the theologians; but I have not read it in their books and it was told to me by some who studied their doctrines-cannot admit the temporal production of the world. If the fact of this extension which measures movement and which stands in relation to it as its measurement were indeed the work of an illusion-like the representation of a world bigger or smaller than it really is-time would not exist, for time is nothing but what the mind perceives of this extension which measures movement. And if it is self-evident that time exists, then the act of the mind must necessarily be a veracious one, embodying reason, not one embodying illusion.

Ghazali says:

If it is said

We do not believe that anyone has the power to do that which is impossible. The world's being smaller or larger than it is is impossible. Therefore, it is beyond anyone's power.

IBN RUSHD:

I say

This is the answer to the objection of the Ash'arites that to admit that God could not have made the world bigger or smaller is to charge Him with impotence, but they have thereby compromised themselves, for impotence is not inability to do the impossible, but inability to do what can be done.

Ghazali says:

This plea will be invalid for three reasons

3.2.1 The First Reason

Firstly, it is repugnant to reason. For reason shows that the supposition of the world's being larger or smaller by a cubit than it is, is not like the supposition of black and white, or existence and non-existence, coming together. It is only the affirmation and denial of the same thing at the same time which is impossible, and to which all impossible things can be reduced. The assertion of the impossibility of a larger or smaller size is an arbitrary, unconvincing and false assertion.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This statement is, as he says, an affront to reason, but only to the reason of him who judges superficially; it is not an affront to true reason, for a statement about its being possible or not' requires a proof. And therefore he is right when he declares that this is not impossible in the way in which the assumption that black might be white is impossible, for the impossibility of the latter is self-evident. The statement, however, that the world could not be smaller or larger than it is is not self-evident. And although all impossibilities can be reduced to self-evident impossibilities, this reduction can take place in two ways. The first is that the impossibility is self-evident; the second is that there follows sooner or later from its supposition an impossibility of the same character as that of self-evident impossibilities.' For instance, if it is assumed that the world might be larger or smaller than it is, it follows that outside it there would be occupied or empty space. And from the supposition that there

is outside it occupied or empty space, some of the greatest impossibilities follow: from empty space the existence of mere extension existing by itself; from occupied space a body moving either upward or downward or in a circle which therefore must be part of another world. Now it has been proved in the science of physics that the existence of another world at the same time as this is an impossibility and the most unlikely consequence would be that the world should have empty space: for any world must needs have four elements and a spherical body revolving round them. He who wants to ascertain this should look up the places where its exposition is demanded this, of course, after having fulfilled the preliminary conditions necessary for the student to understand strict proof.

3.2.2 The Second Reason:

Then Ghazali mentions the second reason:

Secondly, if the world could not have been smaller or larger than it is, then its present size should be called a necessary, rather than possible thing. Arid a possible thing needs no cause. Therefore, you must say what the Materialists say - viz., rejecting the idea of the Creator, or the Cause of causes; although, actually that is not your belief.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

To this the answer which, Avicenna gives in accordance with his doctrine is quite appropriate.' According to him necessity of existence is of two kinds: the necessary, existent by itself, and the necessary, existent through another. But my answer on this question is still more to the point: things necessary in this sense need not have an agent or a maker; take, for example, a saw which is used to saw wood-it is a tool having a certain determined quantity, quality, and matter, that is, it is not possible for it to be of another material than iron and it could not have any other shape than that of a saw or any other measure than the measure of a saw. Still nobody would say that the saw has a necessity of being= See, therefore, how crude this mistake is! If one were to take away the necessity from the quantities, qualities, and matters of things produced by art, in the way the Ash'arites imagine this to happen concerning the created in relation to the creator, the wisdom which lies in the creator and the created would have been withdrawn, any agent

could be an artificer and any cause in existence a creator. But all this is a denial of reason and wisdom.

3.2.3 The Third Reason

Ghazali says:

Thirdly, this false assertion cannot even prevent your opponents from confronting it with something similar to it. For instance, we can say: Before the world came into being, its existence was not possible. On the contrary, existence is commensurate with possibility: being neither more, nor less than it. If you say: "This means that the Eternal has changed from inability to power," we will say: No, since existence was not possible, it was beyond power. The impossibility of realizing what is not possible does not show inability. If you say: "How is it that the existence of the world, which was impossible, became possible?" we will answer: Why should it be impossible that something impossible in one state be possible in another? If you say "The states are similar," we will answer: Similarly, the quantities are equal. Why, then, should one quantity be possible, and another smaller or larger than it by as much as a nail impossible? If *that* is not impossible, *this* cannot be impossible either. So this is the way to meet their arguments.

Our answers have brought out the truth that the possibilities supposed by the philosophers are meaningless. What must be taken for granted is that God is eternal and omnipotent, and that if He wills, no action is impossible for Him. And this much does not necessitate the affirmation of an extended time - unless the Imagination in its artful way should add something (to the meaning of 'action').

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

The summary of this is that the Ash'arites say to the philosophers: this question whether the world could be larger or smaller is impossible according to us; it has sense only for the man who believes in a priority of possibility in relation to the actualization of a thing, i.e. the realization of the possible. We, the Ash'arites, however, say: 'Possibility occurs together with the actuality as it is, without adding or subtracting anything.'

Now my answer is that he who denies the possibility of the possible before its existence denies the necessary, for the possible is the contrary of the impossible without there existing a middle term, and, if a thing is not possible before its existence, then it is necessarily impossible.' Now

to posit the impossible as existing is an impossible falsehood, but to posit the possible as existing is a possible, not an impossible, falsehood.' Their assertion that possibility and actuality exist together is a falsehood, for possibility and actuality are contradictory, and do not exist together in one and the same moment. The necessary consequence for them is that possibility exists neither at the same time as the actuality nor before it. The true consequence for the Ash'arites in this discussion is not that the eternal passes from impotence to power, for he who cannot do an impossible act is not called impotent, but that a thing can pass from the nature of the impossible to the nature of existence, and this is like the changing of the necessary into the possible. To posit a thing, however, as impossible at one time and possible at another does not cut it off from the nature of the possible, for this is the general character of the possible; the existence of anything possible, for instance, is impossible at the moment when its contrary exists in its substratum. If the opponent concedes that a thing impossible at one time is possible at another, then he has conceded that this thing is of the nature of the absolutely possible' and that it has not the nature of the impossible. If it is assumed that the world was impossible for an infinite time before its production, the consequence is that, when it was produced, it changed over from impossibility to possibility. This question is not the problem with which we are concerned here, but as we have said before, the transference from one problem to another is an act of sophistry.

And as to Ghazali words:

Our answers have brought out the truth that the possibilities supposed by the philosophers are meaningless. What must be taken for granted is that God is eternal and omnipotent, and that if He wills, no action is impossible for Him. And this much does not necessitate the affirmation of an extended time - unless the Imagination in its artful way should add something (to the meaning of 'action').

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

Even if there were nothing in this supposition-as he says-that implies the eternity of time, there is something in it that demands that the possibility of the occurrence of the world and equally of time should be eternal. And this is that God never ceases to have power for action, and that it is impossible that anything should prevent His act from being eternally connected with His existence; and perhaps the opposite of this statement indicates the impossibility better still, namely, that He should

have no power at one time but power at another, and that He could be called powerful only at definite limited times, although He is an eternal and perpetual being. And then we have the old question again whether the world may be either eternal or temporal, or whether the world cannot be eternal, or whether the world cannot be temporal, or whether the world may be temporal but certainly cannot be eternal, and whether, if the world is temporal, it can be a first act or not. And if reason has no power to pronounce for one of these opposite propositions, let us go back to tradition, but do not then regard this question as a rational one! We say that the First Cause cannot omit the best act and perform an inferior, because this would be an imperfection; but can there be a greater imperfection than to assume the act of the Eternal as finite and limited, like the act of a temporal product, although a limited act can only be imagined of a limited agent, not of the eternal agent whose existence and action are unlimited? .All this, as you see, cannot be unknown to the man who has even the slightest understanding of the rational. And how can it be thought that the present act proceeding from the Eternal cannot be preceded by another act, and again by another, and so in our thinking infinitely, like the infinite continuation of His existence? For it is a necessary consequence that the act of Him whose existence time cannot measure nor comprehend in either direction cannot be comprehended in time nor measured by a limited duration. For there is no being whose act is delayed after its existence, except when there is an impediment which prevents its existence from attaining its perfection,' or, in voluntary beings, when there is an obstruction in the execution of their choice. He, therefore, who assumes that from the Eternal there proceeds only a temporal act presumes that His act is constrained in a certain way and in this way therefore does not depend on His choice.

Self-Assessment Test:

- 1- What is the implication of saying that God didn't have the power to create before this world, another world which would have made eleven hundred revolutions by this time?
- 2- What is your answer to the fantastic supposition by the Imagination of temporal possibilities before the existence of the world?
- 3- How did the existence of the world, which was impossible, become possible?

4.0 Conclusion.

The philosophers argued that God's priority to the world or the posteriority of the world to God entails either God is prior in essence, not in time as one is prior to two by nature or like the priority of the cause to the effect - e.g., the priority of the movement of a person to the movement of the shadow which follows him, or the priority of the movement of a hand to the movement of the ring on it, or the priority of the movement of a hand in water to the movement of the water. Both the movements in each one of these instances are simultaneous; and yet one is the cause, while the other is the effect, or that God is prior to the world in time, not in essence, which means that before the existence of the world and time, there was a time when the world did not exist. Therefore, God must have preceded the world during a period which came to an end, but which had never begun, and for this reason it is impossible to believe in the origination of time. Simply put, the time that preceded the existence of the world is eternal.

Imam al-Gazali, objected to this argument stating with proves that time did have a beginning; and it was created. And before time, there was no time whatsoever. He further stressed that the problem with philosophers' incoherence in this regard was the inability of the Imagination to apprehend the commencement of a being without supposing something before it. This 'before,' which occurs to the Imagination so inevitably, is assumed to be a veritable existent - viz., time. And the inability of the Imagination in this case is like its inability to suppose a finite body, say, at the upper level, without something above its surface. Hence its assumption that beyond the world there is space - i.e., either a plenum or a void.

5.0 Summary

1-The philosophers assert that he, who believes that the world is posterior to God, or that God is prior to the world, is bound to adopt one of two explanations: (a) He may mean by it that God is prior in essence, not in time, or (b) that He is prior to the world in time, not in essence.

2-Al-Gazali refuted their argument saying that time did have a beginning; and it was created. And before time, there was no time whatsoever. When we say "God is prior to the world and time," we mean that He was and the world was not; and that, afterwards, He was and the world was

together with Him. And the meaning of our words: ". . . He was, and the world was not . . ." is limited to the presence of the Creator's being and the absence of the world's being.

3-If we say that God was and the world was not, there will be a third thing implied in the statement- namely, the – past and the past is time.

4-Al-Gazali: The third thing in respect of which they differ is only a relation, which is, however, necessary from our point of view. There is no distinction between temporal extension - which is described, in terms of its relations, as 'before' and 'after'-and spatial extension - which is described, in terms of its relations, as 'above' and 'below.

5-The world has no 'above' or 'below.' It is a round body, and a round body has no 'above' and 'below. The two limits of the existence of the world - one of them being the First, and the other the Last - are essential and immutable limits. Unlike 'above' and 'below,' these limits cannot be rendered interchangeable by changing relations. Therefore, it is possible for us to say that the world has no 'above' and 'below.' But it is not possible for you to say that the existence of the world has no 'before' and 'after.' And now that 'before' and 'after' have been proved, time has no other meaning than that it is what 'before' and 'after' signify.

6-There is no difference between 'before' and 'after' on the one hand, and 'above' and 'below' on the other. They are the same with 'beyond' or 'outside'. For its 'outside' is its own surface whereby it is bounded off, and likewise it's 'before' is the beginning of its existence whereby it is limited.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1-what do you understand by God's priority to the world?

2-How can you prove that there is neither a plenum nor a void beyond the world?

3-How did al-Gazali refute the assertion that the world has no 'above' or 'below'?

4-Explain the status of the time before the existence of the world and time?

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UNIT 2: The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world (the third argument)

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1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main content

3.1 Their third argument for the eternity of the world.

3.2 The Objection of the third argument.

4.0 Conclusion.

5.0 Summary.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment.

7.0 Reference/Further Reading.

1.0 Introduction:

This unit is a continuation of the first units. It treats the third idea of the philosophers that the existence of the world must have been possible before the world had come into being, for that which is possible never ceased to be. We shall see in the following discussion how Ghazali objected to these fantastic suppositions and his consequent assertions.

2.0 Objectives.

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- a) Discuss the position of the philosophers about the impossibility of the world becoming possible after it had been impossible.
- b) State the aim of the philosophers by positing the possible existence of the world before it actually existed.
- c) State what Ghazali admitted and what he rejected about the possibility of existence of the world before it came to be.

3.0 Main Content:

3.1 Their third argument for the eternity of the word:

Ghazali says:

Seizing (upon the word 'possibility'), they say: The existence of the world must have been possible, before the world had come into being. For it is impossible that, having been impossible, it should have become possible. And this possibility had no beginning - that is, it never lacked being. And the existence of the world never ceased to be possible; for there was no state when it could be described as impossible. Since the possibility never ceased to be, therefore, commensurately with it, that which is possible never ceased to be. For the meaning of our words: "Its existence is possible," is that its existence is not impossible. If existence was always possible, it must always have been not-impossible. If it had always been impossible, it would be false for us to say that it was always possible. And if it were false to say that it was always possible, it would be false to say that the possibility never ceased to be. And if it were false to say that the possibility never ceased to be, it would be true to say that the possibility had a beginning. And if it were true to say that it had a beginning, it must have been impossible before that (beginning). And this would lead to the affirmation of a state when the world was not possible, and God had no power over it.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

He who concedes that the world before its existence was of a never-ceasing possibility must admit that the world is eternal, for the assumption that what is eternally possible is eternally existent implies no absurdity. What can possibly exist eternally must necessarily exist eternally, for what can receive eternity cannot become corruptible, except if it were possible that the corruptible could become eternal. Therefore Aristotle has said that the possibility in the eternal beings is necessary.'

3.2 The Objection of the third argument:**Ghazali says:**

The origination of the world never ceased to be possible. Undoubtedly, its origination could conceivably take place at any moment of time. If it is supposed to have existed for ever, it will not be an originated thing.

Accordingly, the actuality will not be commensurate with the possibility, but incongruent with it.

And this is like their saying (in the case of space): "The supposition of the world as larger than it is, or the supposition of the creation of Body above the world (and the creation of a second body above the first one, and so on *ad infinitum*) is possible ; for the possibility of making additions is unlimited. In spite of this, however, an absolute and infinite void space is impossible."

Similarly, an existence whose limits are not determined is impossible. Nay, as it is said: "Body with finite surface is possible. But its quantities - i.e., the possibilities with respect to bigness or smallness -cannot be specified," similarly, therefore, the origination of the world is possible. But the possibilities of the commencement of its existence being early or late cannot be specified. It is only its being an originated thing which is specified; and only that specific character is, therefore, called a possible thing.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

The man who assumes that before the existence of the world there was one unique, never-ceasing possibility must concede that the world is eternal. The man who affirms, like Ghazali in his answer, that before the world there was an infinite number of possibilities of worlds, has certainly to admit that before this world there was another world and before this second world a third, and so on *ad infinitum*, as is the case with human beings, and especially when it is assumed that the perishing of the earlier is the necessary condition for the existence of the later. For instance, if God had the power to create another world before this, and before this second world yet another, the series must continue infinitely, or else we should arrive at a world before which no other world could have been created (however, the theologians do not affirm this nor use it as a proof for the temporal production of the world). Although the assumption that before this world there might be an infinite number of others does not seem an impossible one, it appears after closer examination to be absurd, for it would follow from it that the universe had the nature of an individual person in this transitory world, so that its procession from the First Principle would be like the procession of the individual person from Him that is to say, through an eternal moving body and an eternal motion. But then this world would be part of another world, like the transient beings in this world, and then

necessarily either we end finally in a world individually eternal or we have an infinite series. And if we have to bring this series to a standstill, it is more appropriate to arrest it at this world, by regarding it as eternally unique.

4.0 Conclusion.

According to Ghazali and the theologians the world is originated and before its existence, there was possibility of its existence and could exist at any time.

According to Ibn Rushd and the philosophers the world is not originated, it is eternal.

5.0 Summary.

1. Ghazali held the opinion that the origination of the world never ceased to be possible. If it is supposed to have existed for ever, it will not be an originated thing, and the actuality will not be commensurate with the possibility, but incongruent with it. Therefore the origination of the world is possible. But the possibilities of the commencement of its existence being early or late cannot be specified. It is only its being an originated thing which is specified; and only that specific character is, therefore, called a possible thing.

2. Ibn Rushd said that the man who assumes that before the existence of the world there was one unique, never-ceasing possibility must concede that the world is eternal.

For instance, if God had the power to create another world before this, and before this second world yet another, the series must continue infinitely

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment.

1. According to Ibn Rushd, what is implication of accepting the possibility of existence of the before it actually existed?
2. From where does human being proceed?
3. What will be the problem between the actuality and possibility of the world if it were supposed to have existed forever?

7.0 References and Further Readings

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UNIT3: The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world (the fourth argument)

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7.0 Reference/Further Reading

1.0 Introduction:

You read in the previous unit about the third idea of the philosophers that the existence of the world must have been possible before the world had come into being, for that which is possible never ceases to be. You will read in this unit about the fourth idea which says that every originated thing is preceded by the Matter in which it is. No originated thing is independent of Matter; and Matter itself is not originated. We shall see in the following discussion how Ghazali objected to these fantastic suppositions and his consequent assertions.

2.0 Objectives:

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- a) State the argument of the philosophers, that everything originated is preceded by its original matter

- b) Show how Ghazali objected to their argument
- c) Point at Ibn Rushd's reply to Ghazali's objection.

3.0 Main content

3.1 Their fourth argument:

Ghazali says:

In this argument, they say: Every originated thing is preceded by the Matter in which it is. No originated thing is independent of Matter; and Matter itself is not originated. It is only the Forms, Accidents and Qualities passing over Matter which are originated. This can be explained as follows:

Before its origination, every originated thing must have been either possible, or impossible, or necessary. Now, it is impossible that it should have been impossible; for that which is impossible in itself is never brought into being. Again, it is impossible for it to have been necessary in itself: for that which is necessary in itself is never deprived of existence. It follows that it must have been possible in itself. Therefore, the possibility of its existence was there before it existed. But the possibility of existence is a relative attribute which cannot exist in itself. There must be a substratum to which it could be related. But there is nothing but Matter to serve as a substratum. So it was related to Matter. This is like the relation we mean when we say that Matter receives heat and coldness, or blackness and whiteness, or motion and rest—that is, it is possible *for Matter* that these qualities should originate (in it), or that such changes should occur (to it). Similarly, therefore, possibility will be an attribute of Matter. And for Matter itself there is no (other) Matter. Hence the fact that it is not originated. If it had been originated, the possibility of its existence would have preceded its existence. And in that case, possibility would exist in itself, unrelated to any (substratum). But possibility being a relative attribute, its existing in itself is unintelligible.

It is not possible to say that possibility means the possible thing's being feasible, and the Eternal's having power over it. For we know that something is feasible only when it is possible. We say that someone has power over it, because it is possible; or that no one has power over it, because it is not possible. If by calling something possible we were to refer to its feasibility, then it would amount to saying: "Someone has power over it, because he has power over it," or: "It is beyond power, because it is beyond power." And that would be the definition of a thing

by referring to that very thing. It is now clear that the judgment about the possibility of something is a distinct intellectual judgment, whereby is known another judgment - viz., the one about its being an object of power.

Again, it is impossible to explain possibility in terms of the Eternal's knowledge of the nature of the possible thing. For knowledge requires the known thing. Therefore, knowledge of possibility and possibility itself which is the object of this knowledge must be different things. Moreover, even when identified with knowledge, possibility will remain a relative attribute which *must* be related to an essence. But there is nothing but Matter which could serve as such an essence; for Matter precedes every originated thing, and primary Matter itself is unoriginated.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

The summary of this is that everything that becomes is possible before it becomes, and that possibility needs something for its subsistence, namely, the substratum which receives that which is possible. For it must not be believed that the possibility of the recipient is the same as the possibility of the agent. It is a different thing to say about Zaid, the agent, that he can do something and to say about the patient that it can have something done to it. Thus the possibility of the patient is a necessary condition for the possibility of the agent, for the agent which cannot act is not possible but impossible. Since it is impossible that the possibility prior to the thing's becoming should be absolutely without substratum, or that the agent should be its substratum or the thing possible-for the thing possible loses its possibility, when it becomes actual-there only remains as a vehicle for possibility the recipient of the possible, i.e. matter. Matter, in so far as it is matter, does not become; for if it did it would need other matter and we should have an infinite regress. Matter only becomes in so far as it is combined with form. Everything that comes into being comes into being from something else, and this must either give rise to an infinite regress and lead directly to infinite matter which is impossible, even if we assume an eternal mover, for there is no actual infinite; or the forms must be interchangeable in the ingenerable and incorruptible substratum, eternally and in rotation.' There must, therefore, be an eternal movement which produces this interchange in the eternally transitory things. And therefore it is clear that the generation of the one in each pair of generated beings is the

corruption of the other; otherwise a thing could come into being from nothing, for the meaning of 'becoming' is the alteration of a thing and its change, from what it has potentially, into actuality. It is not possible that the privation itself should change into the existent, and it is not the privation of which it is said that it has become. There exists, therefore, a substratum for the contrary forms, and it is in this substratum that the forms interchange.

3.2 The Objection of the fourth argument

Ghazali says:

To this, objection may be taken as follows

The possibility they have mentioned is derived from an intellectual judgment. True, when the Intellect can suppose the existence of something - the supposition not being inadmissible to reason - we call that thing possible. Or, if the supposition is inadmissible, we call the thing impossible. Or, if the Intellect cannot suppose the non-existence of something, we call that thing necessary. But these intellectual judgments do not need an existent to which to be related as attributes. There are three reasons for this contention.

Firstly, if possibility required an existing thing to which it might be related, and whose possibility it might be said to be, then impossibility would likewise require an existing thing whose impossibility it might be said to be. But, as a matter of fact, the impossible in itself does not exist. Nor is there any Matter to which impossibility occurs and to which it is related as an attribute.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

That possibility demands an existing matter is clear, for all true intellectual concepts need a thing outside the soul, for truth, as it has been defined, is the agreement of what is in the soul with what is outside the soul.' And when we say that something is possible, we cannot but understand that it needs something in which this possibility can be. As regards his proof that the possible is not dependent on an existent, because the impossible is not dependent on an existent, this is sophistical. Indeed the impossible demands a substratum just as much as the possible does, and this is clear from the fact that the impossible is the opposite of the possible and opposite contraries undoubtedly require a substratum. For impossibility is the negation of possibility, and, if possibility needs a substratum, impossibility which is the negation of

this possibility requires a substratum too, e.g. we say that the existence of empty space is impossible, because the existence of independent dimensions outside or inside natural bodies is impossible, or that the presence of opposites at the same time in the same substratum is impossible, or that the equivalence of one to two is impossible, i.e. in reality. All this is self-evident, and it is not necessary to consider the errors here committed.

Ghazali says:

Secondly, in the case of blackness and whiteness, the intellectual judgment of possibility is made before their existence. If this possibility were to be related to a body to which they occur (so that one might say: What the possibility of blackness or whiteness means is that it is possible *for this body* to become white or black), then neither white nor black would in itself be possible, and the predicate of possibility would not be applicable to either of the two, for the possible thing would be the body to which blackness or whiteness was to be related. Now, we must ask: What about blackness or whiteness in itself? Is it possible, or necessary, or impossible? The only answer to this question is that it is possible. From this it follows that an intellectual judgment of possibility does not require the assumption of an existing essence to which possibility should be related.

IBN RUSHD:

I say

This is a sophism. For the possible is predicated of the recipient and of the inherent quality. In so far as it is predicated of the substratum, its opposite is the impossible, and in so far as it is predicated of the inherent, its opposite is the necessary.' Thus the possible which is described as being the opposite of the impossible is not that which abandons its possibility so far as it is actualized, when it becomes actual, because this latter loses its possibility in the actualizing process.' This latter possible is only described by possibility in so far as it is in potency, and the vehicle of this potency is the substratum which changes from existence in potency into existence in actuality.' This is evident from the definition of the possible that it is the nonexistence which is in readiness to exist or not to exist. This possible non-existent is possible neither in so far as it is nonexistent nor in so far as it is actually existent. It is only possible in so far as it is in potency, and for this reason the Mu'tazilites affirm that the nonexistent is a kind of entity. For non-existence is the

opposite of existence, and each of the two is succeeded by the other, and when the non-existence of a thing disappears it is followed by its existence, and when its existence disappears it is succeeded by its non-existence. As non-existence by itself cannot change into existence, and existence

by itself cannot change into non-existence, there must be a third entity which is the recipient for both of them, and that is what is described by 'possibility' and 'becoming' and 'change from the quality of non-existence to the quality of existence'. For non-existence itself is not described by 'becoming' or 'change'; nor is the thing that has become actual described in this way, for what becomes loses the quality of becoming, change, and possibility when it has become actual. Therefore there must necessarily be something that can be described by 'becoming' and 'change' and 'transition from nonexistence to existence', as happens in the passage of opposites into opposites; that is to say, there must be a substratum for them in which they can interchange-with this one difference, however, that this substratum exists in the interchange of all the accidents in actuality, whereas in the substance it exists in potency.'

And we cannot think of regarding what is described by 'possibility' and 'change' as identical with the actual, i.e. which belongs to the becoming in so far as it is actual, for the former again vanishes and the latter must necessarily be a part of the product. Therefore there must necessarily be a substratum which is the recipient for the possibility and which is the vehicle of the change and the becoming, and it is this of which it is said that it becomes, and alters, and changes from non-existence into existence. Nor can we think of making this substratum of the nature of the actualized, for if this were the case the existent would not become, for what becomes comes into being from the non-existent not from the existent.' Both philosophers and Mu'tazilites agree about the existence of this entity; only the philosophers are of the opinion that it cannot be exempt from a form actually existent, i.e. that it cannot be free from existence, like the transition, for example, from sperma to blood and the transition from blood to the members of the embryo. The reason is that if it were exempt from existence it would have an existence of its own, and if it had an existence of its own, becoming could not come from it. This entity is called by the philosophers 'lyle', and it is the cause of generation and corruption. And according to the philosophers an existent which is free from Kyle is neither generable nor corruptible.

Ghazali says:

Thirdly, they think that the souls of men are self-subsisting substances which are not body, or Matter, or impressed upon Matter. And, according to Ibn Sina and some other great thinkers, these souls are originated, and are possible before they have been originated. But before the existence of these souls, there is no essence or Matter. And yet their possibility is a relative attribute. Now, if this attribute cannot be explained in terms of the power of a powerful being or agent, how then can it be explained at all? So this difficulty will arise from their own theories.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

I do not know any philosopher who said that the soul has a beginning in the true sense of the word and is thereafter everlasting except -as Ghazali relates-Avicenna. All other philosophers agree that in their temporal existence they are related to and connected with the bodily possibilities, which receive this connexion like the possibilities which subsist in mirrors for their connexion with the rays of the suns According to the philosophers this possibility is not of the nature of the generable and corruptible forms, but of a kind to which, according to them, demonstrative proof leads, and the vehicle of this possibility is of another nature than the nature of the Kyle. He alone can grasp their theories in these matters who has read their books and fulfilled the conditions there laid down by them, and has besides a sound understanding and a learned master. That Ghazali should touch on such questions in this way is not worthy of such a man, but there are only these alternatives: either he knew these matters in their true nature, and sets them out here wrongly, which is wicked; or he did not understand their real nature and touched on problems he had not grasped, which is the act of an ignoramus. However, he stands too high in our eyes for either of these qualifications. But even the best horse will stumble' and it was a stumble of Ghazali's that he brought out this book. But perhaps he was forced to do so by the conditions of his time and his situation.

Ghazali says, speaking on behalf of the philosophers

If it is said

It is not possible to reduce possibility to an intellectual judgment. For intellectual judgment means nothing (in this case) but the knowledge of possibility. Now, possibility, qua an object of knowledge, cannot be identical with knowledge. For knowledge only encompasses its object, follows it, and is related to it - whatever the object may be. When the non-existence of knowledge is supposed, the object of knowledge does not disappear; but with the annihilation of the object of knowledge, knowledge will be annihilated. For knowledge and its object are *two* things; one of which is the follower, and the other is that which is followed. So, even if we suppose that all intelligent men have failed to suppose the possibility, or that they are unaware of it, still we will say that the possibility - nay, even the possible things themselves - will remain undisturbed. The intellects may be unaware of the possible things. But, obviously, the possible things remain, regardless of the fact whether any intellect is aware or unaware of them. Nay, they will remain, even if all the intellects and all the intellectual persons pass away.

