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On the Authenticity of al-Ghazālī's *al-Maḍnūn* *al-Kabīr*

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Abstract

Though a considerable amount of scholarship has been produced to have an accurate list of the works of al-Ghazālī, this has not put an end to the ongoing debates and doubts about the authenticity of some of his works. The issue of the authenticity of his *al-Maḍnūn al-Kabīr* in particular has occupied the contemporary researchers, as it confused the medieval Muslim biographers. So, the debates over the authenticity of this work have persisted until the present time. In spite of the factors that render any attempt at forming an exact list of his works almost impossible, the references he makes in his certainly authentic works to his earlier writings help determine the authenticity of the works. In this paper, I shall provide an overview of the persistent debates over the authenticity of *al-Maḍnūn al-Kabīr*, trying to establish that it is authored by al-Ghazālī on the basis of the references he makes to it in his works the authenticity of which has been considered certain.

Key words: Al-Ghazālī, *al-Maḍnūn al-Kabīr*, authorship, authenticity, critical edition.

Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) has been not only one of the most influential but also most controversial figures in the history of Islamic thought. His influence in the realm of Islamic intellectuality is evident, ranging from earning a religious legitimacy for logics to incorporating

Sufism into the body of Islamic sciences. The controversies about him center on his anathema of the Muslim philosophers, setting forth contradictory views in his different works that he composed in different stages of his career as well as on the authenticity of the works which have been attributed to him.

The deep spiritual crises he experienced and the major intellectual shifts and transformations he underwent during his lifetime of fifty-five years manifested themselves in his works. This poses a formidable difficulty to the scholars who try to determine the authenticity of the works that have been ascribed to him. The ascription of some pseudo works to him to take advantage of his intellectual and scholarly fame and prestige makes the task of identifying his original works difficult. The fact that al-Ghazālī adopted two different discourses in addressing the commons and the elects is another factor that adds to the present difficulty. The syncretistic character of his thought and the existence of inconsistencies and contradictions in his texts increase the difficulty in determining his real thought, too.

Nevertheless, there are some factors that help identify his real works. The most important of such factors is the existence of many separate studies that address the question of how many of the nearly four-hundred works which are attributed to al-Ghazālī were authored by him really. The studies that investigate the chronology of his works also provide a great help in Ghazālī studies. Another such factor helping to determine the authenticity of his works is the occasional references the thinker makes in his later works to his earlier works. In spite of all these helping factors and independent studies about his legacy, one can say that there is still a need for much research to establish the authenticity of his works. The fact that many of his works have been published without a critical edition and that the authenticity of some of his works is still debated shows the persistence of this need.

The present study is intended to investigate the authenticity of *al-Maḍnūn bihī 'alā ghayri ahlih*, a work of al-Ghazālī which has been claimed he prevented from the public access and over the authenticity of which there have been serious debates because of its contents. This work has been known as *al-Maḍnūn al-Kabīr* among the researchers. The authorship of the *Maḍnūn* by al-Ghazālī has confused the contemporary scholars as it raised doubts in the minds of the medieval Muslim writers. Therefore, I shall first delineate the views and arguments of the medieval and contemporary scholars about the authorship of this work. Then, I shall try to establish its authenticity through the references al-Ghazālī makes to it in his other works. Finally, I will make a general assessment of the arguments of the researchers who reject the authorship of the work by al-Ghazālī.

Debates over the Authenticity of the *al-Maḍnūn al-Kabīr*

The researchers have had serious disagreements over the authenticity of the *Maḍnūn* due especially to its contents that are in a clear conflict with the Sunnite formulation of the Islamic creed. Some of them have argued that it is authentic while some others have claimed it is an pseudo Ghazalian text and still others doubted its authenticity and used it only as a secondary literature in studying a certain aspect of al-Ghazālī. The ongoing debates and disagreements over the authorship of this text by al-Ghazālī date back to the medieval Muslim biographers.

In this manner, Ibn Rushd (d.595/1198) mentioned *al-Maḍnūn bihī 'alā ghayri ahlih* and attributed it to al-Ghazālī in his *al-Kashf 'an manahij al-'adilla*¹. Then in his *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282) listed *al-Maḍnūn bihī 'alā ghayri ahlih* among the authentic works of al-Ghazālī². In the same manner, Ibn Taymiyah (d. 728/1328) expressed his opinion about the authorship of this text in his *Naqḍ al-Manṭiq*, in which he tried to refute the Aristotelian logics, considering it authentic. He said that he searched for this text of al-Ghazālī to learn the mysteries of truth and attain the final end of matters, but he was disappointed when he found that the book only contained the views of the pretentious Sabeian philosophers. Upon his examination of the text, he got the impression that the wordings and order of the text might have been altered, noting that some other scholars too rejected the authorship of this text by al-Ghazālī. In the final analysis, he, however, attributed this work to al-Ghazālī by asserting that the experts of this field who are acquainted with the thought and personality of al-Ghazālī are convinced that the statements in the text belong to al-Ghazālī³.

Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771/1370) is another important medieval biographer who rejected al-Ghazālī's authorship of the *al-Maḍnūn* on the basis of its contents. When providing detailed information about the life and works of al-Ghazālī in his *Ṭabaqāt*, al-Subkī touched upon the question of the authenticity of the *al-Maḍnūn*, stating that it had not been authored by al-Ghazālī. He also related that Ibn Ṣalāḥ (d. 643/1245), an influential traditionalist in the medieval age of Islam, rejected al-Ghazālī's authorship of this work, claiming that it is an apocryphal text. Al-Subkī clarifies that he agrees with Ibn Ṣalāḥ. These two scholars based their argument for the inauthenticity of the text on its contents, noting that it claims that the universe is eternal, denies that God knows individuals by His eternal knowledge, and strips God of His attributes. Al-Subkī argues that it is

¹ Ibn Rushd, *al-Kashf 'an manahij al-'adilla*, (Beirut: Markazu Dirāsāt al-Waḥdah al-'Arabīyah, 1998), edited under the supervision of M. 'Ābid al-Jabirī, First Edition, 151.

² Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, ed. by Iḥsan 'Abbas, (Beirut: Dāru Ṣadr, no date), IV, 218.

³ Ibn Taymiyah, *Naqḍ al-Manṭiq*, (Cairo: Maktabat al-Sunnah al-Muḥammadiyyah, no date), 53-54; See also: *al-Radd 'alā al-Manṭiqiyyīn*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Lubnānī, 1993), 116-117, 197.

impossible for al-Ghazālī to adopt these views because he clarified in his works that one becomes infidel if one adopts any of these doctrines. Claiming that the Sunnite scholars had been unanimously agreed on this subject, al-Subkī concluded that it is impossible for al-Ghazālī to have asserted these views⁴.

Kātib Chalabī (d. 1067/1657), another classical biographer, only relates the remarks of al-Subkī and Ibn Ṣalāḥ about al-Ghazālī's authorship of the *al-Maḍnūn* without clarifying his own position⁵.

Gazzaliān scholars, such as W.H.t. Gairdner, M. Asin Palacios, Goldziher, D. B. Macdonald and Montgomery Watt, have studied the printed edition of *The Kitāb al-Maḍnūn bihī 'alā ḡhayri ahlih* and considered the work to be authentic⁶. Montgomery Watt, who produced a considerable bulk of scholarship on al-Ghazālī, compared the *Maḍnūn* with the other works of al-Ghazālī and concluded that it is authentic. On the basis of its contents, he argued that the text is harmonious with the views of al-Ghazālī. To his mind, the views set forth in the *Maḍnūn* exist in his other authentic works, like *Mishkāṭ al-Anwār* and *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*⁷.

‘Abdurraḥmān Badawī, who has an important scholarship on the works of al-Ghazālī, just quoted the arguments for and against the authenticity of the *Maḍnūn* without reaching a final conclusion. However, he listed the text as the thirty-ninth work in his chronological listing of al-Ghazālī's authentic works⁸.

Known for his Ghazālī studies, Hava Lazarus Yafeh has not considered the *Maḍnūn* to be authentic on the basis that al-Ghazālī employed no philosophical terms in his authentic works except the ones like the *Maqāṣid* and the *Tahāfut* in which he addressed philosophical topics and theories⁹.

George F. Hourani, who listed al-Ghazālī's works in chronological order, regarded the *Maḍnūn* as authentic in his earlier article, recording it as the tenth work in his chronological listing of the Ghazālīan writings¹⁰. In the

⁴ Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah al-Kubrā*, (Cairo: Dāru Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīyyah, 1918), VI, 257; for the other edition, see (Egypt: Maṭba'ah al-Ḥusayniyyah, no date), IV, 131.

⁵ Kātib Chalabī, *Kaṣḥf al-Ẓunūn*, (Beirut: Dāru Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, no date) II, 1713.

⁶ Maurice Bouyges, *Essai de Chronologie des Auvres de al-Ghazali*, ed. Michel Allard, (Beirut: 1959), 51-52.

⁷ Montgomery Watt, "The Authenticity of the Works Attributed to al-Ghazali", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (1952): 43.

⁸ ‘Abdurraḥmān Badawī, *Muallaḡāt al-Ghazālī*, (Kuveit: Vekālatu'l-Matbuat, 1977), Second Edition, 152-154.

⁹ H. Lazarus Yafeh, *Studies on al-Ghazzali*, (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1975), 251-253.

¹⁰ George F. Hourani, "The Chronology of Ghazali's Writings", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 79, (1959), 231.

revised edition of his article, he, however, adopted the position of Lazarus Yafeh and claimed the inauthenticity of the work for the same reason¹¹.

Of the contemporary scholars who cast doubt on the authenticity of the *Maḍnūn*, one should mention Zakariyyā Bashīr Imām, Sulaymān Dunyā, and Maḥmūd ‘Abdulqādir, too¹². Bashīr Imām acknowledges that al-Ghazālī authored a book entitled *al-Maḍnūn al-Kabīr*, but argues that it is lost and the present text with this title is apocryphal¹³. Sulaymān Dunyā, who is known for his Ghazālī studies, used this text in his doctoral dissertation. He, however, did not fail to note that he used it as a secondary literature, and not as a primary source¹⁴.