As regards the three points you have made, they are not cogent. For (Firstly,) impossibility is a relative attribute which does not require an existent to which it could be related. By the impossible is meant the combination of two contraries. If a place is white, it will be impossible for it to be black and white together. So even in this case, there must be a designated subject. To this subject an attribute is attributed; and as long as the connection lasts, it is said that the contrary (of *this* attribute) is impossible *for* the subject. In this way, impossibility becomes a relative attribute existing in, and related to, a subject. As regards necessity, it is no hidden fact that it is related to the necessary being.

The second point - namely, that blackness in itself is possible - is wrong. For if blackness is taken in abstraction of the substratum in which it resides, then it will be impossible, not possible. It becomes possible only when it is supposed to be a quality in a body. A body is prepared for the successive occurrence of qualities; and successive occurrence of qualities is possible to bodies alone. Otherwise, blackness has no individual self to which possibility could be attributed.

Now to take the third point - i.e., the soul, there is a class of philosophers who believe that the soul is eternal, and that the connection between the soul and bodies is possible *for* the soul. To this class, your objection does not apply.

As regards those who believe in the temporal origin of the soul, some of them believe that the soul is impressed upon Matter, and follows (this) composition. (This seems to have been Galen's view in some of his works.) Therefore, on this view, the soul will be in Matter, and possibility of each soul will be related to its Matter.

As regards those philosophers who believe in the temporal origin of the soul, and who do not consider it to have been impressed upon Matter, the possibility of the soul would mean to them that it is possible *for* Matter that the rational soul should direct it. Thus the possibility of the soul, which preceded its origination, will be related to Matter. For, although the soul is not impressed upon Matter, yet there is a connection between the two - viz., a connection arising from the fact that the soul is the director or the employer of Matter. In this way, therefore, possibility will ultimately be related to Matter.

IBN RUSHD:

I say

What he says in this section is true, as will be clear to you from our explanation of the nature of the possible.

Then Ghazali, objecting to the philosophers, says:

It is right to reduce possibility, impossibility and necessity to intellectual judgments. As regards the contention that intellectual judgment means knowledge which requires a known thing, we will say: The intellectual judgment of possibility has a known thing - in the sense in which colouredness or animality or any other universal judgment is, according to the philosophers themselves, an established fact for reason. No one can say that known things do not correspond to these kinds of knowledge. But such 'things' do not exist among real objects. This is why the philosophers themselves have explicitly stated that the universals exist in minds, not in real objects. It is only the objective particulars which exist in the real things. These particulars are the data of the senses, not of the Intellect; but they are the cause of the Intellect's drawing from them a rational judgment by making abstraction of Matter. Hence colouredness is a distinct intellectual judgment independent of the judgments of blackness and whiteness. In being, a colour which is neither black nor white, etc., is inconceivable. But the unqualified form of colouredness is an established fact for reason. So it is said that this Form is a Form which exists in minds, not in real objects. If this is not an untenable position, the position we have taken cannot be untenable either.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This argument is sophistical because possibility is a universal which has individuals outside the mind like all the other universals, and knowledge is not knowledge of the universal concept, but it is a knowledge of individuals in a universal way which the mind attains in the case of the individuals, when it abstracts from them one common nature which is distributed among the different matters. The nature, therefore, of the universal is not identical with the nature of the things of which it is a universal. Ghazali is here in error, for he assumes that the nature of possibility is the nature of the universal, without there being individuals on which this universal, i.e. the universal concept of possibility, depends. The universal, however, is not the object of knowledge; on the contrary through it the things become known, although it exists potentially in the nature of the things known; otherwise its apprehension of the individuals, in so far as they are universals, would be false. This apprehension would indeed be false if the nature of the object known were essentially individual, not accidentally individual, whereas the opposite is the case: it is accidentally individual, essentially universal. Therefore if the mind did not apprehend the individuals in so far as they are universal, it would be in error and make false judgements about them. But if it abstracts those natures which subsist in the individual things from their matter, and makes them universal, then it is possible that it judges them rightly; otherwise it would confuse those natures, of which the possible is one.

The theory of the philosophers that universals exist only in the mind, not in the external world, only means that the universals exist actually only in the mind, and not in the external world, not that they do not exist at all in the external world, for the meaning is that they exist potentially, not actually in the external world; indeed, if they did not exist at all in the outside world they would be false. Since universals exist outside the mind in potency and possibilities exist outside the soul in potency, the nature of universals in regard to this resembles that of possibilities. And for this reason Ghazali tried to deceive people by a sophism, for he compared possibility to the universals because of their both being potentially in reality, and then he assumed that the philosophers assert that universals do not exist at all outside the soul; from which he

deduced that possibility does not exist outside the soul. What an ugly and crude sophism!

Ghazali says:

In reply to their assertion that the supposition of the non-existence or unawareness of intellectual persons will not annihilate possibility, we will say: Will such a supposition annihilate the universal judgments, viz., the Genera and Species? If they say Yes (which is the only answer; for indeed the Genera and Species mean intellectual judgments only), the same will be our answer with respect to possibility. There is no difference between the two kinds of judgment. If they claim that the Genera and Species will continue to exist in the Divine knowledge, again the same thing will be true of possibility. Thus our objection comes to tell. And it was our purpose to expose the incoherence of their thought.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This argument shows his foolishness and proneness to contradiction. The most plausible form in which it might be expressed would be to base it on two premisses: the first, that the evident proposition that possibility is partially individual, namely, outside the soul, partially universal, namely, the universal concept of the individual possibles, is not true; and the second, that it was said that the nature of the individual possibles outside the soul is identical with the nature of the universal of possibility in the mind; and in this case the possible would have neither a universal nor an individual nature, or else the nature of the individual would have to be identical with that of the universal. All this is presumptuous, and how should it be else, for in a way the universal has an existence outside the soul.

Ghazali says:

As regards their plea that impossibility is related to Matter - to which something has been attributed, and for which the contrary of that thing is, therefore, impossible - it must be pointed out that all impossible things are not of this kind. For instance, the existence of a partner of God is impossible. But in this case there is no Matter to which the impossibility could be related. If they assert that the meaning of the impossibility of a partner of God is that God's singular being or His unity is necessary, and that singularity is related to Him, we will say: No, the world exists with Him; His being is, therefore, not singular. If they assert

that His singularity - insofar as it precludes a rival - is necessary, and that, impossibility being the term contradictory to necessity, impossibility is related to Him, we will say: We mean that God's singularity - insofar as it precludes a rival - is not a singularity which precludes the coexistence of the contingent creatures with Him. For in the former sense, His singularity is necessary; in the latter, it is not. Now, we will make use of this distinction to concoct a relation between Him and the possibility (which the philosophers would have us relate to a substratum), even as they have concocted a relation between Him and impossibility - by shifting the discussion from impossibility to necessity, and then relating singularity to Him through (His) attribute of necessity.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

All this is vain talk, for it cannot be doubted that the judgments of the mind have value only in regard to the nature of things outside the soul. If there were outside the soul nothing possible or impossible, the judgment of the mind that things are possible or impossible would be of as much value as no judgment at all, and there would be no difference between reason and illusion. And that there should be a rival to God is just as impossible in reality as God's existence is necessary in reality. But there is no sense in wasting more words on this question.

Ghazali says:

Finally, the plea concerning the originated souls is invalid. For they have individual essences as well as a possibility which precedes their origination. And there is nothing to which this possibility can be related. The philosophers' statement that it is possible for Matter that the soul should direct it gives only a remote relation. If such a thing can satisfy you, then it would not be improbable if one said the meaning of the possibility of the existence of an originated thing is that it was possible for a powerful agent to originate it. In this way, possibility will be related to an agent, although it is not impressed upon Him - even as you related it to a passive body upon which it had not been impressed. To relate it to an agent is not different from relating it to a patient: for in neither case does 'impression' take place.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

He wants to force those who assume the possibility of the soul's becoming without there being an imprint in matter to concede that the possibility in the recipient is like the possibility in the agent, because the act proceeds from the agent and therefore these two possibilities are similar. But this is a shocking supposition, for, according to it, the soul would come to the body as if it directed it from the outside, as the artisan directs his product, and the soul would not be a form in the body, just as the artisan is not a form in his product. The answer is that it is not impossible that there should be amongst the entelechies which conduct themselves like forms something that is separate from its substratum as the steersman is from his ships and the artisan from his tool, and if the body is like the instrument of the

soul, the soul is a separate form, and then the possibility which is in the instrument is not like the possibility which is in the agent; no, the instrument is in both conditions, the possibility which is in the patient and the possibility which is in the agent, and therefore the instruments are the mover and the moved, and in so far as they are the mover, there is in them the possibility which is in the agent, and in so far as they are moved, the possibility which is in the recipient.' But the supposition that the soul is a separate entity does not force them into the admission that the possibility which is in the recipient is identical with the possibility which is in the agent. Besides, the possibility which according to the philosophers is in the agent is not only a rational judgement, but refers to something outside the soul. Therefore his argument does not gain by assimilating one of these two possibilities to the other. And since Ghazali knew that all these arguments have no other effect than to bring doubts and perplexity to those who cannot solve them-which is an act of wicked sophists, he says:

Ghazali says:

If it is said:

In all your objections you have tried to meet difficulties by raising other difficulties. You have not tried to solve the difficulties which had been raised by the philosophers.

We will answer

After all, this method has exposed the invalidity of the philosophers' theories. Nor do the causes of the difficulties remain unravelled during

the process of questioning (their principles) and reducing (them) to absurdity. However, in this book we have undertaken only an attack on their doctrines, and a refutation of their arguments. It is not our business to support a particular point of view. That is why we would not go beyond the purpose of this book.' Nor would we try to find out arguments which might prove the temporal origin of the world; for the only thing we intended to do was to refute the philosophers' claim that its eternity is definitely known.

But, in order - to affirm the true doctrine, we will - if Divine help enables us to do so - write a separate book, after having concluded this one. We will call that book "The Principles of Beliefs," and will be concerned therein with Affirmation, as in the present one we are concerned with Destruction. And God knows the best.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

To oppose difficulty with difficulty does not bring about destruction, but only perplexity and doubts in him who acts in this way, for why should he think one of the two conflicting theories reasonable and the opposite one vain? Most of the arguments with which this man Ghazali opposes the philosophers are doubts which arise when certain parts of the doctrine of the philosophers come into conflict with others, and when those differences are compared with each other; but this is an imperfect refutation. A perfect refutation would be one that succeeded in showing the futility of their system according to the facts themselves, not such a one as, for instance, his assumption that it is permissible for the opponents of the philosophers to claim that possibility is a mental concept in the same way as the philosophers claim this for the universal. For if the truth of this comparison between the two were conceded, it would not follow that it was untrue that possibility was a concept dependent on reality, but only either that the universal existed in the mind only was not true, or that possibility existed in the mind only was not true. Indeed, it would have been necessary for him to begin by establishing the truth, before starting to perplex and confuse his readers, for they might die before they could get hold of that book, or he might have died himself before writing it. But this book has not yet come into my hands' and perhaps he never composed it, and he only says that he does not base this present book on any doctrine, in order that it should not be thought that he based it on that of the Ash'arites. It

appears from the books ascribed to him that in metaphysics he recurs to the philosophers. And of all his books this is most clearly shown and most truly proved in his book called *The Niche for Lights*.

Self-Assessment Test:

- 1- Where are the philosophers heading to by claiming that the existence of the world must have been possible, before the world had come into being?
- 2- Did Imam Gazali admit the possible existence of the world before its actual being and how?
- 3- How did Gazali challenge the argument of the philosophers that every originated thing is preceded by the Matter in which it is. No originated thing is independent of Matter; and Matter itself is not originated. It is only the Forms, Accidents and Qualities passing over Matter which are originated?
- 4- Explain what philosophers meant when they said that it is impossible to explain possibility in terms of the Eternal's knowledge of the nature of the possible thing.
- 5- Where is the derivation of philosophers' possibility according to Gazali?

4.0 Conclusion.

The philosophers in their first argument tried to assert that the existence of the world is a possibility, and the possibility was prior to the existence, and before the possibility was impossibility. And this would lead to the affirmation of a state when the world was not possible, and God had no power over it. But Imam Gazali put it in another perspective by saying that the origination of the world is possible. But the possibilities of the commencement of its existence being early or late cannot be specified. It is only its being an originated thing which is specified; and only that specific character is, therefore, called a possible thing.

In the second argument, they claimed that every originated thing is preceded by the Matter in which it is. And every originated thing must have been possible in itself. Then possibility which precedes existence is a relative attribute to Matter that serve as a substratum to existence, and Matter is not originated. This leads to impossibility being prior to the possibility of existence.

Imam Gazali refuted their assertion by saying that the possibility they have mentioned is derived from an intellectual judgment and that needs no existent which to be related as its attribute.

5.0 Summary.

The existence of the world must have been possible, before the world had come into being. For it is impossible that, having been impossible, it should have become possible. And this possibility had no beginning - that is, it never lacked being. And if it were true to say that it had a beginning, it must have been impossible before that (beginning). And this would lead to the affirmation of a state when the world was not possible, and God had no power over it.

The Objection:

The origination of the world never ceased to be possible. Undoubtedly, its origination could conceivably take place at any moment of time. If it is supposed to have existed for ever, it will not be an originated thing. Accordingly, the actuality will not be commensurate with the possibility, but incongruent with it. Therefore, the origination of the world is possible. But the possibilities of the commencement of its existence being early or late cannot be specified. It is only its being an originated thing which is specified; and only that specific character is, therefore, called a possible thing.

Argument:

Every originated thing is preceded by the Matter in which it is. No originated thing is independent of Matter; and Matter itself is not originated. It is only the Forms, Accidents and Qualities passing over Matter which are originated. Therefore, the possibility of its existence was there before it existed, but the judgment about the possibility of something is a distinct intellectual judgment.

Again, it is impossible to explain possibility in terms of the Eternal's knowledge of the nature of the possible thing. For knowledge requires the known thing. Therefore, knowledge of possibility and possibility itself which is the object of this knowledge must be different things. Moreover, even when identified with knowledge, possibility will remain a relative attribute which *must* be related to an essence. But there is nothing but Matter which could serve as such an essence; for Matter precedes every originated thing, and primary Matter itself is unoriginated.

Objection.

The possibility they have mentioned is derived from an intellectual judgment. True, when the Intellect can suppose the existence of something - the supposition not being inadmissible to reason - we call that thing possible. Or, if the supposition is inadmissible, we call the thing impossible. Or, if the Intellect cannot suppose the non-existence of something, we call that thing necessary. But these intellectual judgments do not need an existent to which to be related as attributes.

Argument:

It is not possible to reduce possibility to an intellectual judgment. For intellectual judgment means nothing (in this case) but the knowledge of possibility. For knowledge and its object are *two* things; one of which is the follower, and the other is that which is followed. The intellects may be unaware of the possible things. But, obviously, the possible things remain. In this way, impossibility becomes a relative attribute existing in, and related to, a subject. As regards necessity, it is no hidden fact that it is related to the necessary being.

The second point - namely, that blackness in itself is possible - is wrong. For if blackness is taken in abstraction of the substratum in which it resides, then it will be impossible, not possible. There is a class of philosophers who believe that the soul is eternal, and that the connection between the soul and bodies is possible *for* the soul. To this class, your objection does not apply.

As regards those who believe in the temporal origin of the soul, some of them believe that the soul is impressed upon Matter. In this way, therefore, possibility will ultimately be related to Matter.

The Answer

It is right to reduce possibility, impossibility and necessity to intellectual judgments. As regards the contention that intellectual judgment means knowledge which requires a known thing, we will say: The intellectual judgment of possibility has a known thing - in the sense in which colouredness or animality or any other universal judgment is an established fact for reason.

As regards their plea that impossibility is related to Matter - to which something has been attributed, and for which the contrary of that thing is, therefore, impossible - it must be pointed out that all impossible things are not of this kind. For instance, the existence of a partner of God is impossible.

As regards the plea that blackness or whiteness has no self or individual essence, it is true if it means that this is so in Being. But it is not true if it means that this is so for, the Intellect as well. For the Intellect does apprehend universal blackness, judging that it is possible in itself.

Finally, the plea concerning the originated souls is invalid. For they have individual essences as well as a possibility which precedes their origination. And there is nothing to which this possibility can be related.

Argument:

In all your objections you have tried to meet difficulties by raising other difficulties. You have not tried to solve the difficulties which had been raised by the philosophers.

Objection:

However, in this book we have undertaken only an attack on their doctrines, and a refutation of their arguments. It is not our business to support a particular point of view.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment.

- 1- What is a possible thing according to Gazali?
- 2- How can you prove that Matter is not originated?
- 3- Is it possible to reduce possibility to an intellectual judgment?

7.0 References and Further Readings

Al-Ghazali, A. H, (1058-1111 CE), *Tahafut al-falasifa*. See the parallel English-Arabic edition, [hereafter *Tahafut*], translated, introduced and annotated by Michael E. Marmura (2000), Brigham Young University Press, Provo, Utah.

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Unit 4: The refutation of their belief in the everlasting nature of the world (The first argument.)

CONTENTS:

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main content

3.1 The refutation of their belief in the everlasting nature of the world

3.2 The first argument.

3.3 Objection of the first argument.

4.0 Conclusion.

5.0 Summary.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment.

7.0 Reference/Further Reading.

1.0 Introduction

The problem we are going to treat in this unit is an extension of the preceding one. As the philosophers consider the world to be eternal — i.e., without a beginning in time — so do they consider it to be everlasting — i.e., never coming to an end. They say that its corruption or annihilation is impossible; and that it always was, and ever will it be, as it is.

The four arguments they advanced to prove the eternity of the world apply to its everlasting nature as well. And the same objections will be taken to them as have been taken before.

In the first place, they say that the world, as an effect whose cause is eternal and everlasting, must be together with the Cause; and that since the cause is unchangeable, the effect cannot change either. This is the basis for their denial of a beginning (for the world); and this very argument is applicable to the end (of the world).

In the second place, they say that if the world passes away, its non-being will be after its being. Thus it will have an 'after'; wherein lies the affirmation of time.

In the third place, they say that the possibility of existence never ceases. Therefore, it is proper that the possible being should be (unceasing) in agreement with the possibility.

Their fourth argument is related to the third one which we considered above. For they say: When the world passes away, the possibility of the existence must still remain, for that which is possible can never become impossible. But possibility is a relative attribute. And (they claim) everything which is in time needs a preceding Matter; hence everything which passes away must also need a Matter out of which to pass away. This shows that the Matters and the Roots do not perish; it is only the Forms and the Accidents subsisting in them which perish.

We are going to consider these arguments separately and reply them just as we have done earlier, though there are two new arguments we shall focus at.

2.0 Objectives.

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- a) Summarize the arguments submitted by the philosophers as proves for the everlasting nature of the world.
- b) To mention the replies given by Al-Gazali to these arguments.
- c) Summarize the answers of Al-Gazli to the argument of Galen
- c) To show the differences among the observations of the Mu'tazilah, the Karramiyah, and the two Ash'ariyah in the issues of existence and annihilation of the world.

e) To mention the replies of Ibn Rushd to assertions of Ghazali to the arguments Galen and the observations of Karramiyah, and the two Ash'ariyah in the issues of existence and annihilation of the world.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 The refutation of their belief in the everlasting nature of the world

Ghazali says:

Know that this is part of the first question, for according to the philosophers the existence of the world, having no beginning, does not end either; it is eternal, without a final term. Its disappearance and its corruption cannot be imagined; it never began to exist in the condition in which it exists' and it will never cease to exist in the condition in which it exists.

Their four arguments which we have mentioned in our discussion of its eternity in the past refer also to its eternity in the future, and the objection is the same without any difference. They say that the world is caused, and that its cause is without beginning or end, and that this applies both to the effect and to the cause, and that, if the cause does not change, the effect cannot change either; upon this they build their proof of the impossibility of its beginning, and the same applies to its ending. This is their first proof.

The second proof is that an eventual annihilation of the world must occur alter its existence, but 'after' implies an affirmation of time.

The third proof is that the possibility of its existence does not end, and that therefore its possible existence may conform to the possibility.' But this argument has no force, for we regard it as impossible that the world should not have begun, but we do not regard it as impossible that it should last eternally, if God should make it last eternally, for it is not necessary that what begins has also an end, although it is necessary for an act to have a beginning and an initial term. Only Abu Hudhail al-Allaf thought that the world must have an end, and he said that, as in the past infinite circular movements are impossible, so they are in the future, but this is wrong, for the whole of the future never enters into existence

either simultaneously or successively, whereas the whole of the past is there simultaneously but not successively.' And since it is clear that we do not regard the incorruptibility of the world as impossible from a rational point of view-we regard indeed its incorruptibility and corruptibility as equally possible-we know only through the Divine Law which of the two possibilities will be realized. Therefore let us not try to solve this problem by mere reason!

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

His assertion that the argument of the philosophers for the eternity of the world in the past applies also to its eternity in the future is true, and equally the second argument applies to both cases. But his assertion that the third argument is not equally valid for the future and for the past, that indeed we regard the becoming of the world in the past as impossible, but that with the exception of Abu Hudhail al-Allaf, who thought that the eternity of the world was impossible in either direction, we do not regard its eternity in the future as absolutely impossible, is not true. For when it was conceded to the philosophers that the possibility of the world had no beginning and that with this possibility a condition of extension, which could measure this possibility, was connected in the same way as this condition of extension is connected with the possible existent, when it is actualized, and it was also evident that this extension had no initial term, the philosophers were convinced that time had no initial term, for this extension is nothing but time, and to call it timeless eternity is senseless. And since time is connected with possibility and possibility with existence in motion, existence in motion has no first term either. And the assertion of the theologians that everything which existed in the past had a first term is futile, for the First exists in the past eternally, as it exists eternally in the future. And their distinction here between the first term and its acts requires a proof, for the existence of the temporal which occurs in the past is different from

the existence of the eternal which occurs in the past. For the temporal which has occurred in the past is finite in both directions, i.e. it has a beginning and an end, but the eternal which has occurred in the past has neither beginning nor end.' And therefore, since the philosophers have not admitted that the circular movement has a beginning, they cannot be forced to admit that it has an end, for they do not regard its existence in the past as transitory, and, if some philosopher does regard it as such, he contradicts himself and therefore the statement is true that everything that has a beginning has an end. That anything could have a beginning and no end is not true, unless the possible could be changed into the eternal, for everything that has a beginning is possible. And that anything could be liable to corruption and at the same time could be capable of eternity is something incomprehensible' and stands in need of examination. The ancient philosophers indeed examined this problem, and Abu Hudhail agrees with the philosophers in saying that whatever can be generated is corruptible, and he kept strictly to the consequence which follows from the acceptance of the principle of becoming. As to those who make a distinction between the past and the future, because what is in the past is there in its totality, whereas the future never enters into existence in its totality (for the future enters reality only successively), this is deceptive, for what is in reality past is that which has entered time and that which has entered time has time beyond it in both directions and possesses totality. But that which has never entered the past in the way the temporal enters the past can only be said in an equivocal way to be in the past; it is infinitely extended, with the past rather than in the past, and possesses no totality in itself, although its parts are totalities. And this, if it has no initial term beginning in the past, is in fact time itself. For each temporal beginning is a present, and each present is preceded by a past, and both that which exists commensurable with time, and time commensurable with it, must necessarily be infinite. Only the parts of time which are limited by time in both directions can enter the past, in the same way as only the instant which is ever-changing and only the instantaneous motion of a thing in movement in the spatial magnitude in which it moves can really enter the existence of the moved.' And just as we do not say that the past of

what never ceased to exist in the past ever entered existence at an instant-for this would mean that its existence had a beginning and that time limited it in both directions-so it stands with that which is simultaneous with time, not in time. For of the circular movements only those that time limits enter into represented existence,' but those that are simultaneous with time do not afterwards enter past existence, just as the eternally existent does not enter past existence, since no time limits it. And when one imagines an eternal entity whose acts are not delayed after its existence-as indeed must be the case with any entity whose existence is perfect-then, if it is eternal and does not enter past time, it follows necessarily that its acts also cannot enter past time, for if they did they would be finite and this eternal existent would be eternally inactive and what is eternally inactive is necessarily impossible. And it is most appropriate for an entity, whose existence does not enter time and which is not limited by time that its acts should not enter existence either, because there is no difference between the entity and its acts. If the movements of the celestial bodies and what follows from them are acts of an eternal entity, the existence of which does not enter the past, then its acts do not enter past time either. For it is not permissible to say of anything that is eternal that it has entered past time, nor that it has ended, for that which has an end has a beginning. For indeed, our statement that it is eternal means the denial of its entering past time and of its having had a beginning. He who, assuming that it entered past time, assumes that it must have a beginning begs the question. It is, therefore, untrue that what is coexistent with eternal existence, has entered existence, unless the eternal existence has entered existence by entering past time. Therefore our statement 'everything past must have entered existence' must be understood in two ways: first, that which has entered past existence must have entered existence, and this is a true statement; secondly, that which is past and is inseparably connected with eternal existence cannot be truly said to have entered existence, for our expression 'entered existence' is incompatible with our expression 'connected with eternal existence'. And there is here no difference between act and existence. For he who concedes the existence of an entity which has an eternal past must concede that there

exist acts, too, which have no beginning in the past. And it by no means follows from the existence of His acts that they must have entered existence, just as it by no means follows from the past permanency of His essence that He has ever entered existence. And all this is perfectly clear, as you see.

Through this First Existent acts can exist which never began and will never cease, and if this were impossible for the act, it would be impossible, too, for existence, for every act is connected with its existent in existence. The theologians, however, regarded it as impossible that God's act should be eternal, although they regarded His existence as eternal, and that is the gravest error. To apply the expression 'production' for the world's creation as the Divine Law does is more appropriate than to use it of temporal production, as the Ash'arites did,' for the act, in so far as it is an act, is a product, and eternity is only represented in this act because this production and the act produced have neither beginning nor end. And I say that it was therefore difficult for Muslims to call God eternal and the world eternal, because they understood by 'eternal' that which has no cause. Still I have seen some of the theologians tending rather to our opinion.

Note: God's acts can be eternal and temporal: the eternal could be like the act of creating the paradise and whatever therein while the temporal is the act of creating the world and whatever exists in it. Though the philosophers will not accept this in so far there hold to their assertion that the Cause and the effect are eternal.

Ghazali says:

Their fourth proof is similar to the third, for they say that if the world were annihilated the possibility of its existence would remain, as the possible cannot become impossible. This possibility is a relative attribute and according to them everything that becomes needs matter which precedes it and everything that vanishes needs matter from which it can vanish, but the matter and the elements do not vanish, only the forms and accidents vanish which were in them.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

If it is assumed that the forms succeed each other in one substratum in a circular way and that the agent of this succession is an eternal one, nothing impossible follows from this assumption. But if this succession is assumed to take place in an infinite number of matters or through an infinite number of specifically different forms, it is impossible, and equally the assumption is impossible that such a succession could occur without an eternal agent or through a temporal agent. For if there were an infinite number of matters, an actual infinite would exist, and this is impossible. It is still more absurd to suppose that this succession could occur through temporal agents, and therefore from this point of view it is only true that a man must become from another man, on condition that the successive series happens in one and the same matter and the perishing of the earlier men can become the matter of the later. Besides, the existence of the earlier men is also in some respect the efficient cause and the instrument for the later—all this, however, in an accidental way, for those men are nothing but the instrument for the Agent, who does not cease to produce a man by means of a man and through the matter of a man. The student who does not distinguish all these points will not be able to free himself from insoluble doubts. Perhaps God will place you and us among those who have reached the utmost truth concerning what may and must be taught about God's infinite acts. What I have said about all these things is not proved here, but must be examined by the application of the conditions which the ancients have explained and the rules which they have established for scientific research. Besides, he who would like to be one of those who possess the truth should in any question try to examine or consult those who hold divergent opinions.'

3.2 The first argument:

Ghazali says:

The answer to all this has been given above. I only single out this question because they have two proofs for it.

The first argument is the one adopted by Galen. He said: If the Sun were liable to annihilation, signs of decay in it would be visible in course of time. But the astronomical observation of its size has for thousands of years revealed the same quantity. If, therefore, it has not decayed through these long ages, it follows that it is incorruptible.

3.3 Objection of the first argument:

There are two objections to this proof.

First the syllogistic form of this argument would be:

- i) If the Sun were corruptible, decay should befall it.
- ii) But the consequent is impossible.
- iii) Therefore, the antecedent is impossible.

This is what they call a hypothetical conjunctive syllogism. Here the conclusion does not follow; for the antecedent is not true — unless a new condition were added to it, viz., the assertion that if the Sun were corruptible, decay would be inevitable. So this consequent does not follow from this antecedent, without the addition of a condition, such as the assertion that if the Sun were liable to corruption by decay, then decay would be inevitable, or it must be shown that decay is the only way in which corruption takes place. For only then would the consequent necessarily follow from the antecedent, and we do not admit that decay is the only way in which things are corrupted. On the other hand, decay is one of the ways in which corruption takes place. And it is not improbable that even in the state of perfection something should be overtaken by corruption all of a sudden.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

He says in his objection here to this argument that there is no necessary relation between antecedent and consequent, because that which suffers corruption need not become weaker, since it can suffer corruption before it has become weaker. The conclusion, however, is quite sound, when it is assumed that the corruption takes place in a natural way, not by violence, and it is assumed besides that the celestial body is an animal, for all animals suffer corruption only in a natural way—they necessarily decay before their corruption. However, our opponents do not accept these premises, so far as they concern heaven, without proof. And therefore Galen's statement is only of dialectical value. The safest way to use this argument is to say that, if heaven should suffer

corruption, it would either disintegrate into the elements of which it is composed or, losing the form it possesses, receive another, as happens with the four elements when they change into one another. If, however, heaven passed away into the elements, those elements would have to be part of another world, for it could not have come into being from the elements contained in this world, since these elements are infinitely small, compared with its size, something like a point in relation to a circle.' Should heaven, however, lose its form and receive another there would exist a sixth element opposed to all the others, being neither heaven, nor earth, nor water, nor air, nor fire. And all this is impossible. And his statement that heaven does not decay; is only a common opinion, lacking the force of the immediately evident axioms; and it is explained in the Posterior Analytics of what kind these premises are.

Ghazali says:

Secondly, even if it is granted that there is no corruption without decay, how did Galen know that decay has not befallen the Sun? His reference to astronomical observation is absurd. For quantities discovered by astronomical observation are only approximate. If the Sun, which is said to be one hundred and seventy times as big as the Earth, or any other thing of the same size as the Sun loses as much as a range of hills, the loss cannot be apparent to the senses. So it may be assumed that the Sun is in decay, and that it has lost as much as a range of hills or a little more; but the human senses cannot perceive this loss, for sciences which depend on observation quantities are known only by approximation. This may be illustrated in this way: the philosophers tell us that gold and sapphire are composed of elements and are, therefore, liable to corruption. But if a sapphire is kept for a hundred years, the senses will not be able to perceive the diminution it has suffered. Therefore, the loss suffered by the Sun during the entire history of astronomical observation may be compared to that suffered by a sapphire in a century. In neither case is the loss or decay apparent to the senses, hence the utter unsoundness of Galen's argument.

We have ignored many other arguments of this kind; for intelligent people laugh at such things. This one was mentioned here only to serve as an example of what we have passed over. And this is the reason why we proposed to confine our attention to the four arguments which, as already has been seen, require some ingenuity in order that we may solve the doubts raised by them.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

If the sun had decayed and the parts of it which had disintegrated during the period of its observation were imperceptible because of the size of its body, still the effect of its decay on bodies in the sublunary world would be perceptible in a definite degree, for everything that decays does so only through the corruption and disintegration of its parts, and those parts which disconnect themselves from the decaying mass must necessarily remain in the world in their totality or change into other parts, and in either case an appreciable change must occur in the world, either in the number or in the character of its parts. And if the size of the bodies could change, their actions and affections would change too, and if their actions and affections, and especially those of the heavenly bodies, could change, changes would arise in the sublunary world. To imagine, therefore, a dissipation of the heavenly bodies is to admit a disarrangement in the divine order which, according to the philosopher, prevails in this world. This proof is not absolutely strict.

Note: It's like Ghazali is being misunderstood in his consideration of scientific observation as means of ascertaining the healthy or corrupt state of the Sun as absurd. By the example he gave of the Sun which is a hundred and seventy times as big as the earth to have a part of its body as small as a range of hills or little more decayed might not be apparent to the senses, he means that the Sun is so large that any sign of corruption in infinitesimal part of it may not be observed through the senses. For that it is correct to imagine that there may be such a quantity of decay in the Sun which the senses have not been able to observe. For if a decay happens in any part of the Sun and causes the part to disintegrate to the extent of falling down on sublunary bodies as Ibn Rushd claims, such decay must be so big to be apprehended by the senses. This is opposite of what Ghazli means. Take for instance the Moon which suffered a crack in it, and that crack was not observed by the scientists until the Quran pointed at it before it was confirmed by the scientists.

4.0 Conclusion.

1. The theologians regard it as impossible that the world should not have begun, but they do not regard it as impossible that it should last eternally, if God should make it last eternally, for it is not necessary that what begins has also an end.

2. The theologians also said that they did not regard the incorruptibility of the world as impossible from a rational point of view but they regard indeed its incorruptibility and corruptibility as equally possible and they knew through the Divine Law which of the two possibilities will be realized.
3. Theologians asserted that everything which existed in the past had a first term.
4. The philosophers have not admitted that the circular movement has a beginning, they cannot admit that it has an end either.
5. The philosophers said that 'everything past must have entered existence' must be understood in two ways: first, that which has entered past existence must have entered existence, and this is a true statement; secondly, that which is past and is inseparably connected with eternal existence cannot be truly said to have entered existence.

5.0 Summary

The philosophers believe that the world is everlasting. In their first proof on the everlasting nature of the world they said that the world is caused, and that its cause is without beginning or end, and that this applies both to the effect and to the cause, and that, if the cause does not change, the effect cannot change either; upon this they build their proof of the impossibility of its beginning, and the same applies to its ending.

Their second proof is that an eventual annihilation of the world must occur after its existence, but 'after' implies an affirmation of time, and God is not bound by time.

Their third proof is that the possibility of its existence does not end, and that therefore its possible existence may conform to the possibility.'

Ghazali objected to the argument of Galen in two ways: first is that decay is not the only sign of corruption and for that is not necessary that decay must affect Sun before it will corrupt. Second is that if given that no corruption without decay human senses cannot perceive any sign of corruption in the Sun because its largeness.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment.

1. What is wrong with the assertion of Abu Hudhail al-Allaf that “as in the past infinite circular movements are impossible, so they are in the future”,
2. How did Ghazali object to Galen’s argument?
3. How did Galen prove that the Sun is liable to decay?
4. criticize Ibn Rushds reply to Ghazalis objection of Galens argument?

7.0 References and Further Readings

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Unit 5: The refutation of their belief in the everlasting nature of the world (The Second argument).

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5.0 Summary.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment.

7.0 Reference/Further Reading.

1.0 Introduction

In the past unit you learnt that as the philosophers consider the world to be eternal — i.e., without a beginning in time — so do they consider it to be everlasting — i.e., never coming to an end. They say that its corruption or annihilation is impossible; and that it always was, and ever will it be, as it is.

Their four arguments they advanced to prove the eternity of the world apply to its everlasting nature as well. And the same objections will be

taken to them by Ghazali as have been taken before. In this unit you will read about the assertion of the philosophers that the substances in the world are imperishable. For no cause of their annihilation will be intelligible. For if not having been the Willer of the nonexistence of the world, He becomes one, He undergoes a change, first from non-existence to existence, and then from existence to non-existence. For that Ghazali say: "Thus, the argument we had advanced to prove the impossibility of the origination of something in time because of the eternal will also prove the impossibility of its passing into non-existence."

3.0 Objectives

By the end of this unit you will be able to:

- a) State the idea of the second argument as claimed by the philosophers
- b) Criticize the second argument of the philosophers considering the viewpoints of Ghazali and Ibn Rushd.
- c) Write down the opinions of Ghazali and Ibn Rushd about the annihilation of the world.

3.0 Main content :

3.1 The refutation of their belief in the everlasting nature of the world.

3.2 The second argument:

Ghazali says:

In their second argument for the impossibility of the annihilation of the world, the philosophers say:

The substances in the world are imperishable. For no cause of their annihilation will be intelligible. If that which has not been non-existent becomes so there must be a cause of this change. Such a cause will either be the will of the Eternal. But this is impossible. For if not having been the Willer of the nonexistence of the world, He becomes one, He undergoes a change. Or it will lead to the conclusion that the Eternal and His will continue uniform in all states, but the object of the will

nevertheless changes — first from non-existence to existence, and then from existence to non-existence.

Thus, the argument we had advanced to prove the impossibility of the origination of something in time because of the eternal will also proves the impossibility of its passing into non-existence.

Besides, there is another difficulty which is even more formidable. Namely, the object of the will is obviously the action of the willer. Now, even if he who was not an agent, but became one later, does not change in himself, yet it is necessary that his action should become an existent after not having been one. For if the agent remains as he was at the time when he had not effected an action — viz., even if at present he has no action — then he will have done nothing. And non-existence is Nothing. How, then, can it be an action? Suppose He annihilates the world, whereby an action which had not been done before emerges. What can this action be? Is it the existence of the world? Impossible, for existence has come to an end. Is it the non-existence of the world? No, for non-existence is Nothing; hence it cannot be an action. To be an existent is the least degree of an action. But the non-existence of the world is no existent; hence it cannot be said to be effected by an agent, or produced by a producer.

This difficulty (claim the philosophers) has divided the *Mutakallimun* into four groups, each attempting the impossible by trying to solve it:

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

He says here that the philosophers compel the theologians who admit the annihilation of the world to draw the consequence that from the Eternal, who produced the world, there proceeds a new act, i.e. the act of annihilation, just as they compelled them to draw this consequence in regard to His temporal production. About this problem everything has been said already in our discussion of temporal production, for the same difficulties as befall the problem of production apply to annihilation, and there is no sense in repeating ourselves. But the special difficulty he mentions here is that from the assumption of the world's temporal production it follows that the act of the agent attaches itself to nonexistence, so that in fact the agent performs a non-existing act and this seemed to all the parties too shocking to be accepted,' and therefore they took refuge in theories he mentions later. But this

consequence follows necessarily from any theory which affirms that the act of the agent is connected with absolute creation—that is, the production of something that did not exist before in potency and was not a possibility which its agent converted from potency into actuality, a theory which affirms in fact that the agent created it out of nothing. But for the philosophers the act of the agent is nothing but the actualizing of what is in potency, and this act is, according to them, attached to an existent in two ways, either in production, by converting the thing from its potential existence into actuality so that its non-existence is terminated, or in destruction, by converting the thing from its actual existence into potential existence, so that it passes into a relative non-existence. But he who does not conceive the act of the agent in this way has to draw the consequence that the agent's act is attached to non-existence in both ways, in production as in destruction; only as this seems clearer in the case of destruction, the theologians could not defend themselves against their opponents. For it is clear that for the man who holds the theory of absolute annihilation the agent must perform something non-existent, for when the agent converts the thing from existence into absolute non-existence, he directs his first intention to something non-existent, by contrast with what happens when he converts it from actual existence into potential existence; for in this conversion the passage into non-existence is only a secondary fact. The same consequence applies to production, only here it is not so obvious, for the existence of the thing implies the annulment of its non-existence, and therefore production is nothing but the changing of the non-existence of a thing into its existence; but since this movement is directed towards production, the theologians could say that the act of the agent is attached solely to production. They could not, however, say this in regard to destruction, since this movement is directed towards non-existence. They have, therefore, no right to say that in production the act of the agent attaches itself only to production, and not to the annulment of nonexistence, for in production the annulment of non-existence is necessary, and therefore the act of the agent must necessarily be attached to nonexistence. For according to the doctrine of the theologians, the existent possesses only two conditions: a condition in which it is absolutely nonexistent and a condition in which it is actually existent, The act of the agent, therefore, attaches itself to it, neither when it is actually existent, nor when it is non-existent . Thus only the following alternatives remain: either the act of the agent does not attach itself to it at all, or it attaches itself to non-existence,' and

non-existence changes itself into existence. He who conceives the agent in this way must regard the change of nonexistence itself into existence, and of existence itself into nonexistence, as possible, and must hold that the act of the agent can attach itself to the conversion of either of these opposites into the other. This is absolutely impossible in respect to the other opposites, not to speak of non-existence and existence.

The theologians perceived the agent in the way the weak sighted perceive the shadow of a thing instead of the thing itself and then mistake the shadow for it. But, as you see, all these difficulties arise for the man who has not understood that production is the conversion of a thing from potential into actual existence, and that destruction is the reverse, i.e. the change from the actual into the potentials. It appears from this that possibility and matter are necessarily connected with anything becoming, and that what is subsistent in itself can be neither destroyed nor produced.

The theory of the Ash'arites mentioned here by Ghazali, which regards the production of a substance, subsistent in itself, as possible, but not so its destruction, is an extremely weak one, for the consequences which apply to destruction apply also to production, only, it was thought, because in the former case it is more obvious that there was here a real difference. He then mentions the answers of the different sects to the difficulty which faces them on the question of annihilation.

Ghazali says:

(a) The Mu'tazilah say: The action which proceeds from Him is an existent — viz., Annihilation, which is created by Him not in a substratum. So the whole world will perish all of a sudden. And the created Annihilation itself will perish, so that there will be no need for another Annihilation, which would start an infinite regress.

And mentioning this answer to the difficulty, he says:

But this is false for several reasons. Firstly, Annihilation is no intelligible existent whose creation could be supposed. Secondly, if it were an existent, it would not perish by itself, without any cause of annihilation. Thirdly, even on this assumption the world does not perish. For if Annihilation is supposed to be created within the world itself, the whole supposition will be absurd. For the substratum and that which subsists in it come into contact, and, therefore, coexist — though only for an instant. If, therefore, the world and Annihilation could be supposed to coexist, they would not be mutually exclusive: and then the world would not be annihilated. But if Annihilation is created neither within the world

nor in any other substratum, how then can the existence of the one exclude that of the other?

Further, this view is obnoxious for another reason. It implies that God has not the power to annihilate *some* of the substances of the world, and allow others to survive. Nay, it is implied here that He has not the power to do anything, except to create Annihilation which is to annihilate the whole world at once — for not being in a particular substratum, it is brought to bear upon the whole simultaneously and indiscriminately.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

The answer is too foolish to merit refutation. Extinction and annihilation are synonymous, and if God cannot create annihilation, He cannot create extinction either. And even if we suppose extinction to be an existent, it could at most be an accident, but an accident without a substratum is absurd. And how can one imagine that the non-existent causes non-existence? All this resembles the talk of the delirious.

Ghazali says:

(b) The Karramiyah say: Destruction is an action of God, which (action) signifies an existent originated within the Divine essence (May He be exalted above what is said of Him). Thus, the world becomes non-existent through this action. Similarly, existence is the result of an act of production which occurs in His Essence, and because of which the existent becomes an existent.

This is also false. In the first place, it makes the Eternal subject to temporal phenomena. Further, it goes outside the scope of intelligible reality, for because production is understood as a being which can be ascribed to will and power. To affirm anything else besides will, power and the being to which power extends — viz., the world is unintelligible. The same is true of destruction.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

The Karramites believe that there are here three factors: the agent, the act-which they call creation-and an object, i.e. that to which the act attaches itself, and likewise they believe that in the process of annihilation there are three factors: the annihilator, the act-which they call annihilation and a non-existent. They believe that the act inheres in

the essence of the agent and according to them the rise of such a new condition' in the agent does not imply that the agent is determined by a temporal cause, for such a condition is of a relative and proportional type, and a new relation and proportion does not involve newness in the substratum; only those new events involve a change in the substratum which change the essence of the substratum, e.g. the changing of a thing from whiteness to blackness. Their statement, however, that the act inheres in the essence of the agent is a mistake; it is only a relation which exists between the agent and the object of the act which, when assigned to the agent, is called 'act' and when assigned to the object is called 'passivity' Through this assumption the Karramites are not obliged to admit that, as the Ash'arites believed, the Eternal produces temporal reality' or that the Eternal is not eternal, but the consequence which is forced upon them is that there must be a cause anterior to the Eternal, for, when an agent acts after not having acted, all the conditions for the existence of his object being fulfilled at the time he did not act, there must have arisen a new quality in the agent at the time when he acts, and each new event demands a new causes So there must be another cause before the first, and so on ad infinitum.

Ghazali says:

(c) The Ash'ariyah say: The Accidents perish by themselves, and their immortality is inconceivable. For if it were conceivable, their annihilation would be inconceivable in that sense. As regards the Substances, they are not immortal in themselves, but because of an immortality which is additional to their being. So when God does not create immortality for them, the Substances will perish because of the absence of that which would make them immortal.

This is also false: because it comes into conflict with the sensible facts, inasmuch as it implies that blackness or whiteness does not survive and continue, but has its being renewed ever and anon. The Intellect rejects this assertion, as it would reject the assertion that body has its being renewed ever and anon. For the Intellect, which judges that the hair on the head of a man today is the same hair as, and not merely similar to, the hair which was there yesterday, makes the same judgment in regard to the blackness of the hair.

There is yet another difficulty in this theory. For if that which survives does so because of a (derived) immortality, it follows that the Divine attributes should likewise continue because of a (derived) immortality:

that this immortality should need another immortality to immortalize it, and that, therefore, an infinite regress should follow.

(d) Another section of the Ash'ariyah say: The Accidents perish themselves: but the Substances perish when God would not create in them motion or rest, etc. When it has nothing of the sort, it perishes.

It appears that both the groups among the Ash'ariyah incline towards the view that destruction is not an action, but a refraining from action: for they do not find it intelligible to regard non-existence as an action.

Since all these methods of explaining the destruction of the world have been found to be invalid, there is no ground left for anyone to believe in the possibility of the destruction of the world.

This criticism applies when the world is admitted to have originated in time. For, although they admit the temporal origin of the human souls, still they assert the impossibility of their destruction, basing the argument on the same principles as we have related above. In short, the position taken by them is: The annihilation of anything — whether eternal or originated in time — which exists in itself, not in a substratum, is impossible. If one says to them: "When fire burns under water, water is destroyed, they will answer it is not destroyed. It only changes into steam. Later on, steam will change into water once again. Matter, i.e., the *Hayuli*, persists in Air. It is the same Matter as was there beneath the Form of water. Now the *Hayuli* has put on the Form of Air, having divested itself of the Form of water. When the air is cooled, it will condense, and water will reappear. Matter does not emerge anew (during these changes). On the contrary, the Matters are common to all the Elements. It is only the Forms passing over them in succession which change.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

He who affirms that accidents do not persist for two moments, and that their existence in substances is a condition of the persistence of those substances, does not know how he contradicts himself, for if the substances are a condition of the existence of the accidents—since the accidents cannot exist without the substances in which they inhere—and the accidents are assumed to be a condition for the existence of the substances, the substances must be necessarily a condition for their own existence; and it is absurd to say that something is a condition for its own existence. Further, how could the accidents be such a condition,

since they themselves do not persist for two moments? For, as the instant is at the same time the end of their privation and the beginning of their period of existence, the substance must be destroyed in this instant, for in this instant there is neither anything of the privative period nor anything of the existent. If there were in the instant anything of the privative period or of the existent, it could not be the end of the former and the beginning of the latter.' And on the whole, that something which does not persist two moments should be made a condition for the persistence of something for two moments is absurd. Indeed, a thing that persists for two moments is more capable of persisting than one which does not persist for two moments, for the existence of what does not persist for two moments is at an instant, which is in flux, but the existence of what persists for two moments is constant, and how can what is in flux be a condition for the existence of the constant, or how can what is only specifically persistent be a condition for the persistence of the individually persistent? This is all senseless talk. One should know that he who does not admit a Kyle for the corruptible must regard the existent as simple and as not liable to corruption, for the simple does not alter and does not exchange its substance for another substance. Therefore Hippocrates says 'if man were made out of one thing alone, he could not suffer by himself,' i.e. he could not suffer corruption or change. And therefore he could not have become either, but would have to be an eternal existent. What he says here about Avicenna of the difference between the production and the destruction of the soul is without sense.

3.3 Objection of the second argument:

Ghazali says, answering the philosophers:

We might possibly defend all the classes of the *Mutakallimun* mentioned by you, and demonstrate that inasmuch as your fundamental postulates include much like what is to be found there, it is unjust on your part to criticize them. But we prefer brevity, and will confine our attention to only one of these classes. Thus, we will say: How can you disprove one who says that production and destruction are the effects of the will of the Omnipotent? So when God wills, He produces: and when He wills, He destroys. And this is what His being the Omnipotent *par excellence* means. And in the course of all these activities He Himself never changes: it is only the action which changes. As regards your objection: "It is necessary that an action should proceed from an agent. What proceeds from God?" we will reply that that which proceeds from

Him is what has newly emerged, viz., non-existence. For there was no non-existence before the action. Since it newly emerges, it is that which proceeds from Him.

If you say:

Non-existence is nothing. How can it proceed?

we will answer:

Being nothing, how did it happen at all? Its proceeding from God only means that that which happens is to be related to His power. If it's happening is intelligible, why should its relation to power not be intelligible? And what is the difference between them and one who absolutely denies the occurrence of non-existence to Accidents and Forms, saying that since non-existence is nothing, it cannot occur, and occurrence and emergence cannot be predicated of it? For our part, we never doubt that the occurrence of non-existence to Accidents is conceivable. Therefore, that of which the occurrence can be predicated can also intelligibly happen, regardless of whether it is called a thing, or not. And, finally, the relation of this intelligible occurrence to the power of the Omnipotent is also intelligible.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

All this is sophistical and wrong. The philosophers do not deny that a thing becomes non-existent when a destroying agent destroys it; they only say that the destroying act does not attach itself to it, in so far as the thing becomes non-existent, but in so far as it changes from actual being to potential being, and non-existence results from this change, and it is in this way that non-existence is related to the agent. But it does not follow from the fact that its non-existence occurs after the act of the agent that the agent performs it primarily and essentially. For when it was conceded to Ghazali during the discussion of this problem that the non-existence of the corrupting thing will necessarily occur after the act of the corrupting agent, he drew the conclusion that its non-existence would follow essentially and primarily from the act, but this is impossible. For the agent's act does not attach itself to its non-existence in as far as it is nonexistent, i.e. primarily and essentially. And therefore, if the perceptible existences were simple, they could neither be generated nor destroyed except through the act of the agent being attached to their nonexistence essentially and primarily. But the act of the agent is only attached to nonexistence accidentally and secondarily

through its changing the object from actual existence into another form of existence in an act followed by non-existence, as from the change of a fire into air there follows the nonexistence of the fire. This is the philosophical theory of existence and nonexistence.

Ghazali says:

If it is said:

This objection may be taken to the position of a man who thinks that the non-existence of a thing after its existence is possible, Such a one might be called upon to explain what it is that occurs. But in our view it is impossible that any existent should cease to exist. To us, the non-existence of Accidents means the occurrence of their contraries, which are themselves existents. It does not mean the occurrence of abstract non-existence which is Nothing. How can occurrence be predicated of that which is nothing? If the hair whitens, it is whiteness which occurs. And that is all. And whiteness is an existent. We would not say that that which has occurred is the nonexistence of blackness.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This answer on behalf of the philosophers is mistaken, for the philosophers do not deny that non-existence occurs and happens through the agent, not, however, according to a primary intention as would be the consequence for one who assumes that a thing can change into pure nothingness; no, non-existence, according to them, occurs when the form of the thing that becomes non-existent disappears, and the opposite form appears. Therefore the following objection which Ghazali makes is valid.

Ghazali says:

This is false for two reasons

Firstly, does the occurrence of whiteness include the non-existence of blackness, or not? If they say No, they will be opposed to intelligible reality. If they say Yes, is that which includes other than that which is included, or identical with it? If they say that it is identical, it will be a self-contradiction: for nothing includes itself. But if they say that it is other, then is this 'other' intelligible, or not? If they say No, we will answer: How, then, do you know that it is included? The judgment about its being included is an admission of its being intelligible. But if they say Yes, then is this intelligible included one — namely, the non-existence of blackness — eternal, or originated in time? If they call it eternal, it will

be absurd. But if they call it originated, how can that of which a temporal origin is affirmed not be intelligible? If they say that it is neither eternal nor originated in time, it will be absurd. For if before the occurrence of whiteness it were to be said that blackness is non-existent, it would be false. If after the occurrence of whiteness it is said to be non-existent, it is true. So, obviously, it has occurred. And this occurrence is intelligible. Therefore, it is reasonable to ascribe it to the power of the Omnipotent.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This is an occurrence which is perfectly intelligible and must be related to the Omnipotent, but only accidentally and not essentially, for the act of the agent does not attach itself to absolute non-existence, nor to the nonexistence of anything, for even the Omnipotent cannot bring it about that existence should become identical with nonexistence. The man who does not assume matter cannot be freed from this difficulty, and he will have to admit that the act of the agent is attached to non-existence primarily and essentially. All this is clear, and there is no need to say more about it. The philosophers, therefore, say that the essential principles of transitory things are two: matter and form, and that there is a third accidental principle, privation, which is a condition of the occurrence of what becomes, namely as preceding it: if a thing becomes, its privation disappears, and if it suffers corruption, its privation arises.'

Ghazali says:

Secondly, there are some accidents which, even according to them, perish not-by-their-contraries. Thus, motion has no contrary. The antithesis between motion and rest is the antithesis between possession, and non-possession, i.e., being and non-being. Rest means the non-existence of motion. So when motion is non-existent, it is not a contrary, viz., rest, which has occurred, but pure non-existence. The same is true of attributes which are to be classed as perfection, e.g., the impression of the image of sensible objects on the vitreous humor of the eye: or the impression of the Form of the intelligibles on the soul. All these represent the commencement of a being, without the disappearance of a contrary. And their becoming non-existent means the loss of a being to which no contrary succeeds. So their disappearance does mean pure non-existence. Hence non-existence comes to occur. And the happening of this occurrence non-existence is intelligible. And that of which the occurrence is in itself intelligible can

intelligibly be related to the power of the Omnipotent, even if it were not a 'thing.'

From this it is clear that if the happening of anything because of the eternal will is conceivable, it makes no difference whether that which happens is existence or nonexistence.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

On the contrary, when non-existence is assumed to proceed from the agent as existence proceeds from it, there is the greatest difference between the two. But when existence is assumed as a primary fact and non-existence as a secondary fact, i.e. when non-existence is assumed to take place through the agent by means of a kind of existence, i.e. when the agent transforms actual existence into potential existence by removing the actuality-which is a quality possessed by the substrate-then it is true. And from this point of view the philosophers do not regard it as impossible that the world should become non-existent in the sense of its changing into another form, for non-existence is in this case only a subsequent occurrence and a secondary fact. But what they regard as impossible is that a thing should disappear into absolute nothingness, for then the act of the agent would have attached itself to non-existence, primarily and essentially.

Self-Assessment Test:

1. State the problem between the philosophers and Ghazali about the Nature of the world.
2. Mention the Four proofs advanced by the philosophers to back their claim about the nature of the world.
3. Why did the philosophers say that the disappearance and corruption of the world cannot be imagined?

4.0 Conclusion:

Throughout this discussion Ghazali has mistaken the accidental for the essential, and forced on the philosophers conclusions which they themselves regard as impossible. This is in general the character of the discussion in this book. A more suitable name, therefore, for this book would be 'The Book of Absolute Incoherence', or 'The Incoherence of Ghazali', not 'The Incoherence of the Philosophers', and the best name for my book 'The Distinction between Truth and Incoherent Arguments'.

5.0 Summary:

The philosophers say that the world is eternal without a final term. Its disappearance and corruption cannot be imagined. Their four arguments to back their assertion are (1) they say the world is caused and that both cause and effect have no beginning and or end. (2) The second proof is that if there could be an eventual annihilation of the world it must occur after its existence, hence affirmation of time which is contradictory to the cause and effect (the creator and the world). (3) They say that the possibility of its existence does not end and its possible existence may conform to the possibility (4) in their fourth proof they say that if the world were annihilated the possibility of its existence would remain as the possibility cannot become impossibility. For everything that becomes needs matter which precedes it, and everything that vanishes needs matter from which it can vanish, but the matter and the element do not vanish, only the forms and accidents which were in them vanish. One of the arguments that engaged Ghazali and Ibn Rushd in a long discussion was that of Galen who said that if the Sun were liable to annihilation, signs of decay in it would be visible in course of time. But the astronomical observation of its size has for thousands of years revealed the same quantity. If, therefore, it has not decayed through these long ages, it follows that it is incorruptible.

Ghazali calls Galen argument a hypothetical conjunctive syllogism, and he describes scientific observation as absurd because it is based on approximation.

The second argument that engaged both Ghazali and Ibn Rushd is the assertion of the philosophers that the substances in the world are imperishable. For if not having been the Willer of nonexistence of the world, He becomes one, He then goes under change.

Ghazali also disproved this assertion by saying that nonexistence of the world is no existent; hence it cannot be said to be effected by an agent, or produced by a producer.

Ibn Rushd presented an intelligent answer to this argument. He says: But for the philosophers the act of the agent is nothing but the actualizing of what is in potency, and this act is, according to them, attached to an existence in two ways: either in production, by converting the thing from its potential existence into actuality so that its nonexistence is terminated, or in destruction by converting the thing from its actual existence into potential existence so that it passes into a relative nonexistence.

So the difference between the philosophers and Ghazali in this issue is that the philosophers say that the act of the agent

is attached to actuality in both production and destruction while Ghazali and the theologians believe that the act of the agent is attached to nonexistence in both ways.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment.

1. state Galen`s argument to prove everlasting nature of the world.
2. What is meant by hypothetical conjunctive syllogism?
3. according to Ghazali, what is wrong with Galen`s argument?
4. In the opinion of Ibn Rushd, what is wrong with the assertion of Ghazali that the third argument is not equally valid for the future and for the past, that indeed the theologians regard the becoming of the world in the past as impossible, but that with the exception of Abu Hudhail al-Allaf, who thought that the eternity of the world was impossible in either direction, the theologians do not regard its eternity in the future as absolutely impossible?

7.0 References and Further Readings

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MODULE THREE

THE THEORY OF PRE-ETERNITY OF THE WORLD THREE

UNITE 1: Their dishonest assertion that God is the Creator of the world, and that the world is His product.

CONTENTS:

1.0 Introduction

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3.1 Disproving the wrong assertion of the philosophers that God is the maker and the agent of the world through His act and the world is His product.

3.2 Refutation of the assertion of the philosophers that the world is the act of God.

3.3 Refutation of emanation of plurality from the First effect.

4.0 Conclusion.

5.0 Summary.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment.

7.0 Reference/Further Reading.

1.0 Introduction

In this unit we are going to study the assertion of the philosophers that God is the creator of the world through His act, and He is the agent as well. We are also going to see how Ghazali refuted the assertion of the philosophers because to him, an agent possesses human attributes while God, according to the philosophers, is not qualified with any of human qualities. And the claim of the philosophers that God created the world through his act is also self-contradictory according to Ghazali, because they believe that the world is eternal while an act implies a beginning in time.

2.0 Objectives:

By the end of the lesson you will be able to:

- 1- Point out the assertions of the philosophers concerning the creation of the world
- 2- Explain the refutations of Ghazali to the assertions of the philosophers.
- 3- State the replies of Ibn Rushd to Ghazali's refutations

3.0 Main content:

3.1 Disproving the wrong assertion of the philosophers that God is the maker, the agent of the world and the world is His product

Ghazali says:

All philosophers, except the materialists, agree that the world has a maker, and that God is the maker and agent of the world and the world is His act and His work. And this is an imposture where their principle is concerned, nay it cannot be imagined that according to the trend of their principle the world is the work of God, and this for three reasons: (1) from the point of view of the agent, (2) from the point of view of the act, and (3) from the point of view of the relation common to act and agent. As concerns the first point, the agent must be willing, choosing, and knowing what he wills to be the agent of what he wills, but according to them God does not will, He has no attribute whatever, and what proceeds from Him proceeds by the compulsion of necessity. The second point is that the world is eternal, but 'act' implies production. And the third point is that God is unique, according to their principles, from all points of view, and from one thing-according to their principles-there can only proceed one thing. The world, however, is constituted out of diverse components; how could it therefore proceed from Him?

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

Ghazali's words 'The agent must be willing, choosing, and knowing what he wills to be the agent of what he wills' are by no means self-evident and cannot be accepted as a definition of the maker of the world without a proof, unless one is justified in inferring from the empirical to the divine. For we observe in the empirical world two kinds of agents, one which performs exclusively one thing and this essentially, for instance warmth which causes heat and coldness which causes cold; and this kind is called by the philosophers natural agents. The second kind of agents are those that perform a certain act at one time and its opposite at another; these, acting only out of knowledge and deliberation, are called by the philosophers voluntary and selective agents. But the First Agent cannot be described as having either of these two actions, in so

far as these are ascribed to transitory things by the philosophers. For he who chooses and wills lacks the things which he wills, and God cannot lack anything He wills. And he who chooses makes a choice for himself of the better of two things, but God is in no need of a better condition. Further, when the Willer has reached his object, his will ceases and, generally speaking, will is a passive quality and a change, but God is exempted from passivity and change. God is still farther distant from natural action, for the act of the natural thing is a necessity in its substance, but is not a necessity in the substance of the Willer, and belongs to its entelechy. In addition, natural action does not proceed from knowledge: it has, however, been proved that God's act does proceed from knowledge. The way in which God becomes an agent and a Willer has not become clear in this place, since there is no counterpart to His will in the empirical world. How is it therefore possible to assert that an agent can only be understood as acting through deliberation and choice? For then this definition is indifferently applied to the empirical and the divine, but the philosophers do not acknowledge this extension of the definition, so that from their refusal to acknowledge this definition as applying to the First Agent, it cannot be inferred that they deny that He acts at all.

This is, of course, self-evident and not the philosophers are impostors, but he who speaks in this way, for an impostor is one who seeks to perplex, and does not look for the truth. He, however, who errs while seeking the truth cannot be called an impostor, and the philosophers, as a matter of fact, are known to seek the truth, and therefore they are by no means impostors. There is no difference between one who says that God wills with a will which does not resemble the human will, and one who says that God knows through a knowledge which does not resemble human knowledge; in the same way as the quality of His knowledge cannot be conceived, so the quality of His will cannot be conceived.

Note: It seems that Ibn Rushd, by his reply to Ghazali, is inclining to accepting the fact that the philosopher err by saying that God is the maker and the agent of the world.

Ghazali says:

We will now test each of these three reasons at the same time as the illusory arguments which the philosophers give in their defence.

The first reason. We say: 'Agent' means someone from whom proceeds an act with the will to act according to choice and with the knowledge of the object willed. But according to the philosophers the world stands in relation to God as the effect to the cause, in a necessary connexion which God cannot be imagined to sever, and which is like the connexion between the shadow and the man, light and the sun, but this is not an act at all. On the contrary, he who says that the lamp makes the light and the man makes the shadow uses the term vaguely, giving it a sense much wider than its definition, and uses it metaphorically, relying on the fact that there is an analogy between the object originally meant by it and the object to which it is transferred, i.e. the agent is in a general sense a cause, the lamp is the cause of the light, and the sun is the cause of luminosity; but the agent is not called a creative agent from the sole fact that it is a cause, but by its being a cause in a special way, namely that it causes through will and through choice. If, therefore, one said that neither a wall, nor a stone, nor anything inanimate is an agent, and that only animals have actions, this could not be denied and his statement would not be called false. But according to the philosophers a stone has an action, namely falling and heaviness and a centripetal tendency, just as fire has an action, namely heating, and a wall has an action, namely a centripetal tendency and the throwing of a shadow, and, according to them each of these actions proceeds from it as its agent; which is absurd.'

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

There are in brief two points here, the first of which is that only those who act from deliberation and choice are regarded as acting causes, and the action of a natural agent producing something else is not counted

among acting causes, while the second point is that the philosophers regard the procession of the world from God as the necessary connexion obtaining between shadow and the person, and luminosity and the sun, and the downward rolling in relation to the stone, but that this cannot be called an action because the action can't be separated from the agent.

I say:

All this is false. For the philosophers believe that there are four causes: agent, matter, form, and end. The agent is what causes some other thing to pass from potency to actuality and from nonexistence to existence; this actualization occurs sometimes from deliberation and choice, sometimes by nature, and the philosophers do not call a person who throws a shadow an agent, except metaphorically, because the shadow cannot be separated from the man, and by common consent the agent can be separated from its object, and the philosophers certainly believe that God is separated' from the world and according to them He is not to be classed with this kind of natural cause. Nor is He an agent in the sense in which any empirical agent, either voluntary or involuntary, is; He is rather the agent of these causes, drawing forth the Universe from non-existence to existence and conserving it, and such an act is a more perfect and glorious one than any performed by the empirical agents. None of these objections therefore touch them, for they believe that God's act proceeds from Him through knowledge, not through any necessity which calls for it, either in His essence or outside His essence, but through His grace and His bounty. He is necessarily endowed with will and choice in their highest form, since the insufficiency which is proper to the empirical Willer does not pertain to Him. And these are the very words of Aristotle in one of his metaphysical treatises: We were asked how God could bring forth the world out of nothing, and convert it into something out of nothing, and our answer is this: the Agent must be such that His capacity must be proportionate to His power and His power proportionate to His will and His will proportionate to His wisdom, if not, His capacity would be weaker than His power, His power weaker than His will, and His will weaker than His wisdom. And if some

of His powers were weaker than others, there would be no difference between His powers and ours, and imperfection would attach to Him as to us—a very blasphemous theory. But in the opposite case each of these powers is of the utmost perfection. When He wills He has the power, and when He has the power He has the capacity and all this with the greatest wisdom. And He exists, making what He wants out of nothing. And this is only astonishing through this imperfection which is in us. And Aristotle said also: Everything that is in this world is only set together through the power which is in it from God; if this power did not exist in the things, they could not last the twinkling of an eye.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

Composite existence is of two classes; in the one class the composition is something additional to the existence of the composed, but in the other the composition is like the existence of matter and form and in these existents the existence cannot be regarded as anterior to the composition, but on the contrary the composition is the cause of their existence and anterior to it. If God therefore is the cause of the composition of the parts of the world, the existence of which is in their composition, then He is the cause of their existence and necessarily he who is the cause of the existence of anything whatsoever is its agent. This is the way in which according to the philosophers this question must be understood, if their system is truly explained to the student.

Ghazali says, speaking on behalf of the philosophers:

The philosophers may say: we call an object anything that has no necessary existence by itself, but exists through another, and we call its cause the agent, and we do not mind whether the cause acts by nature or voluntarily, just as you do not mind whether it acts by means of an instrument or without an instrument, and just as 'act' is a genus subdivided into 'acts which occur by means of an instrument' and 'acts which occur without an instrument', so it is a genus subdivided into 'acts which occur by nature' and 'acts which occur voluntarily'. The proof is that, when we speak of an act which occurs by nature, our words 'by

nature' are not contradictory to the term 'act'; the words 'by nature' are not used to exclude or contradict the idea of act, but are meant only to explain the specific character of the act, just as, when we speak of an act effected directly without an instrument, there is no contradiction, but only a specification and an explanation. And when we speak of a 'voluntary act', there is not a redundancy as in the expression a 'living being-man'; it is only an explanation of its specific character, like the expression, 'act performed by means of an instrument'. If, however, the word 'act' included the idea of will, and will were essential to act, in so far as it is an act, our expression 'natural act' would be a contradiction.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

The answer, in short, has two parts. The first is that everything that is necessary through another thing is an object of what is necessary by itself, but this can be opposed, since that through which the 'necessary through another' has its necessary existence need not be an agent, unless by 'through which it has its necessary existence' is meant that which is really an agent, i.e. that which brings potency into act. The second part is that the term 'agent' seems like a genus for that which acts by choice and deliberation and for that which acts by nature; this is true, and is proved by our definition of the term 'agent'. Only this argument wrongly creates the impression that the philosophers do not regard the first agent as endowed with will. And this dichotomy that everything is either of necessary existence by itself or existent through another is not self-evident.

Ghazali, refuting the philosophers, says:

This designation is wrong, for we do not call any cause whatsoever an agent, nor any effect an object; for, if this were so, it would be not right to say that the inanimate has no act and that only the living exhibit acts—a statement generally admitted.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

His assertion that not every cause is called an agent is true, but his argument that the inanimate is not called an agent is false, for the denial that the inanimate exhibits acts excludes only the rational and voluntary act, not act absolutely, for we find that certain inanimate things have powers to actualize things like themselves; e.g. fire, which changes anything warm and dry into another fire like itself, through converting it from what it has in potency into actuality. Therefore fire cannot make a fire like itself in anything that has not the potency or that is not in readiness to receive the actuality of fire. The theologians, however, deny that fire is an agent, and the discussion of this problem will follow later. Further, nobody doubts that there are in the bodies of animals powers which make the food a part of the animal feeding itself and generally direct the body of the animal. If we suppose them withdrawn, the animal would die, as Galen says. And through this direction we call it alive, whereas in the absence of these powers we call it dead.

Ghazali goes on:

If the inanimate is called an agent, it is by metaphor, in the same way as it is spoken of metaphorically as tending and willing, since it is said that the stone falls down, because it tends and has an inclination to the centre, but in reality tendency and will can only be imagined in connexion with knowledge and an object desired and these can only be imagined in animals.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

If by 'agent' or 'tendency' or 'willing' is meant the performance of an act of a Willer, it is a metaphor, but when by these expressions is meant that it actualizes another's potency, it is really an agent in the full meaning of the word.

Ghazali then says:

When the philosophers say that the term 'act' is a genus which is subdivided into 'natural act' and 'voluntary act', this cannot be conceded; it is as if one were to say that 'willing' is a genus which is subdivided into willing accompanied by knowledge of the object willed, and willing without knowledge of the object willed. This is wrong, because will necessarily implies knowledge, and likewise act necessarily implies will.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

The assertion of the philosophers that 'agent' is subdivided into 'voluntary' and 'non-voluntary agent' is true, but the comparison with a division of will into rational and irrational is false, because in the definition of will knowledge is included, so that the division has no sense. But in the definition of 'act' knowledge is not included, because actualization of another thing is possible without knowing it. This is clear, and therefore the wise say that God's word: 'a wall which wanted to fall to pieces' is a metaphor.

Ghazali proceeds:

When you affirm that your expression 'natural act' is not a contradiction in terms you are wrong; there is as a matter of fact a contradiction when 'natural act' is taken in a real sense, only this contradiction is not at once evident to the understanding nor is the incompatibility of nature and act felt acutely, because this expression is employed metaphorically; for since nature is in a certain way a cause and the agent is also a cause,

nature is called an agent metaphorically. The expression 'voluntary act' is as much redundant as the expression 'he wills and knows what he wills'.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This statement is undoubtedly wrong, for what actualizes another thing, i.e. acts on it, is not called agent simply by a metaphor, but in reality, for the definition of 'agent' is appropriate to it. The division of 'agent' into 'natural' and 'voluntary agent' is not the division of an equivocal term, but the division of a genus. Therefore the division of 'agent' into 'natural' and 'voluntary agent' is right, since that which actualizes another can also be divided into these two classes.

Ghazali says:

However, as it can happen that 'act' is used metaphorically and also in its real sense, people have no objection in saying 'someone acted voluntarily', meaning that he acted not in a metaphorical sense, but really, in the way in which it is said 'he spoke with his tongue', or 'he saw with his eye'. For, since one is permitted to rise 'heart' metaphorically for 'sight', and motion of the head or hand for word-for one can say 'He nodded assent'-it is not wrong to say 'He spoke with his tongue and he saw with his eye', in order to exclude any idea of metaphor. This is a delicate point, but let us be careful to heed the place where those stupid people slipped.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

Certainly it is a delicate point that a man with scientific pretensions should give such a bad example and such a false reason to explain the repugnance people seem to have in admitting the division of 'act' into 'natural' and 'voluntary act'. No one ever says 'He saw with his eye, and he saw without his eye' in the belief that this is a division of sight; we

only say 'He saw with his eye' to emphasize the fact that real sight is meant, and to exclude the metaphorical sense of 'sight'. And the intelligent in fact think that for the man who understands immediately that the real meaning is intended, this connecting of sight with the eye is almost senseless. But when one speaks of 'natural' and 'voluntary act', no intelligent person disagrees that we have here a division of 'act'. If, however, the expression 'voluntary act' were similar to 'sight with the eye' the expression 'natural act' would be metaphorical. But as a matter of fact the natural agent has an act much more stable than the voluntary agent, for the natural agent's act is constant-which is not the case with the act of the voluntary agent. And therefore the opponents of the theologians might reverse the argument against them and say that 'natural act' is like 'sight with the eye' and 'voluntary act' is a metaphor-especially according to the doctrine of the Ash'arites, who do not acknowledge a free will in man and a power to exercise an influence on reality. And if this is the case with the agent in the empirical world, how can we know that it is an accurate description of the real Agent in the divine world to say that He acts through knowledge and will?

Ghazali says, speaking on behalf of the philosophers:

The philosophers may reply: The designation 'agent' is known only through language. However, it is clear to the mind that the cause of a thing can be divided into voluntary and non-voluntary cause, and it may be disputed whether or not in both cases the word 'act' is used in a proper sense, but it is not possible to deny this since the Arabs say that fire burns, a sword cuts, that snow makes cold, that scammony purges, that bread stills hunger and water thirst, and our expression 'he beats' means he performs the act of beating, and 'it burns' it performs the act of burning, and 'he cuts' he performs the act of cutting; if you say, therefore, that its use is quite metaphorical, you are judging without any evidence.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This, in short, is a common-sense argument. The Arabs indeed call that which exerts an influence on a thing, even if not voluntary, an agent, in a proper, not in a metaphorical, sense. This argument, however, is dialectical and of no importance.

Ghazali replies to this:

The answer is that all this is said in a metaphorical way and that only a voluntary act is a proper act. The proof is that, if we assume an event which is based on two facts, the one voluntary, the other involuntary, the mind relates the act to the voluntary fact. Language expresses itself in the same way, for if a man were to throw another into a fire and kill him, it is the man who would be called his killer, not the fire. If, however, the term were used in the same sense of the voluntary and the non-voluntary, and it were not that the one was a proper sense, the other a metaphorical, why should the killing be related to the voluntary, by language, usage, and reason, although the fire was the proximate cause of the killing and the man who threw the other into the fire did nothing but bring man and fire together? Since, however, the bringing together is a voluntary act and the influence of the fire non-voluntary, the man is called a killer and the fire only metaphorically so. This proves that the word 'agent' is used of one whose act proceeds from his will, and, behold, the philosophers do not regard God as endowed with will and choice.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This is an answer of the wicked who heap fallacy on fallacy. Ghazali is above this, but perhaps the people of his time obliged him to write this book to safeguard himself against the suspicion of sharing the

philosophers' view. Certainly nobody attributes the act to its instrument, but only to its first mover. He who killed a man by fire is in the proper sense the agent and the fire is the instrument of the killing, but when a man is burned by a fire, without this fact's depending on someone's choice, nobody would say that the fire burned him metaphorically. The fallacy he employs here is the well-known one *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*, e.g. to say of a negro, because his teeth are white, that he is white absolutely. The philosophers do not deny absolutely that God wills, for He is an agent through knowledge and from knowledge, and He performs the better of two contrary acts, although both are possible; they only affirm that He does not will in the way that man wills.

Ghazali says, answering in defence of the philosophers:

If the philosophers say: We do not mean anything by God's being an agent but that He is the cause of every existent besides Himself and that the world has its subsistence through Him, and if the Creator did not exist, the existence of the world could not be imagined. And if the Creator should be supposed non-existent, the world would be non-existent too, just as the supposition that the sun was non-existent would imply the non-existence of light. This is what we mean by His being an agent. If our opponents refuse to give this meaning to the word 'act', well, we shall not quibble about words.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

Such an answer would mean that the philosophers would concede to their opponents that God is not an agent, but one of those causes without which a thing cannot reach its perfection; and the answer is wrong, for against them it might be deduced from it that the First Cause is a principle, as if it were the form of the Universe, in the way the soul is a principle for the body; no philosopher, however, affirms this.

Then Ghazali says, answering the philosophers:

We say: Our aim is to show that such is not the meaning of 'act' and 'work'. These words can mean only that which really proceeds from the

will. But you reject the real meaning of 'act', although you use this word, which is honoured amongst Muslims. But one's religion is not perfect when one uses words deprived of their sense. Declare therefore openly that God has no act, so that it becomes clear that your belief is in opposition to the religion of Islam, and do not deceive by saying that God is the maker of the world and that the world is His work, for you use the words, but reject their real sense!

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This would indeed be a correct conclusion against the philosophers, if they should really say what Ghazali makes them say. For in this case they could indeed be forced to admit that the world has neither a natural nor a voluntary agent, nor that there is another type of agents besides these two. He does not unmask their imposture by his words, but lie himself deceives by ascribing to them theories which they do not hold.

3.2 Refutation of the assertion of the philosophers that the world is the act of God.

Ghazali says:

The second reason for denying that the world is, according to the principle of the philosophers, an act of God is based on the implication of the notion of an act. 'Act' applies to temporal production, but for them the world is eternal and is not produced in time. The meaning of 'act' is 'to convert from not-being into being by producing it' and this cannot be imagined in the eternal, as what exists already cannot be brought into existence. Therefore 'act' implies a temporal product, but according to them the world is eternal; how then could it be God's act?

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

If the world were by itself eternal and existent (not in so far as it is moved, for each movement is composed of parts which are produced), then, indeed, the world would not have an agent at all. But if the

meaning of 'eternal' is that it is in everlasting production and that this production has neither beginning nor end, certainly the term 'production' is more truly applied to him who brings about an everlasting production than to him who procures a limited production. In this way the world is God's product and the name 'production' is even more suitable for it than the word 'eternity', and the philosophers only call the world eternal to safeguard themselves against the word 'product' in the sense of 'a thing produced after a state of nonexistence, from something, and in time'.

Then Ghazali says, on behalf of the philosophers:

The philosophers may perhaps say: The meaning of 'product' is 'that which exists after its non-existence'. Let us therefore examine if what proceeds from the agent when He produces, and what is connected with Him, is either pure existence, or pure non-existence, or both together. Now, it is impossible to say that previous non-existence was connected with Him, since the agent cannot exert influence upon non-existence, and it is equally impossible to say 'both together', for it is clear that nonexistence is in no way connected with the agent, for non-existence qua nonexistence needs no agent at all. It follows therefore that what is connected with Him is connected with Him in so far as it is an existent, that what proceeds from Him is pure existence, and that there is no other relation to Him than that of existence. If existence is regarded as everlasting, then this relation is everlasting, and if this relation is everlasting, then the term to which this relation refers is the most illustrious and the most enduring in influence, because at no moment is non-existence connected with it. Temporal production implies therefore the contradictory statements that it must be connected with an agent, that it cannot be produced, if it is not preceded by non-existence, and that non-existence cannot be connected with the agent.

And if previous non-existence is made a condition of the existent, and it is said that what is connected with the agent is a special existence, not any existence, namely an existence preceded by non-existence, it may be answered that its being preceded by non-existence cannot be an act of an agent or a deed of a maker, for the procession of this existence

from its agent cannot be imagined, unless preceded by non-existence; neither, therefore, can the precedence of this non-existence be an act of the agent and connected with him, nor the fact that this existence is preceded by non-existence. Therefore to make nonexistence a condition for the act's becoming an act is to impose as a condition one whereby the agent cannot exert any influence under any condition.'

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This is an argument put forward on this question by Avicenna from the philosophical side. It is sophistical, because Avicenna leaves out one of the factors which a complete division would have to state.

For he says that the act of the agent must be connected either with an existence or with a non-existence, previous to it and in so far as it is nonexistence, or with both together, and that it is impossible that it should be connected with non-existence, for the agent does not bring about nonexistence and, therefore, neither can it effect both together. Therefore the agent can be only connected with existence, and production is nothing but the connexion of act with existence, i.e. the act of the agent is only bringing into existence,' and it is immaterial whether this existence be preceded by non-existence or not. But this argument is faulty, because the act of the agent is only connected with existence in a state of nonexistence, i.e. existence in potentiality, and is not connected with actual existence, in so far as it is actual, nor with non-existence, in so far as it is non-existent. It is only connected with imperfect existence in which nonexistence inheres. The act of the agent is not connected with nonexistence, because non-existence is not actual; nor is it connected with existence which is not linked together with non-existence, for whatever has reached its extreme perfection of existence needs neither causation nor cause. But existence which is linked up with non-existence only exists as long as the producer exists. The only way to escape this difficulty is to assume that the existence of the world has always been and will always be linked together with non-existence, as is the case with movement, which is always in need of a mover. And the

acknowledged philosophers believe that such is the case with the celestial world in its relation to the Creator, and a fortiori with the sublunary world. Here lies the difference between the created and the artificial, for the artificial product, once produced, is not tied up with non-existence which would be in need of an agent for the continued sustenance of the product.'

Ghazali continues:

And your statement, theologians, that what exists cannot be made to exist, if you mean by it, that its existence does not begin after its nonexistence, is true; but if you mean that it cannot become an effect at the time when it exists, we have shown that it can only become an effect at the time when it exists, not at the time when it does not exist. For a thing only exists when its agent causes it to exist, and the agent only causes it to exist at the time when, proceeding from it, it exists, not when the thing does not exist; and the causation is joined with the existence of the agent and the object, for causation is the relation between cause and effect. Cause, effect, and causation are simultaneous with existence and there is no priority here, and therefore there is causation only for what exists, if by 'causation' is meant the relation through which the agent and its object exist. The philosophers say: It is for this reason that we have come to the conclusion that the world, which is the work of God, is without beginning and everlasting, and that never at any moment was God not its agent, for existence is what is joined with the agent and as long as this union lasts existence lasts, and, if this union is ever discontinued, existence ceases. It is by no means what you theologians mean, that if the Creator were supposed to exist no longer, the world could still persist; you, indeed, believe that the same relation prevails as between the builder and the building, for the building persists when the builder has disappeared. But the persistence of the building does not depend on the builder, but on the strength of the structure in its coherence, for if it had not the power of coherence-if it were like water, for example-it would not be supposed to keep the shape which it received through the act of the agent.'

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

Possibly the world is in such a condition, but in general this argument is not sound. For it is only true that the causing agent is always connected with the effect, in so far as the effect actually exists without this actuality's having any insufficiency and any potency, if one imagines that the essence of the effect lies in its being an effect, for then the effect can only be an effect through the causation of the agent. But if it's becoming an effect through a cause is only an addition to its essence, then it is not necessary that its existence should cease when the relation between the causing agent and the effect is interrupted. If, however, it is not an addition, but its essence consists in this relation of being an effect, then what Avicenna says is true. However, it is not true of the world, for the world does not exist on account of this relation, but it exists on account of its substance and the relation is only accidental to it. Perhaps what Avicenna says is true concerning the forms of the celestial bodies, in so far as they perceive the separate immaterial forms; and the philosophers affirm this, because it is proved that there are immaterial forms whose existence consists in their thinking, whereas knowledge in this sublunary world only differs from its object because its object inheres in matter.'

Ghazali, answering the philosophers, says:

Our answer is that the act is connected with the agent only in so far as it comes into being, but not in so far as it is preceded by non-existence nor in so far as it is merely existent. According to us the act is not connected

with the agent for a second moment after its coming to be, for then it exists; it is only connected with it at the time of its coming to be in so far as it comes to be and changes from nonexistence into existence. If it is denied the name of becoming, it cannot be thought to be an act nor to be connected with the agent. Your statement, philosophers, that a thing's coming to be means its being preceded by nonexistence, and that its being preceded by non-existence does not belong to the act of the agent and the deed of the producer, is true; but this prior non-existence is a necessary condition for the existent's being an act of the agent. For existence not preceded by non-existence is everlasting, and cannot be truly said to be an act of the agent. Not all conditions necessary to make an act an act need proceed from the agent's act; the essence, power, will, and knowledge of the agent are a condition of his being an agent, but do not derive from him. An act can only be imagined as proceeding from an existent, and the existence, will, power, and knowledge of the agent are a condition of his being an agent, although they do not derive from him.'

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

All this is true. The act of the agent is only connected with the effect, in so far as it is moved, and the movement from potential to actual being is what is called becoming. And, as Ghazali says, nonexistence is one of the conditions for the existence of a movement through a mover. Avicenna's argument that when it is a condition for the act of the agent to be connected with the existence, the absence of this connexion implies that the agent is connected with its opposite, i.e. non-existence, is not true. But the philosophers affirm that there are existents whose essential specific differences consist in motion, e.g. the winds and so on; and the heavens and the sublunary bodies belong to the genus of existents whose existence lies in their movement, and if this is true, they are eternally in a continual becoming. And therefore, just as the eternal existent is more truly existent than the temporal, similarly that which is eternally in becoming is more truly coming to be than that which comes to be only during a definite time. And if the substance of the world were

not in this condition of continual movement, the world would not, after its existence, need the Creator, just as a house after being completed and finished does not need the builder's existence, unless that were true which Avicenna tried to prove in the preceding argument, that the existence of the world consists only in its relation to the agent; and we have already said that we agree with him so far as this concerns the forms of the heavenly bodies.

Therefore the world is during the time of its existence in need of the presence of its agent for both reasons together, namely, because the substance of the world is continually in motion and because its form, through which it has its subsistence and existence, is of the nature of a relation, not of the nature of a quality, i.e. the shapes and states which have been enumerated in the chapter on quality. A form which belongs to the class of quality, and is included in it, is, when it exists and its existence is finished, in no need of an agent. All this will solve the problem for you, and will remove from you the perplexity which befalls man through these contradictory statements.'

Ghazali says, on behalf of the philosophers:

The philosophers might say: If you acknowledge that it is possible that the act should be simultaneous with the agent and not posterior to it, it follows that if the agent is temporal the act must be temporal, and if the agent is eternal the act must be eternal. But to impose as a condition that the act must be posterior in time to the agent is impossible, for when a man moves his finger in a bowl of water, the water moves at the same time as the finger, neither before nor after, for if the water moved later than the finger, finger and water would have to be in one and the same space before the water disconnected itself, and if the water moved before the finger, the water would be separated from the finger and notwithstanding its anteriority would be an effect of the finger performed for its sake. But if we suppose the finger eternally moving in the water, the movement of the water will be eternal too, and will be, notwithstanding its eternal character, an effect and an object, and the supposition of eternity does not make this impossible. And such is the relation between the world and God.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This is true in so far as it concerns the relation of movement and mover, but in regard to the stable existent or to that which exists without moving or resting by nature (if there exist such things) and their relation to their cause, it is not true. Let us therefore admit this relation between the agent and the world only in so far as the world is in motion. As for the fact that the act of every existent must be conjoined with its existence, this is true, unless something occurs to this existent which lies outside its nature, or one or another accident occurs to it, and it is immaterial whether this act be natural or voluntary. See, therefore, what the Ash'arites did who assumed an eternal existent, but denied that He acted during His eternal existence, but then, however, allowed this agent to act eternally in the future, so that the eternal existence of the Eternal would become divided into two parts, an eternal past during which He does not act and an eternal future during which He acts! But for the philosophers all this is confusion and error.

Ghazali answers the philosophers on the question of priority:

We do not say that the simultaneity of agent and act is impossible, granted that the act is temporal, e.g. the motion of the water, for this happens after its non-being and therefore it can be an act, and it is immaterial whether this act is posterior to the agent or simultaneous with him. It is only an eternal act that we consider impossible, for to call an act that which does not come into being out of not-being is pure metaphor and does not conform to reality. As to the simultaneity of cause and effect, cause and effect can be either both temporal or both eternal, in the way in which it may be said that the eternal knowledge is the cause of the fact that the Eternal is knowing; we are not discussing this, but only what is called an act. For the effect of a cause is not called the act of a cause, except metaphorically. It can only be called an act on condition that it comes into being out of non-being. And if a man thinks he may describe the everlasting Eternal metaphorically as acting on something, what he thinks possible is only the use of a metaphor. And

your argument, philosophers-that if we suppose the movement of the water to be eternal and everlasting with the movement of the finger, this does not prevent the movement of the water from being an act-rests on a confusion, for the finger has no act, the agent is simply the man to whom the finger belongs, that is the man who wills the movement; and, if we suppose him to be eternal, then the movement of the finger is his act, because every part of this movement comes out of not-beings and in this sense it is an act. So far as the motion of the water is concerned, we do not say that it occurs through the act of this man-it is simply an act of God. In any case, it is only an act in so far as it has come to be, and if it's coming to be is everlasting, it is still an act, because it has come to be.

Then Ghazali gives the philosophers' answer:

The philosophers may say: 'If you acknowledge that the relation of the act to the agent, in so far as this act is an existent, is like the relation of effect and cause and you admit that the causal relation may be everlasting, we affirm that we do not understand anything else by the expression "that the world is an act" than that it is an effect having an everlasting relation to God. Speak of this as an "act" or not just as you please, for do not let us quibble about words when their sense has once been established.'

Ghazali says:

Our answer is that our aim in this question is to show that you philosophers use those venerable names without justification, and that God according to you is not a true agent, nor the world truly His act, and that you apply this word metaphorically-not in its real sense. This has now been shown.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

In this argument he supposes that the philosophers concede to him that they only mean by God's agency that He is the cause of the world, and nothing else, and that cause and effect are simultaneous. But this would

mean that the philosophers had abandoned their original statement, for the effect follows only from its cause, in so far as it is a formal or final cause, but does not necessarily follow from its efficient cause, for the efficient cause frequently exists without the effect's existing. Ghazali acts here like a guardian who tries to extract from his ward the confession of having done things he did not allow him to do. The philosophers' theory, indeed, is that the world has an agent acting from eternity and everlasting, i.e. converting the world eternally from non-being into being. This question was formerly a point of discussion between Aristotelians and Platonists. Since Plato believed in a beginning of the world, there could not in his system be any hesitation in assuming a creative agent for the world. But since Aristotle supposed the world to be eternal, the Platonists raised difficulties against him, like the one which occupies us here, and they said that Aristotle did not seem to admit a creator of the world. It was therefore necessary for the Aristotelians to defend him with arguments which establish that Aristotle did indeed believe that the world has a creator and an agent. This will be fully explained in its proper place.

The principal idea is that according to the Aristotelians the celestial bodies subsist through their movement, and that He who bestows this movement is in reality the agent of this movement and, since the existence of the celestial bodies only attains its perfection through their being in motion, the giver of this motion is in fact the agent of the celestial bodies. Further, they prove that God is the giver of the unity through which the world is united, and the giver of the unity which is the condition of the existence of the composite; that is to say, He provides the existence of the parts through which the composition occurs, because this action of combining is their cause (as it is proved), and such is the relation of the First Principle to the whole world. And the statement that the act has come to be, is true, for it is movement, and the expression 'eternity' applied to it means only that it has neither a first nor a last term. Thus the philosophers do not mean by the expression 'eternal' that the world is eternal through eternal constituents, for the world consists of movement. And since the Ash'arites did not understand this, it was difficult for them to attribute

eternity at the same time to God and to the world. Therefore the term 'eternal becoming' is more appropriate to the world than the term 'eternity'.

Self-Assessment Test:

1- Why is the assertion of the philosophers that God is agent to the creation of the world absurd according to Ghazali?

2- What is the difference between the understanding of Ghazali and Ibn Rushd about agent?

3- Can you prove according to the philosophers that the causal relation of the First Principle to the world may be everlasting?

4.0 Conclusion

1. Ibn Rushd says that the term 'agent' seems like a genus for that which acts by choice and deliberation and for that which acts by nature; this is true, and is proved by our definition of the term 'agent', but God act proceeds from Knowledge. God is necessarily endowed with will and choice in their highest form, since the insufficiency which is proper to the empirical Willer does not pertain to Him.

2. It is only true that the causing agent is always connected with the effect, in so far as the effect actually exists without this actuality's having any insufficiency and any potency.

5.0 Summary

1. All philosophers, except the materialists, agree that the world has a maker, and that God is the maker and agent of the world and the world is His act and His work. But this is impossible according to the principles of the philosophers.

2. Ibn Rushd disproved Ghazali's objection that God is the maker and the agent of the world and the world is His product through His act because he drew his comparison from the empirical world. For he attributed Will to God, but "generally speaking, will is a passive quality and a change, and God is exempted from passivity and change. God is still farther distant from natural action, for the act of the natural thing is a necessity

in its substance, but is not a necessity in the substance of the Willer, and belongs to its entelechy. In addition, natural action does not proceed from knowledge: it has, however, been proved that God's act does proceed from knowledge. The way in which God becomes an agent and a Willer has not become clear in this place, since there is no counterpart to His will in the empirical world"

3. Ghazali said that according to the philosophers the world stands in relation to God as the effect to the cause. And that God can't be agent because an agent acts out of deliberation and choice. Ibn Rushd denied it saying "All this is false. For the philosophers believe that there are four causes: agent, matter, form, and end" and God is the agent of the courses drawing the universe from nonexistence to existence.

4. 'Act' applies to temporal production, but for the philosophers the world is eternal and is not produced in time. This is a contradiction.

7.0 Tutor Marked Assignment:

1. Show the different meanings of agent according to Ghazali and Ibn Rushd?

2. When is act used metaphorically and when is it used properly according to Ghazali?

3. Why did Ibn Rushd regard division of will into rational and irrational as false?

7.0 References and Further Readings

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UNITE 2: The reason why it is impossible for the philosophers to admit according to their principle that the world is the act of God

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1.0 Introduction

In the previous unit you studied about the assertion of the philosophers that God is the creator of the world through His act, and He is the agent as well. And you saw how Ghazali refuted the assertion of the philosophers because to him, an agent possesses human attributes while God, according to the philosophers, is not qualified with any of human qualities. And that the claim of the philosophers that God created the world through his act is also self-contradictory according to Ghazali, because they believe that the world is eternal while an act implies a beginning in time.

In this unit you will read about the third reason why it is impossible for the philosophers to admit according to their principle that the world is the act of God.

Ghazali regarded the assertion of the philosophers that God is the maker and agent of the world and the world is His act and His work as an imposture for three reasons: as concerns the first point, the agent must be willing, choosing, and knowing what he wills to be the agent of what he wills, but according to them God does not will, He has no attribute whatever, and what proceeds from Him proceeds by the compulsion of necessity. The second point is that the world is eternal, but 'act' implies production. And the third point is that God is unique, according to their principles, from all points of view, and from one thing-according to their principles-there can only proceed one thing. The world, however, is constituted out of diverse components; how could it therefore proceed from Him?

2.0 Objectives

By the end of the lesson you be able to:

- a) Summarize the idea of the third reason while the philosopher cannot admit that the world is the act of God.

- b) Explain the reply of Ibn Rushd to the third reason posited by Ghazali.
- c) Explain how the philosophers arrived at the total number of the noble principles after the First Principle.

3.0 Main content

3.1 The third reason why it is impossible for the philosophers to admit according to their principle that the world is the act of God.

Ghazali says:

The third reason why it is impossible for the philosophers to admit according to their principle that the world is the act of God is because of a condition which is common to the agent and the act, namely, their assertion that out of the one only one can proceed. Now the First Principle is one in every way, and the world is composed out of different constituents. Therefore according to their principle it cannot be imagined that the world is the act of God.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

If one accepts this principle, and its consequences, then indeed the answer is difficult. But this principle has only been put forward by the later philosophers of Islam.'

Then Ghazali says, on behalf of the philosophers:

The philosophers may say perhaps: The world in its totality does not proceed from God without a mediator; what proceeds from Him is one single existent, and this is the first of the created principles, namely, abstract intellect, that is a substance subsisting by itself, not possessing any volume, knowing itself and knowing its principle, which in the language of the Divine Law is called 'angel'. From it there proceeds a third principle, and from the third a fourth, and through this mediation the existent beings come to be many. The differentiation and multiplicity of the act can proceed either from a differentiation in active powers, in the way that we act differently through the power of passion and

through the power of anger; or through a differentiation of matters, as the sun whitens a garment which has been washed, blackens the face of man, melts certain substances and hardens others; or through a differentiation of instruments, as one and the same carpenter saws with a saw, cuts with an axe, bores with an awl;’ or this multiplication of the act can proceed through mediation, so that the agent does one act, then this act performs another act, and in this way the act multiplies. All these divisions are impossible in the First Principle, because there is no differentiation nor duality, nor multiplicity in His essence, as will be proved in the proofs of His unity. And there is here neither a differentiation of matters-and the very discussion refers to the first effect, which is, for example, primary matter, nor a differentiation of the instrument, for there is no existent on the same level as God-and the very discussion refers to the coming into existence of the first instrument. The only conclusion possible is that the multiplicity which is in the world proceeds from God through mediation, as has been stated previously.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This amounts to saying that from the One, if He is simple, there can proceed only one. And the act of the agent can only be differentiated and multiplied either through matters (but there are no matters where He is concerned), or through an instrument (but there is no instrument with Him). The only conclusion therefore is that this happens through mediation, so that first the unit proceeds from Him, and from this unit another, and from this again another, and that it is in this way that plurality comes into existence.

Then Ghazali denies this, and says:

We answer: The consequence of this would be that there is nothing in the world composed of units, but that everything that exists is simple and one, and each unit is the effect of a superior unit and the cause of an inferior, till the series ends in an effect which has no further effect, just as the ascending series ends in a cause which has no other cause.

But in reality it is not like this, for, according to the philosophers, body is composed of form and matter, and through this conjunction there arises one single thing; and man is composed out of body and soul and body does not arise out of soul, nor soul out of body: they exist together through another cause. The sphere, too, is, according to them, like this, for it is a body possessing a soul and the soul does not come to be through the body, nor the body through the soul; no, both proceed from another cause. How do these compounds, then, come into existence? Through one single cause? But then their principle that out of the one only one arises is false. Or through a compound cause? But then the question can be repeated in the case of this cause, till one necessarily arrives at a point where the compound and the simple meet. For the First Principle is simple and the rest are compound, and this can only be imagined through their contact. But wherever this contact takes place, this principle, that out of the one only one proceeds, is false.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This consequence, that everything which exists is simple, is a necessary consequence for the philosophers, if they assume that the First Agent is like a simple agent in the empirical world. But this consequence is binding only upon the man who applies this principle universally to everything that exists. But the man who divides existents into abstract existents and material, sensible existents, makes the principles to which the sensible existent ascends different from the principles to which the intelligible existent ascends, for he regards as the principles of the sensible existents matter and form, and he makes some of these existents the agents of others, till the heavenly body is reached, and he makes the intelligible substances ascend to a first principle which is a principle to them, in one way analogous to a formal cause, in another analogous to a final cause, and in a third way analogous to an efficient cause. All this has been proved in the works of the philosophers, and we state this proposition here only in a general way. Therefore these difficulties do not touch them. And this is the theory of Aristotle.'

About this statement-that out of the one only one proceeds-all ancient philosophers were agreed, when they investigated the first principle of the world in a dialectical way (they mistook this investigation, however, for a real demonstration), and they all came to the conclusion that the first principle is one and the same for everything, and that from the one only one can proceed. Those two principles having been established, they started to examine where multiplicity comes from. For they had already come to the conclusion that the older theory was untenable. This theory held that the first principles are two, one for the good, one for the bad; for those older philosophers did not think that the principles of the opposites could be one and the same; they believed that the most general opposites which comprehend all opposites are the good and the bad, and held therefore that the first principles must be two. When, however, after a close examination, it was discovered that all things tend to one end, and this end is the order which exists in the world, as it exists in an army through its leader, and as it exists in cities through their government, they came to the conclusion that the world must have one highest principle; and this is the sense of the Holy Words 'If there were in heaven and earth gods beside God, both would surely have been corrupted'. They believed therefore, because of the good which is present in everything that evil occurs only in an accidental way, like the punishments which good governors of cities ordain; for they are evils instituted for the sake of the good, not by primary intention. For there exist amongst good things some that can only exist with an admixture of evil, for instance, in the being of man who is composed of a rational and an animal soul. Divine Wisdom has ordained, according to these philosophers, that a great quantity of the good should exist, although it had to be mixed with a small quantity of evil, for the existence of much good with a little evil is preferable to the nonexistence of much good because of a little evidence.

Since therefore these later philosophers were convinced that the first principle must of necessity be one and unique, and this difficulty about the one occurred, they gave three answers to this question. Some, like Anaxagoras and his school, believe that plurality is only introduced through matter,' some believe that plurality is introduced through the

instruments, and some believe that plurality comes only through the mediators; and the first who assumed this was Plato. This is the most convincing answer, for in the case of both the other solutions one would have to ask again; from where does the plurality come in the matters and in the instruments? But this difficulty touches anyone who acknowledges that from the one only one can proceed: he has to explain how plurality can derive from the one. Nowadays, however, the contrary of this theory, namely, that out of the one all things proceed by one first emanation, is generally accepted, and with our contemporaries we need discuss only this latter statement.

The objection which Ghazali raises against the Peripatetics, that, if plurality were introduced through mediators, there could only arise a plurality of qualitatively undifferentiated agglomerates which could only form a quantitative plurality, does not touch them. For the Peripatetics hold that there exists a twofold plurality, the plurality of simple beings, those beings namely that do not exist in matter, and that some of these are the causes of others and that they all ascend to one unique cause which is of their own genus, and is the first being of their genus, and that the plurality of the heavenly bodies only arises from the plurality of these principles; and that the plurality of the sublunary world comes only from matter and form and the heavenly bodies. So the Peripatetics are not touched by this difficulty. The heavenly bodies are moved primarily through their movers, which are absolutely immaterial, and the forms of these heavenly bodies are acquired from these movers and the forms in the sublunary world are acquired from the heavenly bodies and also from each other, indifferently, whether they are forms of the elements which are in imperishable prime matters or forms of bodies composed out of the elements, and, indeed, the composition in this sublunary world arises out of the heavenly bodies. This is their theory of the order which exists in the world. The reasons which led the philosophers to this theory cannot be explained here, since they built it on many principles and propositions, which are proved in many sciences and through many sciences in a systematic way. But when the philosophers of our religion, like Farabi and Avicenna, had once conceded to their opponents that the agent in the divine world is like

the agent in the empirical, and that from the one agent there can arise but one object (and according to all the First was an absolutely simple unity), it became difficult for them to explain how plurality could arise from it. This difficulty compelled them finally to regard the First as different from the mover of the daily circular movement; they declared that from the First, who is a simple existent, the mover of the highest sphere proceeds, and from this mover, since he is of a composite nature, as he is both conscious of himself and conscious of the First, a duality, the highest sphere, and the mover of the second sphere, the sphere under the highest can arise. This, however, is a mistake,' according to philosophical teaching, for thinker and thought are one identical thing in human intellect and this is still truer in the case of the abstract intellects. This does not affect Aristotle's theory, for the individual agent in the empirical world, from which there can only proceed one single act, can only in an equivocal way be compared to the first agent. For the first agent in the divine world is an absolute agent, while the agent in the empirical world is a relative agent, and from the absolute agent only an absolute act which has no special individual object can proceed. And thereby Aristotle proves that the agent of the human intelligibles is an intellect free from matter, since this agent thinks all things, and in the same way he proves that the passive intellect is ingenerable and incorruptible, because this intellect also thinks all things.

According to the system of Aristotle the answer on this point is that everything whose existence is only effected through a conjunction of parts, like the conjunction of matter and form, or the conjunction of the elements of the world, receives its existence as a consequence of this conjunction. The bestower of this conjunction is, therefore, the bestower of existence. And since everything conjoined is only conjoined through a unity in it, and this unity through which it is conjoined must depend on a unity, subsistent by itself, and be related to it, there must exist a single unity, subsistent by itself, and this unity must of necessity provide unity through its own essence. This unity is distributed in the different classes of existing things, according to their natures, and from this unity, allotted to the individual things, their existence arises; and all those unities lead upwards to the First Monad, as warmth which exists in

all the individual warm things proceeds from primal warmth, which is fire, and leads upwards to it? By means of this theory Aristotle connects sensible existence with intelligible, saying that the world is one and proceeds from one, and that this Monad is partly the cause of unity, partly the cause of plurality. And since Aristotle was the first to find this solution, and because of its difficulty, many of the later philosophers did not understand it, as we have shown. It is evident, therefore, that there is a unique entity from which a single power emanates through which all beings exist. And since they are many, it is necessarily from the Monad, in so far as it is one, that plurality arises or proceeds or whatever term is to be used. This is the sense of Aristotle's theory, a sense very different from that in which those thinkers believe who affirm that from the one only one can proceed. See therefore how serious this error proved among the philosophers! You should, therefore, see for yourself in the books of the ancients whether these philosophical theories are proved, not in the works of Avicenna and others who changed the philosophical doctrine in its treatment of metaphysics so much that it became mere guessing.

3.2 Division of Existents

Ghazali says, on behalf of the philosophers:

It may be said: If the philosophical theory is properly understood, the difficulties disappear. Existents can be divided into what exists in a substratum, like accidents and forms, and what does not exist in a substratum. The latter can be divided again into what serves as a substratum for other things, e.g. bodies, and what does not exist in a substratum, e.g. substances which subsist by themselves. These latter again are divided into those which exert an influence on bodies and which we call souls, and those which exert an influence not on bodies but on souls, and which we call abstract intellects. Existents which inhere in a substratum, like accidents, are temporal and have temporal causes which terminate in a principle, in one way temporal, in another way everlasting, namely, circular movement. But we are not discussing this here. Here we are discussing only those principles which exist by themselves and do not inhere in a substratum, which are of three kinds:

(i) bodies, which are the lowest type, (ii) abstract intellects, which are not attached to bodies, either by way of action or by being impressed upon them, which are the highest type, and (iii) souls, which are the intermediate agencies, attached to the bodies in a certain way, namely, through their influence and their action upon them, and which stand midway in dignity; they undergo an influence from the intellects and exert an influence upon the bodies.

Now the number of bodies is ten. There are nine heavens, and the tenth body is the matter which fills the concavity of the sphere of the moon. The nine heavens are animated; they possess bodies and souls, and they have an order in existence which we shall mention here. From the existence of the First Principle there emanates the first intellect—an existent which subsists by itself, immaterial, not impressed on body, conscious of its principle and which we philosophers call First Intellect, but which (for we do not quibble about words) may be called angel, or intellect, or what you will. From its existence there derive three things, an intellect, the soul, and the body of the farthest sphere, i.e. the ninth heaven. Then from the second intellect there derive a third intellect and the soul and the body of the sphere of the fixed stars, then from the third intellect there derive a fourth intellect and the soul and the body of the sphere of Saturn, then from the fourth intellect there derive a fifth intellect and the soul and the body of the sphere of Jupiter, and so on till one arrives at the intellect from which there derive the intellect, the soul and the body of the sphere of the moon, and this last intellect is that which is called the active intellect. Then there follows that which fills the sphere of the moon, namely, the matter which receives generation and corruption from the active intellect and from the natures of the spheres. Then through the action of the movements of the spheres and the stars the matters are mixed in different mixtures from which the minerals, vegetables, and animals arise. It is not necessary that from each intellect another intellect should derive endlessly, for these intellects are of a different kind, and what is valid for the one is not valid for the other. It follows from this that the intellects after the First Principle are ten in number and that there are nine spheres, and the sum of these noble principles after the First Principle is therefore nineteen; and that under

each of the primary intellects there are three things, another intellect and a soul and body of a sphere. Therefore there must be in each intellect a triple character, and in the first effect a plurality can only be imagined in this way: (i) it is conscious of its principle, (ii) it is conscious of itself, (iii) it is in itself possible, since the necessity of its existence derives from another. These are three conditions, and the most noble of these three effects must be related to the most noble of these conditions. Therefore the intellect proceeds from the first effect; in so far as the first effect is conscious of its principle; the soul of the sphere proceeds from the first effect, in so far as the first effect is conscious of itself; and the body of the sphere proceeds from the first effect, in so far as by itself the first effect belongs to possible existence. We must still explain why this triple character is found in the first effect, although its principle is only one. We say that from the First Principle only one thing proceeds, namely, the essence of this intellect through which it is conscious of itself. The effect, however, must by itself become conscious of its principle, and this kind of consciousness cannot be derived from its cause. Also the effect by itself belongs to possible existence, and it cannot receive this possibility from the First Principle, but possesses it in its own essence. We do indeed regard it as possible that one effect should proceed from the one, although this effect possesses by itself and not through its principle certain necessary qualities, either relative or nonrelative. In this way a plurality arises, and so it becomes the principle of the existence of plurality. Thus the composite can meet the simple, as their meeting must take place and cannot take place in any other manner, and this is the right and reasonable explanation, and it is in this way that this philosophical theory must be understood.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

All these are inventions fabricated against the philosophers by Avicenna, Farabi, and others. But the true theory of the ancient philosophers is that there are principles which are the celestial bodies, and that the principles of the celestial bodies, which are immaterial existents, are the movers of those celestial bodies, and that the celestial bodies move

towards them in obedience to them and out of love for them, to comply with their order to move and to understand them, and that they are only created with a view to movement. For when it was found that the principles which move the celestial bodies are immaterial and incorporeal, there was no way left to them in which they might move the bodies other than by ordering them to move. And from this the philosophers concluded that the celestial bodies are rational animals, conscious of themselves and of their principles, which move them by command. And since it was established-in the De Anima-that there is no difference between knowledge and the object of knowledge, except for the latter's being in matter, of necessity the substance of immaterial beings-if there are such -had to be knowledge or intellect or whatever you wish to call it. And the philosophers knew that these principles must be immaterial, because they confer on the celestial bodies everlasting movement in which there is no fatigue or weariness,' and that anything which bestows such an everlasting movement must be immaterial, and cannot be a material power. And indeed the celestial body acquires its permanence only through these immaterial principles. And the philosophers understood that the existence of these immaterial principles must be connected with a first principle amongst them; if not, there could be no order in the world. You can find these theories in the books of the philosophers and, if you want to make sure of the truth in these matters, you will have to consult them. It also becomes clear from the fact that all the spheres have the daily circular movement, although besides this movement they have, as the philosophers had ascertained, their own special movements, that He who commands this movement must be the First Principle, i.e. God, and that He commands the other principles to order the other movements to the other spheres. Through this heaven and earth are ruled as a state is ruled by the commands of the supreme monarch, which, however, are transmitted to all classes of the population by the men he has appointed for this purpose in the different affairs of the state. As it says in the Qur'an: 'And He inspired every Heaven with its bidding. This heavenly injunction and this obedience are the prototypes of the injunction and obedience imposed on man because he is a rational animal. What Avicenna says of the

derivation of these principles from each other is a theory not known amongst the ancients, who merely state that these principles hold certain positions in relation to the First Principle, and that their existence is only made real through this relation to the First Principle. As it is said in the Qur'an: 'There is none amongst us but has his appointed place. It is the connexion which exists between them which brings it about that some are the effect of others and that they all depend on the First Principle. By 'agent' and 'object', 'creator' and 'creature', in so far as it concerns this existence nothing more can be understood than just this idea of connexion. But what we said of this connexion of every existent with the One is something different from what is meant by 'agent' and 'object', 'maker' and 'product' in this sublunary world. If you imagine a ruler who has many men under his command who again have others under their command, and if you imagine that those commanded receive their existence only through receiving this command and through their obedience to this command, and those who are under those commanded can only exist through those commanded, of necessity the first ruler will be the one who bestows on all existents the characteristic through which they become existent, and that which exists through its being commanded will only exist because of the first ruler. And the philosophers understood that this is what is meant by the divine laws when they speak of creation, of calling into existence out of nothing, and of command. This is the best way to teach people to understand the philosophical doctrine without the ignominy attaching to it, which seems to attach when you listen to the analysis Ghazali gives of it here. The philosophers assert that all this is proved in their books, and the man who, (fulfilled the conditions they impose), is able to study their works will find the truth of what they say---or perhaps its opposite--and will not understand Aristotle's theory or Plato's in any other sense than that here indicated. And their philosophy is the highest point human intelligence can reach. If any man discovers these explanations of philosophical theory, he will find that they happen not only to be true but to be generally acknowledged, and teachings which are generally acceptable are pleasing and delightful to all.

One of the premises from which this explanation is deduced is that when one observes this sublunary world, one finds that what is called 'living' and 'knowing' moves on its own account in well-defined movements towards well-defined ends and well-defined acts from which new well defined acts arise. For this reason the theologians say that any act can only proceed from a living, knowing being. When one has found this first premises, that what moves in well-defined movements from which arise well-defined and ordered actions is living and knowing, and one joins to this a second premise which can be verified by the senses, that the heavens move on their own account in well-defined movements from which there follow in the existents under them well-defined acts, order, and rank through which these existents under them receive their subsistence, one deduces from this, no doubt, a third principle, namely, that the heavenly bodies are living beings endowed with perception. That from their movements there follow well-defined acts from which this sublunary world, its animals, vegetables, and minerals receive their subsistence and conservation, is evident from observation, for, were it not that the sun in its ecliptic approaches the sublunary world and recedes from it, there would not be the four seasons, and without the four seasons there would be no plants and no animals, and the orderly origination of elements out of each other necessary for the conservation of their existence would not take place. For instance, when the sun recedes towards the south the air in the north becomes cold and rains occur and the production of the watery element increases, whereas in the south the production of the airy element becomes greater; whereas in summer, when the sun approaches our zenith, the opposite takes place. Those actions which the sun exercises everlastingly through its varying distance from the different existents which always occupy one and the same place are also found in the moon and all the stars which have oblique spheres, and they produce the four seasons through their circular movements, and the most important of all these movements, in its necessity for the existence and conservation of the creation, is the highest circular movement which produces day and night. The Venerable Book refers in several verses to the providential care for man which arises out of God's subjection of all the heavens to His bidding, as, for

instance, in the Qur'anic verse 'And the sun and the moon and the stars are subjected to His bidding', and when man observes these acts and this guidance which proceed necessarily and permanently from the movements of the stars, and sees how these stars move in fixed movements, and that they have well-defined shapes and move in well-defined directions towards well defined actions in opposite motions, he understands that these well-defined acts can only arise from beings perceptive, living, capable of choice and of willing.

And he becomes still more convinced of this when he sees that many beings in this world which have small, despicable, miserable, and insignificant bodies are not wholly devoid of life, notwithstanding the smallness of their size, the feebleness of their powers, the shortness of their lives, the insignificance of their bodies; and that divine munificence has bestowed on them life and perception, through which they direct themselves and conserve their existence. And he knows with absolute certainty that the heavenly bodies are better fitted to possess life and perception than the bodies of this sublunary world, because of the size of their bodies, the magnificence of their existence, and the multitude of their lights,' as it says in the Divine Words: 'Surely the creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of man, but most men know it not. But especially when he notices how they direct the living beings of this sublunary world, does he understand with absolute certainty that they are alive, for the living can only be guided by a being leading a more perfect life. And when man observes these noble, living, rational bodies, capable of choice, which surround us, and recognizes a third principle, namely, that they do not need for their own existence the providence with which they guide the sublunary world, he becomes aware that they are commanded to perform these movements and to control the animals, vegetables, and minerals of this sublunary world, and that He who commands them is not one of them and that He is necessarily incorporeal (for, if not, He would be one of them) and that all these heavenly bodies control the existents which are under them, but serve Him, who for His existence is in no need of them. And were it not for this Commander, they would not give their care everlastingly and continuously to this sublunary world which they guide willingly, without

any advantage to themselves, especially in this act. They move thus by way of command and obligation the heavens which repair to them, only in order to conserve this sublunary world and to uphold its existence. And the Commander is God (glory be to Him), and all this is the meaning of the Divine Words 'We come willingly'.

And another proof of all this is that, if a man sees a great many people, distinguished and meritorious, applying themselves to definite acts without a moment's interruption, although these acts are not necessary for their own existence and they do not need them, it is absolutely evident to him that these acts have been prescribed and ordered to them and that they have a leader who has obliged them in his everlasting service to act continually for the good of others. This leader is the highest among them in power and rank and they are, as it were, his submissive slaves. And this is the meaning to which the Venerable Book refers in the words: 'Thus did we show Abraham the kingdom of heaven and the earth that he should be of those who are safe. 'And when man observes still another thing, namely, that all the seven planets in their own special movements are subservient to their universal daily motion and that their own bodies as parts of the whole are submissive to the universal body, as if they were all one in fulfilling this service, he knows again with absolute certainty that each planet has its own commanding principle, supervising it as a deputy of the first Commander. Just as, in the organization of armies, where each body of troops has one commander, called a centurion, each centurion is subordinate to the one Commander-in-chief of the army, so also in regard to the movements of the heavenly bodies which the ancients observed. They number somewhat more than forty, of which seven or eight'-for the ancients disagreed about this -dominate the others and themselves depend on the first Commander, praise be to Him! Man acquires this knowledge in this way, whether or not he knows how the principle of the creation of these heavenly bodies acts, or what the connexion is between the existence of these commanders and the first Commander. In any case he does not doubt that, if these heavenly bodies existed by themselves, that is, if they were eternal and had no cause, they might refuse to serve their own commanders or might not

obey them, and the commanders might refuse to obey the first Commander. But, since it is not possible for them to behave in this way, the relation between them and the first Commander is determined by absolute obedience, and this means nothing more than that they possess this obedience in the essence of their being, not accidentally, as is the case in the relation between master and servant. Servitude, therefore, is not something additional to their essence, but these essences subsist through servitude and this is the meaning of the Divine Words: 'There is none in the heavens or the earth but comes to the Merciful as a servant. And their possession is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth which God showed to Abraham, as it is expressed in the Devine Words: 'Thus did we show Abraham the kingdom of heaven and earth that he should be of those who are safe. Therefore you will understand that the creation of these bodies and the principle of their becoming cannot be like the coming to be of the bodies of this sublunary world, and that the human intellect is too weak to understand how this act works, although it knows that this act exists. He who tries to compare heavenly with earthly existence, and believes that the Agent of the divine world acts in the way in which an agent in this sublunary world works, is utterly thoughtless, profoundly mistaken, and in complete error.

This is the extreme limit we can reach in our understanding of the theories of the ancients about the heavenly bodies, of their proof for the existence of a Creator for these bodies who is immaterial, and of their statements concerning the immaterial existents under Him, one of which is the soul. But to believe in His existence as if He were the cause through which these bodies had been produced in time, in the way we see the production of the bodies of this sublunary world, as the theologians desired-this, indeed, is very difficult, and the premises they use for its proof do not lead them where they desire. We shall show this later, when we discuss the different proofs for the existence of God.

And since this has been firmly established, we shall now go back to relate and refute in detail what Ghazali tells of the philosophers, and to

show the degree of truth reached by his assertions, for this is the primary intention of this book.

Self-Assessment Test:

1. How can you prove that the principle of (out of one only one proceeds) is false according to Ghazali?
2. According to philosophers, how many are the divisions of existent?
3. What are those things that proceed from the first effect?

4.0 Conclusion:

We can conclude this unit by saying that the assertion of the philosophers that out of the one only one can proceed has been refuted by Ghazali, for he said that according to the philosophers, body is composed of form and Kyle, and through this conjunction there arises one single thing; and man is composed out of body and soul and body does not arise out of soul, nor soul out of body: they exist together through another cause. The sphere, too, is, according to them, like this, for it is a body possessing a soul and the soul does not come to be through the body, nor the body through the soul; no, both proceed from another cause. But the philosopher changed the theory of out of one only one proceeds to another theory, namely, that out of the one all things proceed by one first emanation.

5.0 Summary:

1. The third reason while the philosophers cannot admit according to their principle that the word is the act of God is their assertion that out of the one only one can proceed.
2. The philosophers are of the opinion that the world does not proceed from God directly but from a mediator, as the first created principles, from which other principles were generated leading to plurality.
3. The philosophers first believe that there were two powers in the world namely good and bad. Secondly they believed after research that there is only one God from whom only one thing can proceed. Then through thorough observation of contradictions in this empirical world

to second believe, the arrived at the third believe that out of the one all things proceed by one first emanation.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment:

- a) Explain how Ghazali and Ibn Rushd differ in their understanding of the first principles.
- b) Why is it impossible for the philosophers to admit that the world is the act of God?
- c) How many are the principles of creation and how were they generated?
- d) In your own opinion, who is correct between the philosophers and Ghazali in their ideas about the creation of the world?

7.0 References and Further Readings

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UNITE 3: Refutation of emanation of plurality from the First effect.

CONTENTS:

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
 - 3.1 The first objection
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Ghazali and Ibn Rushd differ in comprehension of the meaning of plurality in the first effect. While Ibn Rushd claims that the meaning of plurality in the first effect is that it is possible in its existence Ghazali decides to twist the claim by interpreting it to mean that the possible existence is either identical with the being of the effect or different from it. Affirmation of the first statement leads to negation of plurality as against the claim of the philosophers, while affirmation of the second statement leads to attribution of plurality to the First principle.

2.0 Objectives:

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

1. Tell how Ghazali refutes the procession of plurality from the first effect.

2. Tell how Ibn Rushd is able to reply Ghazali`s refutations.
3. Give sound judgement between the ideas of Ghazali and Ibn Rushd.

3.0 Main content

- 3.1 The first objection
- 3.2 The second objection
- 3.3 The first answer

3.1 THE FIRST OBJECTION:

Ghazali says, refuting the philosophers:

What you affirm are only suppositions and in fact you do nothing but add obscurities to obscurities. If a man were to say that he had seen such things in a dream, it would be a proof of his bad constitution, or if one should advance such arguments in juridical controversies, in which everything under discussion is conjectural, one would say these were stupidities which could not command any assent.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This is very much the way the ignorant treat the learned and the vulgar the eminent, and in this way, too, the common people behave towards the products of craftsmanship. For, when the artisans show the common people the products of their craftsmanship which possess many qualities from which they draw wonderful actions, the masses scoff at them and regard them as insane, whereas in reality they themselves are insane and ignorant in comparison with the wise. With such utterances as these the learned and the thoughtful need not occupy themselves. What Ghazali ought to have done, since he relates these theories, is to show

the motives which led to them, so that the reader might compare them with the arguments through which he wants to refute them.

Ghazali says:

The ways of refuting such theories are countless, but we shall bring here a certain number. The first is that we say: You claim that one of the meanings of plurality in the first effect is that it is possible in its existence, but we ask whether it's being possible in its existence is identical with its being or something different? If you say 'identical', then no plurality proceeds from it, but if you say that it is different, why then do you not assert that there is a plurality in the First Principle, for it not only has existence, but is necessary in its existence, and existence and necessary existence are not identical. Therefore, because of this plurality in the First Principle, let us allow that different entities proceed from it. If it is said: 'Necessity of existence cannot mean anything but existence', we answer: 'Possibility of existence cannot mean anything but existence. If, however, you say: 'Its existence can be known without its possibility being known, and therefore they are different,' we answer: 'In the same way the existence of the necessary existent can be known without its necessity being known, unless another proof is added,' let them therefore be different! Generally speaking, existence is a universal which can be divided into necessary and possible, and if the one specific difference is an addition to the universal, the other specific difference is also an addition, for both cases are the same. If you say, 'It possesses the possibility of its existence through itself and its existence through another, how then can what it possesses through itself and what it possesses through another be identical?' we answer: 'How then can the necessity of its being be identical with its being, so that the necessity of its existence can be denied and its existence affirmed? And to God, the One, the Absolute Truth, negation and affirmation cannot be applied equivocally, for one cannot say of Him that He is and is not, or that His existence is at the same time necessary or not necessary; but it can be said of Him that He exists, but that His existence is not necessary, as it can be said of Him that He exists, but that His existence is not possible. And it is through this that His Unity can be recognized. But this unity in

the First cannot be upheld, if what you say is true, that possibility of existence is something different from the possible existent.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

Ghazali affirms that, when we say of a thing that it is possible in its existence, this must either mean that it is identical with its existence or different from it, i.e. something additional to its existence. If it is identical, there is no plurality, and the statement of the philosophers that there is a plurality in the possible existent has no sense. If, however, it is not identical, the philosophers will have to make the same admission about the necessary existent, i.e. that there is a plurality in it, but this is in contradiction to their own principle. This reasoning, however, is not valid, for Ghazali has overlooked a third case, namely, that necessity of being might be not something added to existence outside the soul but a condition' in the necessary existent which adds nothing to its essence; it might be said to refer to the denial of its being the effect of something else, is a denial of that which is affirmed of all other entities, just as, when we say of something that it is one, nothing additional to its essence existing outside the soul is meant-as it is, on the contrary, the case when we speak of a white existent-but only a negative condition, namely, indivisibility. In the same way, when we speak of the necessary existent, we mean by the necessity of His existence a negative condition which is the consequence of His existence, namely, that His existence is necessary through Himself, not through something else. And also when we speak of the existent which is possible through itself, it is not something additional to its essence outside the soul-as it is the case with the real possible-that should be understood, but merely that its essence determines that its existence can become necessary only through a cause; what is meant, therefore, is an essence which will not be by itself necessary in its existence when its cause is removed and therefore is not a necessary existent, i.e. it is denied the quality of necessary existence. It is as if Ghazali said that the necessary existent is partially necessary through itself, partially through a cause, and that which is necessary through a cause is not necessary through itself.

Nobody doubts that these specific differences are neither substantial differences which divide the essence nor additions to the essence, but that they are only negative or relative relations, just as, when we say that a thing exists, the word 'exists' does not indicate an entity added to its essence outside the soul, which is the case when we say of a thing that it is white. It is here that Avicenna erred, for he believed that unity is an addition to the essence and also that existence, when we say that a thing exists, is an addition to the things, this question will be treated later. And the first to develop this theory of the existent, possible by itself and necessary through another, was Avicenna; for him possibility was a quality in a thing, different from the thing in which the possibility is, and from this it seems to follow that what is under the First is composed of two things, one to which possibility is attributed, the other to which necessity is attributed; but this is a mistaken theory. But he who has understood our explanation will not be concerned about the difficulty which Ghazali adduces against Avicenna. The only question he will have to ask, when he has understood the meaning of 'possibility of existence' for the first effect, is whether this possibility brings about a compound character in the first effect or not, for if the quality is relative, it does not bring about a compound character. For not all the different dispositions which can be imagined in a thing need determine additional qualities in its essence outside the soul; indeed, this is the case with the disposition of privations and relations, and for this reason certain philosophers do not count the category of relation among things which exist outside the soul, i.e. the ten categories. Ghazali, however, implies in his argument that any additional meaning must apply to an additional entity actually outside the soul; but this is a mistake, and a sophistical argument. This follows from his words "Generally speaking, existence is a universal which can be divided into necessary and possible, and if the one specific difference is an addition to the universal, the other specific difference also is an addition, for both cases are the same".

But the division of existence into possible and necessary is not like the division of animal into rational and irrational, or into walking, swimming, and flying animals, for those things are additional to the genus and provide additional species-animality is their common concept and they

are specific differences added to it. But the possible into which Avicenna divides existence is not an entity actually outside the soul, and his theory is wrong, as we said before. For the existence which for its existence is in need of a cause can, as an entity by itself, only be understood as nonexistence-that is to say, anything that exists through another thing must be non-existent by itself, unless its nature is the nature of the true possible. Therefore the division of existence into necessary and possible existence is not a valid one, if one does not mean by 'possible' the true possible; but we will treat this later. The summary of what we said here is that the existent can be divided either into essential differences or into relative conditions or into accidents additional to its essence; out of the division into essential differences there must necessarily result a plurality of acts which arise out of the existent, but out of the division into relational and accidental dispositions no such plurality of different acts results. And if it should be claimed that out of relational qualities a plurality of acts results, well then, a plurality will proceed from the First Principle of necessity without need of the intervention of an effect as the principle of plurality; on the other hand, if it should be claimed that out of relational qualities no plurality of acts results, well then, out of the relational qualities of the first effect also there will result no plurality of acts, and this latter assumption is the better.'

Ghazali says:

How then can what it possesses through itself, and what it possesses through another, be identical?

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

But how can this same man who affirms that possibility exists only in the mind, say such a thing? Why then does he not apply this doctrine here, for it is not impossible for the one essence to be positive and negative in its relations without there resulting a plurality in this essence-which, however, Ghazali denies. But if you have understood this, you will be able to solve the problem Ghazali poses in this section.

If it is said: 'It follows from this that there is no composition, either in existence, necessary by itself, or in existence, necessary through another,' we answer: As to what is necessary through another, the mind perceives in it a composition through cause and effect; if it is a body, there must be in it both a unity actually, and a plurality potentially; if it is, however, incorporeal, the mind does not perceive a plurality either in act or in potency. For this reason the philosophers call this kind of existent simple, but they regard the cause as more simple than the effect and they hold that the First is the most simple of them all, because it cannot be understood as having any cause or effect at all. But composition can be understood of the principles which come after the First; therefore, according to the philosophers, the second principle is simpler than the third, and it is in this way that their theory must be understood. The meaning of 'cause' and 'effect' in these existents is that a potential plurality (as it were) exists in them which shows itself in the effect, i.e. there proceeds out of it a plurality of effects which it never contains actually in any definite moments. If the hearer has understood their theory in this way and accepted it, he will see that they are not affected by the objections of Ghazali. But one should not understand this theory in the way Ghazali does, namely, that out of the second principle, because it knows its own essence and knows its principle, and therefore possesses two forms or a dual existence, there proceed two different things, for this is a false theory. For this would mean that this second principle is composed of more than one form and that therefore this form' is one in its substratum, many by its definition, as is the case with the soul. But the theologians keep tenaciously to this false explanation in their statements about the derivation of these principles from each other, as if they wanted to understand the divine through an analogy with perceptible acts; indeed, when metaphysics contains such theories, it becomes more conjectural than jurisprudence. You will have seen from this that the conclusion Ghazali wants the philosophers to draw concerning the plurality in the necessary existent, because of the plurality which he considers must exist in the possible existent, has no validity. For, if possibility were understood as real possibility, it would indeed imply here a plurality, but since this is impossible, according to

what we have said and shall show later, nothing similar follows concerning the necessary existent. But if possibility is understood as being a concept of the mind, it follows that neither the necessary existent nor the possible existent must be regarded as composite for this reason; the only reason why composition must be admitted here is because of the relation of cause ; and effect.

3.2 THE SECOND OBJECTION:

Ghazali says:

The second objection is that we say: 'Is the knowledge the first effect has of its Principle identical with its own existence and with the knowledge it has of itself?' If so, there is only a plurality in the expression used to describe the essence, not in the essence itself; if not, this plurality will exist also in the First, for He knows Himself and He knows others.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

What is true is that the knowledge the first effect has of its principle is identical with its own essence and that the first effect belongs to the domain of relation and is therefore of a lesser rank than the First who belongs to the domain of what exists by itself. It is true, according to the philosophers, that the First thinks only His own essence not something relative, namely, that He is a principle-but His essence, according to the philosophers, contains all intellects, nay, all existents, in a nobler and more perfect way than they all possess in reality, as we shall explain later. Therefore this theory does not imply the abominable consequences he ascribes to it.

Ghazali says:

It may be said by the philosophers that His knowing Himself is identical with His essence, and that he who does not know that he is a principle for others does not know his own essence, for knowledge conforms to the thing known and refers therefore to His essence.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This statement is wrong, for His being a principle is something relative and cannot be identical with His essence. If He could think that He is a principle, He would be conscious of the things the principle of which He is, in the way these things really exist, and in this case the higher would be perfected through the lower, for the thing known is the perfection of the knower according to the philosophers, as is set forth in the sciences about the human intellect.'

3.3 The first answer

Ghazali says:

But we answer: In this case the knowledge the effect has of itself is identical with its essence, for it thinks with its substance and knows itself, and intellect and knower and thing known are all one. Therefore, if it's knowing itself is identical with its essence, well then, let it think itself as the effect of a cause, for this it really is. But the intellect conforms to the thing known; therefore all this refers solely to its essence and so there is no plurality. If, indeed, there is a plurality, it must exist in the First. Therefore, let differentiation proceed from the First.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

What he says here of the philosophers, about the exclusive existence of a plurality in the principles under the First Principle, is wrong and does not follow from their principles. There is, according to them, no plurality in these intellects, and they do not distinguish themselves by simplicity and plurality, but only by being cause and effect. And the difference between the knowledge of the First Principle, as knowing itself, and the knowledge of the other principles, as knowing themselves, is that the First Principle thinks itself as existing by itself, not as being related to a cause, whereas the other intellects think themselves as related to their

cause and in this way plurality is introduced into them. They need not all have the same degree of simplicity, since they are not of the same rank in relation to the First Principle and none of them is simple in the sense in which the First Principle is simple, because the First Principle is regarded as an existence by itself whereas they are in related existence.

And as to Ghazali's words:

Therefore, if its knowing itself is identical with its essence, well then, let it think itself as the effect of a cause, for this it really is. But the intellect conforms to the thing known, and therefore all this refers solely to its essence and so there is no plurality. If, indeed, there is a plurality, it must exist in the First Principle.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

It does not follow from the fact that intellect and the thing known are identical in the separate intellects that they are all similar in simplicity, for in this, according to the philosophers, some are superior to others in a greater or lesser degree; absolute simplicity is only found in the First Intellect, and the reason is that the essence of the First Intellect is subsistent by itself, and the other intellects, when they think themselves, are conscious that they subsist by it; if intellect and the intelligible were in each of them of the same degree of unity as in the First Principle, either the essence existing by reason of itself and the essence existing by reason of another would be congruous, or intellect would not conform to the nature of the intelligible thing;' which is impossible, according to the philosophers. All these arguments and their answers, as set forth by Ghazali, are dialectical and the only man who can-notwithstanding the deficiency of the human understanding concerning these questions-give a demonstrative argument about them is the man who knows (to begin with) what the intellect is, and the only man who knows what the intellect is is the man who knows what the soul is, and the only man who knows what the soul is is the man who knows what a living being is. There is no sense in discussing these matters in a superficial way and according to the common notions,

which do not contain specific knowledge and are not properly related to the problem. To discuss these questions, before knowing what the intellect is, is nothing more than babbling. The Ash'arites, therefore, when they relate the philosophical doctrines, make them extremely hateful and something very different from even the first speculation of man about what exists.

Ghazali says:

Let us therefore drop the claim of its absolute unity, if this unity is annulled through plurality of this kind.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

Ghazali means that, when the philosophers assume that the First thinks its own essence and knows through this that it is the cause of others, they must conclude that it is not absolutely one. For it has not yet been proved that God must be absolutely one. This is the theory of some Peripatetics who interpreted it as the theory of Aristotle himself.

Ghazali says:

If it is said that the First knows only its own essence, and the knowledge of its own essence is identical with its essence, for intelligence, thinker, and intelligible are all one and it does not know anything but itself-this can be refuted in two ways. First, because of its worthlessness this theory was abandoned by Avicenna and other philosophers of repute, who affirm that the First knows itself as the principle of what emanates from it and knows all other existents in their species by a universal thought, and not individually. For they repudiate the theory that there emanates out of the First Principle, which does not know what emanates

from it, only one intellect; that its effect is an intellect from which there emanates an intellect and the soul and the body of a sphere, and that this intellect knows itself and its three effects, whereas its cause and principle knows only itself. For according to this theory the effect is superior to the cause, since from the cause only one thing emanates, whereas from the effect three things emanate; moreover, the First Principle knows only itself, but the effect knows its principle and effects besides itself. Who can be satisfied with the idea that such words can apply to the status of God, for indeed they make Him lower than any of His creatures, who know themselves and know Him, and he who knows Him and knows himself is of a nobler rank than He is, since He knows none but Himself. Their profound thoughts about God's glory end therefore in a denial of everything that is understood by His greatness, and assimilate the state of God to that of a dead body which has no notion of what happens in the world, with the sole exception that God possesses self-knowledge. So does God deal with those who turn aside from His way and deviate from the path of His guidance, denying His words: 'I did not make them witnesses of the creation of the heavens and the earth nor of the creation of themselves, 'who think wicked thoughts about God, who believe that the powers of man suffice to reach the essence of the divine, who, deceived in their minds, believe that the human understanding is competent to free itself from the authority of the prophets and from obedience to them. For no doubt they are now forced to acknowledge that the quintessence of their thought is reduced to absurdities which would make one wonder if they were told in a dream.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

One who wants to enter deeply into these speculations must know that much of what is firmly established in the speculative sciences seems at first sight, and compared to the opinions the common man holds about them, like the visions of a dreamer, as Ghazali truly says; many of these truths are deduced from a different kind of premises from that which satisfies the masses; indeed there is no other way for anyone to become

convinced of their truth than that of comprehending them by logical proof and evidence. If, for example, the common man, and even he who has reached a somewhat higher degree of culture, is told that the sun, which appears to the eye as being the size of a foot, is about a hundred and seventy times bigger than the earth, he will say that it is absurd, and will regard him who believes it as a dreamer; and it is difficult for us to convince him through propositions which he can easily understand and acknowledge in a short time. The only way, indeed, to attain such knowledge is through deductive proof—that is, for the man who is amenable to proof. If it is the case even with geometrical questions and mathematical problems in general, that, when a solution is explained to the common man, it will appear to him fallacious and open to criticism at first sight and to have the character of a dream, how much more this will be the case in the metaphysical sciences, since for this kind of knowledge there are no plausible premises which satisfy the superficial understanding, by which I mean the understanding of the masses. One might say that the final knowledge the understanding can reach will seem to the common man at first sight something absurd. And this happens not only in the theoretical sciences but in the practical sciences as well. Therefore, the assumption that one of the sciences should vanish and then come into existence again, at first sight would seem to be impossible. For this reason many have thought that those sciences are of supernatural origin and some attribute them to the Jinn, others to the prophets, so that Ibn Hazm goes so far as to affirm that the strongest proof of the existence of prophecy is the existence of these sciences. Therefore, if a lover of truth finds a theory reprehensible and does not find plausible premises which remove its reprehensible character, he must not at once believe that the theory is false, but must inquire how he who puts it forward has arrived at it, must employ much time in learning this, and follow the systematic order corresponding to the nature of the topic. And if this is necessary in other sciences than metaphysics, how much more will this hold for metaphysics, since that science is so remote from the sciences built on common sense. Thus it should be learned that in metaphysics rhetorical reasoning cannot be applied, as it may be applied in other questions; for dialectics is useful

and permissible in the other sciences but forbidden in this. For this reason most students of this science seek refuge in the theory that metaphysics is wholly concerned with the qualification of the substance which the human mind cannot qualify, for if it could do so, the eternal and the transitory would be on the same level. If this is so, may God judge him who discusses these questions with common opinions and who argues about God without scientific knowledge. So it is often thought that the philosophers are extremely inefficient in this science, and for this reason Ghazali says that metaphysics is only conjectural.

But in any case we shall try to show some plausible premises and true propositions-and we try this only because Ghazali gave such a false representation of this noble science and denied people the possibility of attaining happiness through excellent acts, and God is the inquirer and the reckoner-in order to set out the motives which moved the philosophers to believe these theories about the First Principle and other existents, the limit which the human understanding can reach in this matter, and the doubts which beset these problems; and we shall show all this also in respect to the Muslim theologians and indicate how far their wisdom attained. We hope through this to help the lover of knowledge to find the truth, and to urge him to study the sciences of both parties, hoping also that God may assist him in all this!

Self-Assessment Test

1. What is the consequence of possibility of plurality being identical with the existence of the First Principle or different from it according Ghazali's explanation?
2. What is the implication of the philosophers' theory that God only knows His essence while the created effects know Him and know themselves and other things?

4.0 Conclusion:

The division of existence into necessary and possible existence is not a valid one, if one does not mean by 'possible' the true possible.

The theory that God knows His essence alone while the effects know Him and themselves berates God and for that it is invalid.

5.0 Summary:

1. Generally speaking, existence is a universal which can be divided into necessary and possible, and if the one specific difference is an addition to the universal, the other specific difference is also an addition, for both cases are the same.

2. Ghazali has overlooked a third case, namely, that necessity of being might be not something added to existence outside the soul but a condition' in the necessary existent which adds nothing to its essence.

3. And the first to develop this theory of the existent, possible by itself and necessary through another, was Avicenna; for him possibility was a quality in a thing, different from the thing in which the possibility is, and from this it seems to follow that what is under the First is composed of two things, one to which possibility is attributed, the other to which necessity is attributed; but this is a mistaken theory.

4. Ghazali, however, implies in his argument that any additional meaning must apply to an additional entity actually outside the soul; but this is a mistake, and a sophistical argument. This follows from his words "Generally speaking, existence is a universal which can be divided into necessary and possible, and if the one specific difference is an addition to the universal, the other specific difference also is an addition, for both cases are the same".

5. But one should not understand this theory in the way Ghazali does, namely, that out of the second principle, because it knows its own essence and knows its principle, and therefore possesses two forms or a dual existence, there proceed two different things, for this is a false theory.

6. The First Principle thinks itself as existing by itself, not as being related to a cause, whereas the other intellects think themselves as related to their cause and in this way plurality is introduced into them.

7. For according to this theory the effect is superior to the cause, since from the cause only one thing emanates, whereas from the effect three things emanate; moreover, the First Principle knows only itself, but the effect knows its principle and effects besides itself. Who can be satisfied with the idea that such words can apply to the status of God, for indeed they make Him lower than any of His creatures, who know themselves and know Him, and he who knows Him and knows himself is of a nobler rank than He is

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. How did plurality come into existence according to Ibn Rushd?
2. How did plurality come into existence according to Ghazali?
3. How can the Unity of God be recognised according to Ghazali?

7.0 References and Further Readings

1. Al-Ghazali, A. H, (1058-1111 CE), *Tahafut al-falasifa*. See the parallel English-Arabic edition, [hereafter *Tahafut*], translated, introduced and annotated by Michael E. Marmura (2000), Brigham Young University Press, Provo, Utah.
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UNITE 4: Refutation of emanation of plurality from the First effect (the third objection.)

CONTENTS:

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main content

 3.1 The second answer

 3.2 The third Objection

4.0 Conclusion.

5.0 Summary.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment.

7.0 Reference/Further Reading.

1. Introduction

You read in the immediate past unit about the two objections of Ghazali to the philosophers' claim of the possible existence of plurality in the first effect. The first is his statement "You claim that one of the meanings of plurality in the first effect is that it is possible in its existence, but we ask whether it's being possible in its existence is identical with its being or something different? If you say 'identical', then no plurality proceeds from it, but if you say that it is different, why then do you not assert that there is a plurality in the First Principle," and the second is "Is the knowledge the first effect has of its Principle identical with its own existence and with the knowledge it has of itself?" If so, there is only a plurality in the expression used to describe the essence, not in the essence itself; if not, this plurality will exist also in the First, for He knows Himself and He knows others." In this unit, you are going to see the second answer and third objections from Ghazali against the philosophers claim of possible existence of plurality in the first effect.

3.0 Objectives

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- a) State clearly the second answer and third objections of Ghazali to philosophers' claim of possible existence of plurality in the first effect.
- b) State the reply of Ibn Rushd to Ghazali objections.
- c) Give your own view to the bone of contention.

3.0 Main content:

3.1 The second answer

Ghazali says:

The second answer is: people say of the First Principle that it knows only itself, because they want to avoid the implication of plurality in it, for the statement that it knows another would imply a duality: its knowing itself

and its knowing another. However, the same applies to the first effect: it must necessarily know only itself. If it knew another and not itself alone, there would have to be a different cause for its knowing another than that for its knowing itself, but there is no other cause than that for its knowing itself, namely the First Principle. So it can only know itself, and the plurality which arose in this way disappears.

If it is said that it follows from its existence and from its knowing itself that it must know its principle, we answer: Does this necessity arise from a cause or without a cause? If the former is the case, there is no other cause than the one first cause from which only one effect can proceed, and indeed has proceeded, namely this first effect itself; how, therefore, could this second effect proceed from it? In the latter case, then, let the existence of the First Principle imply a plurality of existents without a cause, and let the plurality follow from them! But if such a thing cannot be imagined, because the necessary existent can be only one, and anything added to it must be a possible, and the possible needs a cause, then the following conclusion must be drawn concerning the effect: if it is an existent necessary by itself, then what the philosophers say is untrue, that there is only one necessary existent; if it is a possible, then it needs a cause; but it has no cause, and therefore it cannot know the existence of its cause.

There is no special necessity for the first effect to have a possible existence; this is necessary for any effect. However, that the effect should know its cause is not necessary for its existence, just as the knowledge of its effect is not necessary for the existence of the cause; still, it seems more plausible that the cause should know its effect than that the effect should know its cause. Therefore the plurality which would arise from its knowing its principle is impossible; there is no principle for this knowledge and it is not a necessary consequence of an effect that it should know its principle; and out of this there is no issue.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

This is a proof of one who affirms that the First Principle must, besides knowing itself, know its effect; for, if not, its knowing itself would be imperfect.

The meaning of Ghazali's objection is that the knowledge the effect has of its principle must either be based on a cause or be without a cause. In the former case, there must be a cause in the First Principle, but there is none; in the latter case, a plurality must follow from the First Principle, even if it does not know it; if, however, a plurality follows from it, it cannot be a necessary existent, for there can be only one necessary existent, and that from which there proceeds more than one is only a possible existent; but the possible existent needs a cause, and therefore their assertion that the First Principle is a necessary existent is false, even if it does not know its effect. He says also that if it is not a necessity of its existence that the effect should have knowledge of its cause, it even seems more fitting that it is not a necessity of its existence that the cause should know its effect.

My answer to this is that all this is sophistical. If we assume that the cause is an intellect and knows its effect, it does not follow that this is an addition to the essence of the cause; on the contrary, it belongs to the essence itself, since the emergence of the effect is the consequence of its essences. And it is not true that if the effect proceeds from the First Principle not because of a cause, but because of the essence of this principle, a plurality proceeds from it, for according to the thesis of the philosophers the emergence of the effect depends on the essence of the First Principle: if its essence is one, one proceeds from it; if many, many proceed from it. What he assumes in this discussion, namely, that every effect is a possible existent, is only true for the composite effect, for there cannot be a compound that is eternal, and everything that is of a possible existence is generated, according to the philosophers, as Aristotle has shown in different passages of his works; and we shall prove this more fully later in our discussion of the necessary being. What Avicenna calls the possible existent has only its name in common with what is in reality the possible existent; it is, therefore, by no means clear

that it needs an agent in the way it is clear that the possible existent needs an agent.

3.2 The third objection

Ghazali says:

The third objection is: Is the self-knowledge of the first effect identical with its essence or not? If the former, this is impossible, for knower and known cannot be identical; if the latter, let the same apply to the First Principle, so that plurality will follow from the First Principle. And if the self-knowledge of the effect is not identical with the essence of the effect, there will not only be a triplicity in the effect, as they affirm, but a quadruplicity, to wit: its essence, its knowledge of itself, its knowledge of its principle, and its being a possible existent by itself, and to this it should perhaps be added that it is an existent necessary through another-and then it would be fivefold. From this you can see and measure the depth of their ignorance.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

In this discussion of the intellects there are two points: first the question about what these intellects know or do not know (this question was fully treated by the ancients); secondly, the question of what proceeds from these intellects. What Ghazali mentions here as the theory of the philosophers is in fact the individual opinion of Avicenna on this latter problem. Ghazali exerts himself especially to refute him and his followers, in order to create the impression that he has refuted them all; and this is acting like one who is, as he puts it, in the depths of ignorance. But this theory is not found in the works of any of the ancients; and there is no proof of it except the supposition that from the one there can proceed only one. But this proposition does not apply in the same way to the agents which are forms in matter as to the agents which are forms separate from matter, and according to the philosophers an intellect which is an effect must necessarily know its principle, and there are here not two entities, i.e. the intellect and

something additional to its essence, for, if so, it would be a compound, and the intellect, which is simple, cannot be composite. And the difference in the separate forms between cause and effect is that the First Cause exists by itself and the second cause exists through its relation with the First Cause, for the fact of its being an effect lies in its substance and is not an additional entity, in contrast with material effects; e.g. colour is an entity which exists by itself in a body, but it is the cause of sight, in so far as it is related, and sight has no existence except in this relation;’ and in the same way substances which are separate from matter are substances which are of the nature of relation. For this reason the cause and the effect are unified in the forms separated from matter, and in the same way sensible forms are of the nature of relation, as has been proved in the book on psychology.’

4.0 Conclusion:

Ghazali concluded here that there was no special necessity for the first effect to have a possible existence; and that this was necessary for any effect. However, that the effect should know its cause was not necessary for its existence, just as the knowledge of its effect was not necessary for the existence of the cause. Therefore the plurality which would arise from its knowing its principle was impossible.

5.0 Summary:

1. The philosophers say of the First Principle that it knows only itself, because they want to avoid the implication of plurality in it, for the statement that it knows another would imply a duality: its knowing itself and its knowing another.

2. Ibn rushd replies Ghazali: “If we assume that the cause is an intellect and knows its effect, it does not follow that this is an addition to the essence of the cause; on the contrary, it belongs to the essence itself, since the emergence of the effect is the consequence of its essences. And it is not true that if the effect proceeds from the First Principle not because of a cause, but because of the essence of this principle, a plurality proceeds from it.”

3. if the self-knowledge of the effect is not identical with the essence of the effect, there will not only be a triplicity in the effect, as they affirm, but a quadruplicity, to wit: its essence, its knowledge of itself, its knowledge of its principle, and its being a possible existent by itself, and to this it should perhaps be added that it is an existent necessary through another-and then it would be fivefold.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment.

1. What is the difference in the separate forms between cause and effect?
2. What is the second objection by Ghazali?
3. What is the third objection by Ghazali?
4. Why did the philosophers say that the First Principle knows only itself?

7.0 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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UNITE 5: Refutation of emanation of plurality from the First effect (the fourth and the fifth objections.)

CONTENTS:

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main content

 3.1The Fourth Objection

 3.2The Fifth Objection

4.0 Conclusion.

5.0 Summary.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment.

7.0 Reference/Further Reading.

1.0 Introduction

You read in unit four about Ghazali's second answer and the third objection to philosophers claim of everlasting nature of the world which led the both parties to argument about emanation of plurality from the First Principle, and whether the first effect knows its principle or not. Here Ghazali drew a conclusion that if the first effect is an existent necessary by itself, then what the philosophers say is untrue, that there is only one necessary existent; if it is a possible,' then it needs a cause; but it has no cause,' and therefore it cannot know the existence of its cause. He also proved the ignorance of the philosopher by confirming fivefold plurality in the first effect instead of threefold by the philosophers. In this unit, you are going to meet his fourth and fifth objections to the argument.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- a) Give the summary of the fourth and the fifth objections
- b) Give the summary of Ibn Rushds reply to Ghazali's objections.
- c) Come in between to Ghazali's objections and Ibn Rushds replies with your own viewpoints.

3.0 Main content

3.1 The fourth objection

Ghazali says:

The fourth objection is that it can be said: Triplicity is not sufficient in the first effect, for the body of heaven which, according to the philosophers, proceeds from one entity out of the essence of its principle is composite, and this in three ways.

The first way is that it is composed of form and matter, as is body generally, according to the philosophers, and both must have a principle,

since matter differs from form and they are, according to the philosophers, interdependent causes, so that the one cannot come into being by means of the other without the intervention of another cause.

IBN RUSHD:

I say:

What he says here is that according to the philosophers the body of the heavens is composed of matter, form, and soul, and that therefore there must be in the second intellects from which the body of the heavens proceeds, four entities, namely, one from which the form proceeds, one from which the hyle proceeds-as both are interdependent, for matter is in one way a cause of form and form in one way a cause of matter-one from which the soul proceeds, and one from which the mover of the second sphere proceeds. But the view that the body of the heavens is composed of form and matter like other bodies is falsely ascribed by Avicenna to the Peripatetics. On the contrary, according to them the body of the heavens is a simple body; if it were composite, it would, according to them, suffer corruption, and therefore they say that it neither comes into being nor perishes, and does not possess the potency for contraries. If it were as Avicenna says, it would be composite like a living being, and if this were true, quadruplicity would be a necessary consequence for the man who asserted that from the one only one can proceed. And we have already stated that the way these forms are causes for each other, for the heavenly bodies, and for the sublunary world, and the way the First Cause is a cause for all of them, is quite different from all this.

Ghazali says:

The second way is that the highest sphere has a definite measure of size, and its determination by this special measure taken from among all other measures is an addition to the existence of its essence, since its essence might be smaller or bigger than it is; therefore, it must have a determinant for this measure, added to the simple entity which causes its existence. The same necessity does not exist for the existence of the intellect, which is pure existence and not specified by any measure taken

from among other measures, and therefore may be said to need only a simple cause.

IBN RUSHD

I say:

The meaning of this statement is that when the philosophers say that the body of the sphere proceeds as a third entity, which by itself is not simple (for it is a body possessing quantity), there are here in reality two entities, the one which provides the substantial corporeality, the other the definite quantity; therefore there must be in the intellect from which the body of the sphere proceeds more than one entity, and therefore the second cause is not triple but quadruple. But this is a false assumption, for the philosophers do not believe that body in its entirety' proceeds from the separate principles; if anything proceeds from them, according to the philosophers, it is only the substantial form, and according to them the measures of the bodily parts follow from the forms; this, however, refers only to the forms in matter, but the heavenly bodies, since they are simple, are not susceptible of measure. Therefore, to assume that form and matter proceed from an abstract principle is by no means in conformity with philosophical principles, and is quite absurd. In reality, the agent in transitory things,' according to the philosophers, produces neither the form nor the matter; it only makes a compound out of matter and form. If the agent produced the form in matter, it would produce the form in something, not from something. This is not philosophical theory, and there is no sense in refuting it, as if it were.

Ghazali says, on behalf of the philosophers:

It might be said: If the sphere were bigger than it is, this greater size would be superfluous for the order of the universe; if smaller, it would not suffice for the intended order.

IBN RUSHD

I say:

He means by this statement that the philosophers do not believe that, for example, the body of the sphere could be bigger or smaller than it is, for in either case the order intended in the universe would not be realized, and the sphere would not set the world in motion according to its natural power, but either too strongly or too weakly, both of which would involve the corruption of the world. A greater size of the world would not be a superfluity, as Ghazali says; no, out of both, bigness and smallness, the corruption of the world would result.'

Ghazali says, to refute the philosophers:

We answer: Does the determination of the manner of this order suffice in itself for the existence of what possesses this order, or does it need a cause to effect it? If you believe it suffices, then you regard it as superfluous to assume causes at all, and you may well judge that from the order of these existents the existents themselves result without any additional cause; if, however, you believe it does not suffice, but a cause is necessary, this new cause will not suffice either for the specification of these measures, but will itself need a cause for its specifying.'

IBN RUSHD

I say:

The summary of this is that he makes the objection against them that in the body there are many things which cannot proceed from one agent, unless they admit that many acts can proceed out of one agent, or unless they believe that many accidents of the body result from the form of the body and that the form of the body results from the agent. For,

according to such an opinion, the accidents resulting from the body which comes into being through the agent do not proceed from the agent directly but through the mediation of the form. This is a conception permissible to the doctrines of the philosophers, but not to those of the theologians. However, I believe that the Mu'tazilites think as the philosophers do that there are things which do not directly proceed from the agent. We have already explained how the Monad is the cause of the order, and of the existence of all things which support this order, and there is no sense in repeating ourselves.

Ghazali says:

The third way is that in the highest heavens there are marked out two points, the poles, which are immovable and do not leave their position, whereas the parts of the equator change their position. Now either all the parts of the highest sphere are similar (or then there will not be a special determination of two points amongst all the points to be poles), or the parts of the sphere are different and some have a special character which others have not. What, then, is the principle of these differences? For the body of the heavens proceeds from only one and the same simple entity and the simple can cause only that which is simple of shape, namely the sphere, and that which is homogeneous, that is, has no special distinguishable character. And out of this there is no issue.

IBN RUSHD

I say:

'Simple' has two meanings: first, simplicity can be attributed to that which is not composed of many part, although it is composed of form and matter, and in this way the four elements are called simple;' secondly, it can be attributed to that which is not composed of form and matter capable of changing its form, namely to the heavenly bodies; further, simplicity can be attributed to the agglomerate which has the same definition for its whole and its part, even when it is composed of the four elements. The simple character which is attributed to the heavenly bodies can very well possess parts which are differentiated by

nature, as are the right and left sides of the sphere and the poles; for the globe, in so far as it is a globe, must have definite poles and a definite centre through which globes differ individually, and it does not follow from the fact that the globe has definite sides that it is not simple, for it is simple in so far as it is not composed of form and matter in which there is potency, and it is non-homogeneous in so far as the part which receives the place of the poles cannot be any part of the globe, but is a part determined by nature in each globe individually. If this were not so, globes could not have centres by nature through which they were differentiated; thus they are heterogeneous-in this special meaning of the word 'heterogeneous'-but this does not imply that they are composed of bodies different by nature, nor that their agent is composed of many potencies, for every globe is one. Nor do the philosophers regard it as true that every point of whatever globe can be a centre and that only the agent specifies the points, for this is only true in artificial things, not in natural globes. And from the assumption that every point of the globe can be a centre, and that it is the agent which specifies the points, it does not follow that the agent is a manifold unless one assumes that there is in the empirical world nothing that can proceed from a single agent; for in the empirical world things are composed of the ten categories and therefore anything whatever in the world would need ten agents. But all this, to which the view in question leads, which is very much like babbling in metaphysics, is stupid and senseless talk. The artificial product in the empirical world is produced, indeed, by only one agent, even if it possesses the ten categories. How untrue is this proposition that the one can produce only one, if it is understood in the way Avicenna and Farabi understand it, and Ghazali himself in his Niche for Lights, where he accepts their theory of the First Principle.'

Ghazali says:

One might say: 'Perhaps there are in the principle different kinds of plurality which do not result from its being a principle, only three or four are manifest to us, and the rest we do not perceive, but our incapacity

for observation does not shake our belief that the principle of plurality is plurality and that from the one no manifold can proceed.'

IBN RUSHD

I say:

If the philosophers made such a statement, they would have to believe that there is in the first effect an infinite plurality, and one would necessarily have to ask them whence plurality comes in the first effect. And since they say that from the one no manifold proceeds, they would have to concede that the manifold cannot proceed from the One, but their statement that from the one only one proceeds contradicts their statement that what proceeds from the First Monad possesses plurality, for from the One one must proceed. Of course they can say that each term in the plurality of the first effect is a first term, but then there must be a plurality of first terms. It is most astonishing how this could remain hidden from Farabi and Avicenna, for they were the first who made these silly statements, and many followed them and attributed these theories to the philosophers. For when Farabi, Avicenna, and their school say that the plurality in the second principle arises through its self-knowledge and its knowing another, it follows for them that its essence has two natures or two forms, and it would be interesting to know which form proceeds from the First Principle and which does not. And there is a similar difficulty in their statement that the second principle is possible by itself, but necessary by another, for its possible nature must necessarily be different from its necessary nature, which it acquires from the necessary being. But the possible nature cannot become necessary, unless the nature of the possible can become necessary. Therefore there is in necessary natures no possibility at all, be it a possibility necessary by itself or a possibility necessary by another. All these are senseless statements and assertions, weaker than those of the theologians, extraneous to philosophy, and not congruous with its principles, and none of these affirmations reaches the level of rhetorical persuasion, to say nothing of dialectic persuasion.

And therefore what Ghazali says in different passages of his books is true, that the metaphysics of Farabi and Avicenna are conjectural.

Ghazali says:

We answer: If you regard this as possible, say then that all existing things in their multiplicity (and indeed their number reaches thousands) derive from the first effect and one need not limit this to the body of the extreme sphere' and its soul, but all souls, heavenly and human, and all earthly and heavenly bodies can proceed from it, with the many diversities, belonging to them, which nobody has ever seen. But then the first effect will suffice.

IBN RUSHD

I say:

This conclusion is true, especially when they imagine that the first act proceeding from the First Principle is the unity through which the first effect becomes a unique existent, notwithstanding the plurality in it. And indeed, if they allow an undetermined plurality in the first effect, it must be less or more than the number of existents, or equal to it; if less, they must introduce a third principle unless there is a thing without cause, if equal or more, the plurality assumed in it will be superfluous.

Ghazali says:

And then it follows that the First Cause by itself will suffice too. For if one regards it as possible that a plurality should arise inevitably, although without a cause, and although there is no necessity for it in the existence of the first effect, this will be permissible also with reference to the First Cause, and the existence of all things will be without a cause, although it is said that they follow inevitably and their number is not known. And if their existence without a cause can be imagined with reference to the First Cause, it can also be imagined with reference to the second cause; indeed, there is no sense in speaking of a reference to the first or to the second cause, since there is no distinction between them in time and place and neither the first nor the second cause can be

characterized by its relation to things which do not differ from them in time and place and can exist without a cause.

IBN RUSHD

I say:

He says that if a plurality in the first effect is permissible without a cause, because out of the First Cause there does not follow a plurality, one may also suppose a plurality within the First Cause, and there is no need to assume a second cause and a first effect. And if the existence of something without cause within the First Cause is impossible, then it is also impossible within the second cause; indeed, our expression 'second cause' has no sense, since in fact they are one and the same thing, and the one is not different from the other either in time or in space, and if it is permissible that something should exist without a cause, neither the First Cause nor the second can be specially distinguished by this; it suffices that it refers to one of them and therefore it is not necessary to refer it to the second cause.

Ghazali says by way of an answer in the name of the philosophers:

It might be said: 'The entities have become so many that they exceed thousands, but it seems absurd that a plurality of that extent exists in the first effect and for this reason we have multiplied the intermediates.'

Then he says in refutation of this:

We answer, however: To say 'it seems absurd' is pure conjecture, and such a judgement should not be applied to intelligibles. But if one says that it is impossible, we ask: 'Why is it impossible, what will refute it, and where the criterion is?' For, once we exceed the one and believe that one, two, or three entities can arise in the first effect without a cause, what makes it impossible that there should be four, five, indeed, a thousand and many thousands, and who could fix the limit? No, if unity is once exceeded, nothing can be rejected. This proof again is decisive.

IBN RUSHD

I say:

If, however, Avicenna and these other philosophers had answered that the first effect possesses plurality, and that necessarily any plurality becomes one through a unity which requires that plurality should depend on unity, and that this unity through which plurality becomes one is a simple entity which proceeds from an individual simple Monad, then they would have saved themselves from these objections of Ghazali, and disengaged themselves from these false theories. But since Ghazali secured his point by ascribing a false assumption to the philosophers, and did not find anyone to give him a correct answer, he made merry and multiplied the impossibilities which can be deduced from their theory, for anyone who lets his horse canter in an empty space can make merry. But if he had known that he did not thereby refute the philosophers, he would not have been so delighted about it. The fundamental mistake of Avicenna and Farabi was that they made the statement that from the one only one can proceed, and then assumed a plurality in the one which proceeds. Therefore they were forced to regard this plurality as uncaused. And their assumption that this plurality was a definite plurality; which demanded the introduction of a third and fourth principle was a supposition not enforced by any proof. And generally, this assumption is not a legitimate assumption for a first and second principle, for they might be asked, 'Why has only the second principle and not the first this special character of possessing a plurality?' All this is foolish and senseless talk. The fact is that Avicenna and Farabi did not know how the Monad was a cause in the system of Aristotle and the Peripatetics. Aristotle, in the twelfth book of his *Metaphysics*, expresses pride in his solution,' and says that none of his predecessors could say anything about this problem. In the sense in which we have expounded the Aristotelian doctrine, this statement that out of the one only one can proceed is true, and the statement that out of the one a plurality proceeds is equally true.

Ghazali says:

Further, we affirm that the statement that out of the one only one can proceed is false in respect of the second effect, for out of it there emanates the sphere of the fixed stars, in which there are a thousand and twenty-odd stars, different in magnitude, shape, position, colour, and influence, be it of ill omen or auspicious, some in the shape of a ram, a bull, or a lion; others in the shape of a man; they influence one and the same place of the sublunary world differently in conferment of cold and warmth, fortune and misfortune, and their own measures are variable. On account of their differences it cannot be said that they are all of one kind; for if this could be said, it might also be said that all the bodies of the world were of one and the same kind of corporeal nature, and that one cause sufficed for them all. But just as the differences in qualities, substances, and natures of the bodies of the sublunary world show that they themselves are different, in the same way the stars, no doubt, are shown to differ, and each of them will need a cause for its form, a cause for its matter, a cause for the special function in its nature, to bring warmth or cold or happiness or calamity, a cause for its being in the definite place it occupies, then again a cause for its special tendency to group itself with others in the shapes of different animals. And if this plurality can be imagined to be known in the second intellect, it can also be imagined in the first intellect; and then this first intellect will suffice.

IBN RUSHD

I say:

He had already exhausted this difficulty which is of a type he uses abundantly in this book, and if the answer we have given in defence of the philosophers is valid, none of these impossibilities need follow. But if by this expression one understands that, from the simple numerically one, only one simple one-not something numerically one in one way, but plural in another-can proceed, and that its unity is the cause of the existence of plurality, then one can never escape from these doubts. And again, things only become many, according to the philosophers, through substantial differences, and differences through accidents-be they quantitative, qualitative, or in whatsoever of the nine categories of the accident-do not cause, according to them, differentiations in the

substance,' and the heavenly bodies, as we said, are not composed of matter and form and are not specifically different, since they have, according to the philosophers, no common genus (for, if so, they would be composite, not simple). But we have treated of this already, and there is no sense in repeating ourselves.

3.2 The fifth objection

Ghazali says:

The fifth objection is to say: If we concede these inept assumptions and these erroneous judgements, how is it then that they are not ashamed to say that from the fact that the first effect is of a possible existence, there results the existence of the highest sphere, and that from its knowledge of itself there follows the existence of the soul of the sphere and from its knowledge of the First Principle there follows the existence of an intellect? What is the difference between this and the statement that the existence of an unknown man is necessary, and that he is of a possible existence and knows himself and his Creator and then that from the fact that he is of a possible existence there follows the existence of a sphere? But it will be objected: What is the relation between his having a possible existence and the existence of a sphere following from him? And the same holds for the fact that from his knowing himself and his Creator there follow two other entities. But it would be ridiculous to say such a thing about a man or any other existent whatever, for the possibility of existence is a concept which does not change through the changing of the possible object, be it a man or an angel or a sphere. I do not know how any madman could content himself with any of these assertions, let alone the learned who split hairs in their discussions about intelligibles.

IBN RUSHD

I say:

These are all theories of Avicenna and his followers, which are not true and are not built on the foundations of the philosophers; still they are not as inept as this man says they are, nor does he represent them in a

true light. For the man whom he supposed to be of a possible existence through himself and necessary through another, knowing himself and his agent, is only a true representation of the second cause, when it is assumed in addition that through his essence and through his knowledge he is the agent of the existents, in the way this is assumed by Avicenna and his school of the second principle, and in the way all philosophers must admit it of the First Principle, God, glory be to Him. If this is admitted, it follows that from this man two things proceed: one in so far as he knows himself, the other, in so far as he knows his Creator, for he is supposed to act only because of his knowledge, and it is not absurd, if he is supposed to act because of his essence, to say that what proceeds from him, in so far as he has a possible existence, is different from what proceeds from him in so far as he has a necessary existence, since both these attributes exist in his nature. This theory, therefore, is not as ignominious as this man tries to represent it to be through this comparison, in order to cast odium on the theories of the philosophers and to make them despicable in the eyes of students.'

There is no difference between Ghazali's comparison and a person who said: If you assume a being living through life, willing through will, knowing through knowledge, hearing, seeing, and speaking through audition, sight, and speech, and the whole world proceeds from him, it is possible that from man, living, knowing, hearing, seeing, speaking, the whole world proceeds, for if these attributes by themselves determine the existence of the world, it cannot make any difference in the effect through whichever being possessing these attributes they produce it. If this man Ghazali sought to speak the truth in this and erred, he might be forgiven; if, however, he understood how to deceive in these things and tried that, and if there were no necessity for him to do so, there is no excuse for him. And if he only wanted to show that he possessed no proof by which he could provide an answer to the question whence plurality proceeds, as might be inferred from what he says below, he speaks the truth, for Ghazali had not reached the degree of knowledge necessary for comprehending this problem, as will be seen from what he says later; and the reason is that he studied only the books of Avicenna, and through this the deficiency in his knowledge arose.

Ghazali says:

But if one should say to us: 'Certainly, you have refuted their theory, but what do you say yourself? Do you affirm that from one thing two different things can in any way proceed? In that case you offend reason. Or will you say that in the First Principle there is plurality? In that case you abandon the doctrine of God's unity. Or will you say that there is no plurality in the world? In that case you contradict the evidence of the senses. Or will you say that plurality occurs through intermediates? In that case you are forced to acknowledge the theory of your opponents. We answer: 'We have not made a deep inquiry in this book; our aim which we have attained-was only to disturb the claims of our opponents. To this we may add that the claim that the thesis that two proceed from one is an affront to reason, and the claim that the attribution of eternal attributes to the First Principle contradicts the doctrine of God's unity both these claims, we say, are vain and possess no proof. The impossibility that two should proceed from one is not known in the way the impossibility of one single person's being in two places is known in short, it is known neither by intuitive necessity nor by deduction. What is the objection against saying: 'The First Principle is provided with knowledge, power, will; He acts as He wants, He judges as He wants, He creates the dissimilar and the similar as He Hants and in the way He wants?' The impossibility of this is known neither by immediate necessity nor by deduction. But the prophets have brought us this truth, justifying it through their miracles, and we must accept it. To inquire, however, how God's act proceeds from Him through His Will is vain and an illusory pursuit. Those who have sought to represent and understand this have arrived as a result of their inquiry at a first effect from which as a possible existent there proceeds a sphere, and from which, so far as it knows itself, there proceeds the soul of the sphere. But this is nonsense and is by no means an appropriate explanation. Let us therefore accept the principles of these things from the prophets, and let us believe in this, since the intellect does not regard it as impossible. And let us abandon the inquiry about quality, quantity, and quiddity,' for the human powers do not suffice for this. And therefore the master of the

Divine Law has said: Think about God's creation, but do not think about God's essence.

IBN RUSHD

I say:

His statement is true, that we have to refer to the Law of God everything which the human mind is unable to grasp. For the knowledge which results from revelation comes only as a perfection of the sciences of the intellect; that is, any knowledge which the weakness of the human mind is unable to grasp is bestowed upon man by God through revelation. This inability to comprehend things the knowledge of which is, however, necessary in the life and existence of man, is either absolute-i.e. it is not in the nature of the intellect, in so far as it is intellect, to comprehend such a thing-or it is not in the nature of a certain class of men, and this kind of weakness is either a fundamental character of his disposition or something accidental through a lack of education. Revelation is a mercy bestowed on all these classes of men.

And as to Ghazali's words:

Our aim-which we have attained-was only to disturb our opponents; this aim is not a proper one for him and is censurable in a learned man, for the intention of the learned, in so far as they are learned, must be to seek the truth, not to sow doubts and perplex minds.

And as to his words:

the impossibility that two should proceed from one is not known in the way the impossibility a single person's being in two places is known; although these two propositions are not of the same degree of assent, still the proposition that from the simple unit there proceeds only one single unit keeps its evidence inside the empirical world. Propositions which are evident differ in their degree of evidence, as has been shown in the Posterior Analytics, and the reason for this is that when evident propositions are supported by imagination they receive a stronger degree of assent, and unsupported by imagination their assent is weakened; but only the masses rely on imagination, and he who is well

trained in intellectual thought and renounces imagination accepts both propositions with the same degree of assent.

The strongest degree of evidence pertains to this proposition when a man makes an induction from transitory existents and sees that they only change their names and definitions through their acts and that, if any existent whatever could arise from any act and any agent whatever, the essences and definitions would become mixed and knowledge would be annihilated. The soul, for instance, distinguishes itself from the inorganic only through its special acts which proceed from it, and inorganic things are only distinguished from one another through the acts that are proper to them; and the same applies to souls. And if many acts were to proceed from a single potency, in the way that many acts proceed from composite potencies, there would be no difference between the simple and the composite essence and they would be indistinguishable for us. And again, if many acts could proceed from one single essence, an act without an agent would be possible, for an existent comes to be through an existent, not through a non-existent, and therefore the non-existent cannot come to be by itself; and if it is true that the mover of the privation and the transposer of its potency into act transposes it only through the actuality it possesses itself, of necessity the actuality it possesses must be of the same kind as the act it transposes. If any effect whatever could proceed from any agent whatever, it would not be impossible that the effects should be actualized by themselves without an agent. And if many kinds of potency could be actualized through one and the same agent, this agent would itself have to possess these kinds or related kinds, for if it possessed only one of these kinds, all the other kinds would have to be actualized by themselves without a cause. It is not permissible to say: The only condition for the agent is that it exists as acting with an absolute action, not with a specified kind of action; for, in that case, any existent whatever would be able to perform any act whatever and what exists would be mixed; besides, the absolute, that is the universal, existent stands nearer to non-existence than the real individual existent. So those who denied the theory of universals denied the belief in a universal existent and in a universal becoming, whereas the champions

of this theory regarded them as something midway between being and nonbeing; but if this were the case, it would follow that the universals could be a cause of existents. The proposition that from the one only one act can proceed is more evident for the empirical than for the divine world. For knowledge multiplies through the multiplying of the objects of thought in the world, since the intellect knows these objects in the way that they exist in the world, and they are the cause of its knowledge. It is not possible for many objects of thought to be known through one act of thought, nor can one act of thought produce many effects in the empirical world, e.g. the knowledge of the artisan which produces, for example, a cupboard is different from the knowledge which produces a chair. But eternal wisdom and the eternal agent differ in this matter from temporal knowledge and the temporal agent.

If I were asked 'what is your own point of view in this question? You have denied Avicenna's theory of the cause of plurality, but what do you say yourself? For it has been pointed out that the different schools of philosophy have three different answers to this question; that the plurality comes only through matter; that the plurality comes only through instruments; that the plurality comes through mediators. And it is said of the Peripatetics that they accept the theory which makes mediation the cause of plurality'-I cannot give in this book an answer to this question supported by a demonstrative proof. We find, however, neither in Aristotle nor in any of the known Peripatetics this theory which is ascribed to them, with the exception of Porphyry, the Tyrian, the author of the Introduction to Logic, and he is not among the most subtle of philosophers. My opinion is that according to the principles of the Peripatetics the cause of plurality is a combination of three factors, the intermediates, the dispositions, and the instruments; and we have already explained how all these depend on the Monad and refer to it, for each of them exists through an absolute unity which is the cause of plurality. For it seems that the cause of the plurality of the separate intellects is the difference in their natures, by which they receive the knowledge they gain of the First Principle and which acquire from the First Principle a unity which by itself is one single act, but which becomes many through the plurality of the recipients, just as there are many

deputies under the power of a king and many arts under one art. This we shall examine in another place, and if some part of it becomes clear it will suffice; otherwise we must take refuge in revelation. In so far as the differences depend on differences between the four causes, the question is clear. For the differentiation of the spheres arises from the differences of their movers, of their forms, of their matter, supposing they have matter,' and of their acts which serve a special end in the world, even if the philosophers did not believe that these spheres exist for the sake of these acts. As to the differences which arise primarily in the sublunary world in the elements, as for instance the differences between fire and earth, and in short the opposites, they are based on the differentiation of matter and on their varying distances from their movers, which are the heavenly bodies. As to the difference between the two supreme movements, one of which is the agent of generation and the other the agent of corruption, they depend on the differentiation of the heavenly bodies and their motions, as is proved in the book *On Generation and Corruption*. For the difference which arises from the heavenly bodies resembles the difference which arises from the difference in the instruments. To sum up: the factors for the origination of plurality from the one Agent are three, according to Aristotle, and he refers to the One in the sense mentioned above, namely, that the One is the cause of the plurality. In the sublunary world the differences arise from the four causes, that is to say, the difference of the agents, the matter, the instruments, and the intermediaries which transmit the acts of the First Agent without its direct interference, and those intermediaries are very similar to the instruments. And an example of the differentiation which arises through the difference of the recipients, and out of the fact that certain differentiated things cause others, is colour. For the colour which arises in the air differs from the colour in the body, and the colour in the faculty of sight, i.e. in the eye, from the colour in the air, and the colour in the common internal sense from the colour in the eye, and the colour in the imagination from the colour in the common internal sense, and the colour in the memorative and retentive faculty from the colour in the imagination; and all this has been explained in the book of psychology.

4.0 IN CONCLUSION:

The philosophers tried to acquire knowledge about reality through speculation alone, without relying on the words of anyone who should induce them to acquiesce in them without proof; on the contrary, sometimes through speculation they came into contradiction with the facts as shown by the senses. They discovered that the sublunary world can be divided into two classes, the living and the inanimate, any instance of which only comes into being through something, called form, which is the entity by which it comes into being after having been non-existent; through something, called matter, out of which it comes into being; through something, called the agent, from which it comes into being; and through something, called the end, for the sake of which it comes into being; and so they established that there are four causes. And they found that the form by which a thing comes into being, i.e. the form of the thing generated, is identical with the proximate agent, from which it comes into being, either in species, like the generation of man out of man, or in genus, like the generation of the mule from a horse and a donkey. And since, according to them, the causes do not form an infinite series, they introduced a primary, permanent efficient cause. Some of them believed that the heavenly bodies are this efficient cause, some believe that it is an abstract principle, connected with the heavenly bodies, some believe that it is the First Principle, some again that it is a principle inferior to it,' and these philosophers thought it sufficient to regard the heavens and the principles of the heavenly bodies as the cause for the coming into being of the elements, since according to them they too need an efficient cause. As to the generation of living beings from each other in the sublunary world, the philosophers had, because of this faculty of life, to introduce another principle, which was the bestower of soul and of form, and of the wisdom which is manifested in this world. This is what Galen calls the formative faculty' and some regard it as an abstract principle, some as an intellect, some as a soul,' some as the body of the heavens, and some as the First. Galen called this potency the demiurge and was in doubt whether it is God or

another principle. This faculty acts in the generative animals and in plants, and is needed still more in those plants and animals which have an equivocal generation. This was the point they reached in the examination of the sublunary world.

When they had agreed that the heavens were the principles of the perceptible bodies, they investigated the heavens also and agreed that the heavenly bodies are the principles of the changeable perceptible bodies and of the species in the sublunary world, either by themselves or in combination with an abstract principle. And from their investigation of the heavenly bodies it appeared to them that these do not come into being in the way that the transitory things of the sublunary world come into being, for what comes into being, in so far as it comes into being, is seen to be a part of this perceptible world and its coming into being is only effected in so far as it is a part of it, for what has come into being has come into being out of something, through the act of something, by means of something, in time and in space. And they discovered that the celestial bodies are, as remote efficient causes, a condition for the coming into being of perceptible things. If, however, the celestial bodies themselves had come into being in this way, they would, as a condition of their becoming, have required prior to them other bodies which would have needed to be parts of another world, and there would be in this other world bodies like these, and if these bodies had also come into being, they would have required other celestial bodies before, and so ad infinitum. And since this was established in this way and many others, they were convinced that the heavenly bodies neither come into being nor are destroyed in the way that sublunary things come into being and are destroyed, for 'coming into being' has no other definition or description or explanation or meaning than that which we have laid down here. Then they found that the celestial bodies have also moving principles by means of which and by the agency of which they are moved. And when they investigated their principles, they found that the moving principles were neither bodies nor potencies in bodies. They are not bodies because they are the first principles of the bodies encircling the world; they are not potencies in bodies, i.e. their bodies are not a condition for their

existence (as is the case in this sublunary world with the composite principles in animals), because any potency in a body is, according to the philosophers, finite, since it can be divided through the division of the body' and everybody which can be divided is generable and corruptible, i.e. composed of matter and form, and the existence of its matter is a condition for the existence of its form. And again, if the principles of heavenly bodies were like the principles of earthly bodies, the former would be like the latter and would need other bodies prior to them. Thus they were convinced of the existence of incorporeal principles which are not potencies in a body.

Moreover, they had already found, concerning the human intellect that form has two modes of existence, a sensible existence in matter, as in the stone there is the form of the inorganic which exists in the matter outside the soul, and an intelligible existence, namely, perception and intellect, which is separate from matter and exists in the soul. From this they concluded that these absolutely abstract existences are pure intellects, for if what is separated from another is already intellect, how much better suited to be intellect will something be that is absolutely separates. And so, of necessity, they deduced that the objects of thought of those intellects are the forms of the existents and of the order which exists in the world, as is the case with the human intellect, for the human intellect is nothing other than the perception of the forms of the existents, in so far as they are without matter. They concluded, therefore, that existents have two modes of existence, a sensible existence and an intelligible existence, and that the relation between sensible and intelligible existence is like the relation between the products of art and the arts of the craftsman, and they believed therefore that the heavenly bodies are conscious of these principles and that they can only guide what exists in the sublunary world because they are animated. And when they compared the separate intellects with the human intellect, they found that these intellects are superior to the human intellect, although they have it in common with the human intellect that their intelligibles are the forms of existents, and that the form of each of these intellects is nothing but the forms and the order of the existents it perceives, in the way that the human intellect is nothing

but the forms and the order of the existents it perceives. The difference between these two kinds of intellect is that the forms of the existents are a cause of the human intellect, since it receives its perfection through them, in the way that the existent is brought into being through its form, whereas the intelligibles of these intellects are the cause of the forms of the existents. For the order and arrangement in the existents of this sublunary world are only a consequence and result of the order which exists in these separate intellects; and the order which exists in the intellect which is in us is only a consequence of the order and arrangement which it perceives in the existents, and therefore it is very imperfect, for most of this order and arrangement it does not perceive. If this is true, there are different degrees in the forms of the sensible existents; the lowest is their existence in matters, then their existence in the human intellect is superior to their existence in matters, and their existence in the separate intellects is still superior to their existence in the human intellect. Then again they have in the separate intellects different degrees of superiority of existence, according to the different degrees of superiority in these intellects in themselves.

And again when they investigated the body of the heavens they found that in reality it is one unique body similar to one single animal, and that it has one general movement-which is like the general movement of the animal which moves the whole body of the animal -namely, the daily movement, and they found that the other heavenly bodies and their individual movements were similar to the particular members of a single animal and its particular movements. And they believed, because of this connexion between these bodies, their referring to one body and to one end, and their collaboration in one act-namely, the world in its totality-that they depended on one principle, as happens to different arts which aim at one product and which depend on one primary art. For this reason they believed that these abstract principles depend on a unique abstract principle which is the cause of all of them, that the forms and the order and arrangement in this principle are the noblest existence which the forms, the order, and the arrangement in all reality can possess, that this order and arrangement are the cause of all the orders and arrangements in this sublunary world, and that the intellects reach

their different degrees of superiority in this, according to their lesser or greater distance from this principle. The First amongst all these principles thinks only its own essence and, by thinking its essence, thinks at the same time all existents in the noblest mode of existence and in the noblest order and arrangement. The substance of everything under the First Principle depends on the way in which it thinks the forms, order, and arrangement which exist in the First Intellect; and their greater or lesser superiority consists only in this. They conclude therefore that the inferior cannot think the superior in the way the superior thinks its own essence, nor does the superior think the inferior in the way the inferior thinks its own essence; this means that no one of any pair of existents can be of the same rank as its fellow, since if this were possible they would have become one and would not form a numerical plurality. Because of this they say that the First thinks only its own essence, and that the next principle can think only the First, but cannot think what is under itself, because this is its effect and if it should think its effect, the effect would become a cause. The philosophers believe that the consciousness which the First has of its own essence is the cause of all existents, and that which each of the intellects inferior to it thinks is in part the cause of those existents the creation of which pertains especially to it, in part the cause of its own essence, i.e. the human intellect in its universality.

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It is in this way that the doctrine of the philosophers concerning these things and concerning the motives which lead them to these beliefs about the world must be understood. On examination they will not be less convincing than the motives of the theologians of our religion, first the Mu'tazilites and secondly the Ash'arites, which lead them to their view of the First Principle. They believed, namely, that there exists an essence neither corporeal, nor in a body-which is living, knowing, willing, provided with power, speaking, hearing, and seeing, while the Ash'arites, but not the Mu'tazilites, held besides that this essence is the agent of everything without intermediary and knows them with an infinite knowledge, since the existents themselves are infinite. The

Ash'arites denied the existence of causes, and professed that this living, knowing, willing, hearing, seeing, powerful, speaking essence exists in continuous existence connected with everything and in everything. But this assumption may be thought to imply consequences open to criticism, for an essence with qualities as mentioned above must necessarily be of the genus of the soul, for the soul is an essence, incorporeal, living, knowing, provided with power, willing, hearing, seeing, speaking, and therefore these theologians assumed the principle of reality to be a universal soul, separated from matter in a way they did not understand.'

We shall now mention the difficulties which result from this assumption. The most obvious one concerning their theory of the qualities is that there must exist a composite, eternal essence and therefore an eternal compound, which contradicts the Ash'arite theory that every compound is temporal, because it is an accident and every accident is according to them a temporal product. They assumed besides that all existents are possible acts, and they did not believe that there is in them an order, a proportion, and a wisdom which the nature of these existents requires; no, they held that all things could be different from what they are and this applies necessarily also to the intellect; still, they believed that in the products of art, to which they compared the products of nature, there exist order and proportion, and this was called wisdom, and they called the Creator wise. The argument by which they tried to show that there is in the universe something like this principle was that they compared natural acts to acts of will and said that every act, in so far as it is an act, proceeds from an agent endowed with will, power, choice, life, and knowledge, and that the nature of an act, in so far as it is an act, demands this; and they tried to prove the truth of this by arguing that what is not living is inorganic and dead, and, since from the dead there cannot proceed any act, there does not proceed any act from what is not alive. Thus they denied the acts which proceed from natural things and moreover they refused to admit that the living beings which we see in the empirical world have acts; they said that these acts seem connected with the living in the empirical world, but their agent is only the living God in the divine world. But the logical conclusion for them would be

that there is in the empirical world no life at all, for life is inferred from things in the empirical world, because of their acts; and, further, it would be interesting to know how they arrived at this judgement about the divine world.'

The manner in which they established this creator was by assuming that every temporal product must have a cause, but that this cannot go on infinitely, and that therefore of necessity the series must end in an eternal cause; and this is true enough, only it does not follow from this that this eternal principle cannot be body. They need therefore the additional proposition that a body cannot be eternal, but this proposition causes them many difficulties. For it is not sufficient for them to prove that this world is produced, since it might still be argued that its cause is an eternal body which has none of the accidents, no circular movements, nor anything else, through which---although they themselves admitted an eternal composite being---they proved that the heavens must be produced. Now, having assumed that the heavenly body has been produced, they supposed that this production had taken place in quite a different way from what is understood by production in the empirical world. In the empirical world, namely, things are produced from something, in time and space, and with a definite quality, not in their totality, and in the empirical world there is no production of a body from that which is not a body. Nor did they suppose its agent to act like an agent in the empirical world, for the empirical agent changes one quality in the existent into another; it does not change absolute nonexistence into existence---no, it brings the existent into a form and an intelligible quality through which this existent becomes another existent instead of this, different from it in substance, definition, name, and act, as it is expressed in the Divine Words: 'We have created man from [an extract of] clay, then we made him a clot in a sure depository, then we created the clot congealed blood, and we created the congealed blood a morsel, etc. It is for this reason that the ancient philosophers believed that the absolute existent neither comes into existence nor can be destroyed.

Now, if one concedes to the theologians that the heavens were created in time, they are unable to prove that they are the first of created things, as is the evident meaning of what is said in the Venerable Book in more than one verse, for instance, in the Divine Words, 'Do not those who misbelieve see that the heavens and the earth were both solid, and in the words, 'and His throne was upon the water' and in the words, 'then He made for heaven and it was but smoke, And as concerns this agent, according to the theologians, it creates the matter and the form of that which becomes, if they believe that it has a matter, or it creates the thing in its totality, if they believe it to be simple in the way they believe the atom to be simple; and if this is so, this kind of agent changes either nonexistence into existence, namely, when there is generation, that is when the atom, which according to them is the element of the bodies, comes into being; or existence into non-existence, namely, when there is destruction, that is, when the atom is destroyed. But it is clear that an opposite cannot be changed into its opposite, and that non-existence itself cannot become existence nor warmth itself cold. It is the privation which becomes existent, it is the warm thing which becomes cold and the cold thing which becomes warm, and for this reason the Mu'tazilites say that privation is an entity although they deprive this entity of the attribute of existence before the becoming of the world. And their arguments by which they believe it can be proved that a thing does not come into being from another thing are incorrect. The most plausible of them is their affirmation that, if a thing came into being from another thing, this would imply an infinite regress. The answer is that this is only impossible for production in a straight line, which, indeed, needs an infinite existence in act; but, as to circular production, it is not impossible that, for instance, fire should come from air and air from fire ad infinitum, while the substratum is eternal. They support their theory of the temporal production of the universe by saying that that which cannot be devoid of things produced must itself be produced, and the universe, being the substratum of the things that are produced, must therefore be produced. The greatest mistake in this argument, when its premise is conceded, is that it is a false generalization, for that which cannot be devoid of things produced in the empirical world is a thing

produced out of something else, not out of nothing, whereas they assume that the universe is produced out of nothing. Further, this substratum which the philosophers call primary matter cannot be devoid of corporeality according to the philosophers, and, according to the philosophers, absolute corporeality is not produced. Besides, the premise which affirms that what cannot be devoid of things produced is produced, is only true when the things produced of which it cannot be devoid are individual things, but if the things produced are one generically, they have no initial term; and from whence then should it follow that their substratum must be produced? And since among the theologians the Ash'arites understood this, they added to this proposition another, namely, that it is not possible that infinite generated things (i.e. without initial and final term) should exist, a proposition which the philosophers regard as necessary. Such difficulties follow from the assumption of the theologians, and they are much more numerous than those which can be held against the philosophers.

And again their assumption that the identical agent which is the First Principle is an agent for everything in the world without an intermediary contradicts the evidence of the senses that things act upon other things. Their most convincing argument on this point is that, if the agent were an effect, this would lead to an infinite regress. But this would only follow if the agent were agent only in so far as it is effect, and if what is moved were the mover, in so far as it is moved, but this is not the case; on the contrary the agent is only agent in so far as it is an actual existent, for the non-existent does not produce any effect. What follows from this is not that there are no acting effects, as the theologians thought, but that the acting effects end in an agent which itself is not an effect at all. Further, the impossibility which is the consequence of their deduction is still greater than the impossibility which follows from the premises from which they draw this conclusion. For if the principle of the existents is an essence, endowed with life, knowledge, power, and will, and if these qualities are additional to its essence and this essence is incorporeal, then the only difference between the soul and this existent is that the soul is in a body and this existent is a soul which is not in a body. But that which has such a quality is necessarily composed of an essence and

attributes, and each compound requires of necessity a cause for its being a compound, since a thing can neither be compounded by itself nor produced by itself, for producing, which is an act of the producer, is nothing but the putting together of the product. And, in general, just as for each effect there must be an agent, so for each compound there must be an agent which puts it together, for the putting together is a condition of the existence of the compounds. And nothing can be a cause of the condition of its own existence, because this would imply that a thing should be its own cause. Therefore the Mu'tazilites assumed that these attributes in the First Principle refer to its essence and are nothing additional to it, in the way in which this happens with many essential qualities in many existents, like a thing's being existent and one and eternal and so on. This comes nearer to the truth than the theory of the Ash'arites, and the philosophers' theory of the First Principle approaches that of the Mu'tazilites.

We have now mentioned the motives which led these two parties to their theories about the First Principle, and the conclusions which their adversaries can draw from them and hold against them. As concerns the objections against the philosophers, Ghazali has related them in full; we have answered some of them already, and we will answer some of them later. The difficulties which beset the theologians we have shown in this discussion in detail.

We shall now return to distinguish the degree of conviction and plausibility reached by the different statements which Ghazali makes in this book, as we proposed to do, and we were only compelled to mention the plausible propositions which led the philosophers to their theories about the principles of the universe because they answer the objections which their adversaries, the theologians, adduce against them; on the other hand, we mentioned the difficulties which beset the theologians because it is only right that their arguments on this problem should be known and their views represented, since they are free to use them as they wish. It is right, as Aristotle says, that a man should adduce the arguments of his adversaries as he brings forward his own; that is, he should exert himself to find the arguments of his opponents in

the same way as he exerts himself to find the arguments of his own school of thought, and he should accept the same kind of arguments from them as he accepts when he has found the arguments himself.'

We say: The objection that the First Principle, if it can think only its own essence, must be ignorant of everything it has created would be only a valid inference if the way it thinks its essence were to exclude all existents absolutely. But the philosophers mean only that the manner in which it thinks its own essence includes the existents in their noblest mode of existence, and that it is the intellect which is the cause of the existents; and that it is not an intellect because it thinks the existents, in so far as they are the cause of its thinking, as is the case with our intellect. The meaning of their words, that it does not think the existents which are under it, is that it does not think them in the way we think them, but that it thinks them in a way no other thinking existent can think them, for if another existent could think them in the way it thinks them, it would participate in the knowledge of God, and God is far too exalted for this. This is a quality which is peculiar to God, and for this reason certain theologians concluded that God, besides the seven qualities which they attribute to Him, has yet another which is peculiar to Him. Therefore His knowledge can be described neither as universal nor as individual, for both the universal and the individual are effects of existents, and the knowledge of both universal and individual is transitory. We shall explain this still better when we discuss the question whether God knows individuals or does not know them, as the philosophers mostly assert when they pose this problem, and we shall explain that the whole problem is absurd in relation to Gods This problem as a whole is based on two necessary points. First, if God thought existents in such a way that they should be the cause of His knowledge, His intellect would necessarily be transitory and the superior would be brought into being through the inferior. Secondly, if His essence did not contain the intelligibles of all things and their order, there would exist a supreme intellect which would not perceive the forms of existents in their order and proportion. And since these two cases are absurd, it follows that when this principle thinks its own

essence, these existents exist in it in a nobler mode than that in which they exist by themselves.

And that one and the same existent can have different degrees of existence can be shown from what occurs with colour. For we find that colour has different degrees of existence, some higher than others; the lowest degree is its existence in matter, a higher degree is its existence in sight, for it exists in such a way that the colour becomes conscious of itself, whereas existence in matter is an inorganic existence without consciousness; further, it has been proved in the science of psychology that colour has also an existence in the imaginative faculty, and this is a superior existence to its existence in the faculty of sight; it has equally been shown that it has an existence in the remembering faculty superior to that in the imaginative faculty, and, finally, it has in the intellect an existence superior to all these existences. Now, in the same way, we are convinced that it has in the essence of the First Knowledge an existence superior to all its other existences, and that this is the highest degree of existence possible.

As for what Ghazali mentions concerning the philosophical theory of the order in the emanation of these separate principles and of the number of entities which emanate out of each of them, there is no proof that this really takes place and that this happens exactly in this way; and the form in which Ghazali relates it is therefore not to be found in the works of the ancient philosophers. But these philosophers all agree on the theory that the principles, both separate and nonseparate, all emanate from the First Principle, and that through the emanation of this unique power the world in its totality becomes a unity, and that through this power all its parts are connected, so that the universe aims at one act, as happens with the one body of an animal; which, however, has different potencies, members, and acts; and indeed the world is according to the learned one and the same existent only because of this one power which emanates from the First Principle. And they agree about all this, because according to them the heavens are like a single animal and the daily movement which is common to all the heavens is like the animal's general movement in space, and the particular movements which the

different parts of heaven have are like the particular movements of the members of the animal. And the philosophers had already proved that there is one power in the animal through which it becomes one and through which all the potencies which it possesses tend towards one act, that is, towards the preservation of the animal,' and all these potencies are connected with the potency which emanates from the First Principle; and if this were not the case, its parts would disconnect themselves and it would not persist for the twinkling of an eye. If, however, it is necessary that for a single animal there should be a single spiritual potency, permeating all its parts, through which the plurality of potencies and bodies in it becomes unified, so that it can be said of its bodies and potencies that they are one, and if, further, the relations of individual beings to the universe in its totality are like the relation of the parts of an animal to the animal itself, it needs must be the case that all the potencies in the particular parts of this unique animal and in the psychological and intellectual motive powers of these parts should be such that there is in them one single spiritual force which connects all the spiritual and bodily potencies and which permeates the universe in one and the same penetration. If this were not the case, no order and no proportion would exist. And in this way it is true that God is the creator, supporter, and preserver of everything, and to this the Divine Words apply: 'Verily, God supports the heavens and the earth lest they should decline.' And it in no way follows from the fact that this one potency permeates many things that there should be a plurality in it, as those thought who said that from the First Principle there can in the first place emanate only one from which plurality can then emanate; for this statement can only be regarded as valid if the immaterial agent is compared to the material agent. Therefore the term 'agent' can only be applied equivocally to both the immaterial agent and the material. And this will explain to you the possibility of the procession of plurality from the Monad.

Again, the existence of all other separate principles consists only in the forms in which they conceive the First Principle, and it is not impossible that this should be one identical thing, notwithstanding the difference of the forms in which they conceive it, in the same way as it is not

impossible that a plurality should be conceived through one and the same form. And we find, indeed, that all the heavenly bodies in their daily movement, and the sphere of the fixed stars, conceive one identical form' and that they all, moving in this daily movement, are moved by one and the same mover, who is the mover of the sphere of the fixed stars; and we find, too, that they have also different particular movements. Therefore it needs must be that their movements proceed partly from different movers, partly namely through the connexion of their movements with the first sphere-from one unique mover. And just as the removal of an organ or a potency vital to the whole animal would invalidate all the organs and potencies of this animal, so the same applies to heaven with respect to its parts and its moving potencies, and in general with respect to the principles of the world and their parts in relation to the First Principle and in their mutual relations. According to the philosophers the world is closely similar to a single state: a state is upheld through one ruler and many deputies subordinate to him; all the deputies in the state are connected with the first ruler, because the authority of each of them is based on him alone, with respect to the ends and the order of the acts which lead to these ends for the sake of which these deputies exist; and so is the relation of the First Ruler in the world to His deputies. And it is evident to the philosophers that he who bestows on the immaterial existents their end is identical with him who bestows on them their existence, for according to them form and end are identical in this kind of existent and he who bestows on these existents both form and end is their agent. And therefore it is clear that the First Principle is the principle of all these principles, and that He is an agent, a form, and an ends And as to His relation to the sensible existents, He is -since He bestows on them the unity which causes their plurality and the unification of their plurality-the cause of all of them, being their agent, form, and end, and all the existents seek their end by their movement towards Him, and this movement by which they seek their end is the movement for the sake of which they are created, and in so far as this concerns all existents, this movement exists by nature, and in so far as this concerns man, it is voluntary. And therefore man is of all beings the one charged with duty and obligation. And this is the meaning

of the Divine Words: 'Verily, we offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it and shrank from it; but man bore it: verily he is ever unjust and ignorant.'

And the philosophers only assert that, although all these ruling principles proceed from the First Principle, it is only some of them that do so directly, whereas others, ascending gradually from the lower world to the higher, proceed mediately. For they discovered that certain parts of heaven exist for the sake of the movements of other parts, and they related them in each instance to a first principle, till they finally arrived at the absolutely First Principle; and so it was evident to them that there was one unique order and one unique act in which they all participate. But to ascertain the order, which he who contemplates reality and aspires to the knowledge of the First Principle perceives, is difficult, and what human understanding can grasp of it is only its general principle. What led the philosophers to believe in a gradation of these principles, in conformity with the spatial order of their spheres, is that they saw that the highest sphere seems in its action superior to what is under it, and that all the other spheres follow its movement. And therefore they believed that what was said about their order was based on their spatial order. But one might perhaps object that the order in the spheres is perhaps only based on their activity, not on their spatial order; for since it seemed that the activities and movements of the planets exist because of the movement of the sun, perhaps their movers in setting them in motion follow the sun, and the movement of the sun derives perhaps directly from the First. For this reason there are in this question no indubitable assertions, but only assertions more or less plausible and likely to be true. And since this is established, let us now return to our subject.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment.

1. What is the third case Ghazali couldn't consider in his refutation of plurality according to Ibn Rushd?
2. Ghazali says: "Generally speaking, existence is a universal which can be divided into necessary and possible, and if the one specific difference

is an addition to the universal, the other specific difference is also an addition, for both cases are the same”

How did Ibn Rushd respond to this assertion?

3. Point out the statement of Ghazali that refutes plurality directly.

4. Point out the statement of Ibn Rushd that support plurality.

7.0 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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