In his recent paper as a postscript to Badawī’s study on the Ghazālian legacy, Mashhad al-Allaf holds that the *Maḍnūn* is impossible to have been authored by al-Ghazālī, listing some argumentations for this claim. He argues that Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī and Ibn Ṣalāḥ dismissed the authorship of this work by al-Ghazālī. He takes Badawī’s quotation of the remarks of Ibn Ṣalāḥ and al-Subkī as an important evidence for the inauthenticity of the text. To his mind, the dedication of the work to Ahmad, brother of al-Ghazālī, is another evidence because al-Ghazālī has no custom of dedicating his works. The oldest manuscripts of the *Maḍnūn* are dated the eleventh century of the Hegira or later.¹⁵ For Allaf, this shows that the text appeared in later periods and thus is apocryphal. Allaf claims that the text contains some statements that are clearly against the tenets of the Islamic creed and its style is too weak to have been authored by al-Ghazālī. The work contains inconsistencies and contradictions as well as too superstitious statements especially on the generation of the animate beings to be uttered by a doctor of law. Allaf concludes that the *Maḍnūn* was not authored by al-Ghazālī, being a pseudo Ghazālian work¹⁶.

The Arguments for the Authenticity of *al-Maḍnūn al-Kabīr*

¹¹ George F. Hourani, “A Revised Chronology of Ghazali’s Writings”, *Journal of American Oriental Society*, 104, (1984), 298.

¹² Zakariyyā Bashīr Imām, *al-Falsafah al-Nūrāniyyah al-Qur’āniyyah ‘inda al-Ghazālī*, (Kuwait: Maktabat al-Fallāḥ, 1989), First Edition, 118-119,135; Maḥmūd ‘Abdulqādir, *al-Falsafah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī al-Islām*, (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1967), 206-208.

¹³ Bashīr Imām, *al-Falsafat al-Nūrāniyyah*, 135.

¹⁴ Sulaymān Dunyā, *al-Ḥaqīqah fī Naẓar al-Ghazālī*, (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, no date), Fourth Edition, 119.

¹⁵ This argument isn’t true Ibn Rushd’s attribute of this work to al-Ghazali proves that he saw the manuscripts of this work in sixth century of the Hegira. Ibn Rushd, *al-Kashf*, 151.

¹⁶ Mashhad Allaf, “*al-Kutub val-rasāil al-mavdu’a val-manḥūla ‘ala Imām Ghazālī wallatī nusibet ileyhi wehiye leyse lehi*”, <http://www.ghazali.org/articles/not-ghazali.htm>

Anyone who is familiar with the works of al-Ghazālī knows that he sets forth concerning the same issue different views in his different works. Beginning to write when he was studying with the famous theologian al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085), the author kept writing until his death even during the period of his seclusion in Tus. He passed through various intellectual and spiritual stages in his career, and all this life-long process of mental transformation and development characterized his works –a fact al-Ghazālī himself acknowledges in his writings. For instance, he noted that he might be criticized for being inconsistent in relation to some points in *Mīzān al-‘Amal*, a certainly authentic moral treatise which he composed in the period during which he was under the intense influence of philosophy. He notes that some of the views he quoted in the book are in exclusive harmony with the Sufī point of view while the others are only in agreement with the position of the Theologians; thus, all of them cannot be right at the same time. He tries to answer this objection and justify his attitude by interpreting in three different ways the term *madhhab*, which refers commonly to the legal and doctrinal schools in Islam¹⁷.

To his mind, the first meaning of the term is the set of beliefs we inherit from our ancestors, i.e., sect and doctrine. Secondly, the *madhhab* means opinion and view as one forms and reveals under certain conditions and circumstances. Thirdly, it designates one’s real personal beliefs and convictions that are secret between him and God. Al-Ghazālī holds that only God knows one’s *madhhab* in the third meaning unless one reveals it to the others, for example, to his intimate friends¹⁸. Then he recommends the reader to attach no importance to the *madhhabs*, i.e., doctrines and opinions, describing the individual spiritual journey towards God as necessary to acquiring one’s own *madhhab*, i.e., personal beliefs. He opposes the blind imitation of the leader of any *madhhabs* in the settings in which thousands of guides cry out that the leaders of *madhhab* lead astray and cause destruction. In conclusion, he emphasizes the spiritual and intellectual independence as the unique way of salvation¹⁹.

The third way al-Ghazālī interprets the term *madhhab* implies that he might have some personal beliefs and views that he revealed only to his very close friends. This point is of great importance to our current discussion.

Al-Ghazālī set forth similar views in his later works. For example, in his *Iḥyā*, a certainly authentic work, he clarified the wrongness of following a certain *madhhab* in blind imitation, noting that the *madhhab* fanaticism leads

¹⁷ Al-Ghazālī, *Mīzān al-‘Amal*, (Egypt: Maṭba‘a-yi Kurdistan al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1328 H.), 212-214.

¹⁸ Al-Ghazālī, *Mīzān al-‘Amal*, 215-216.

¹⁹ Al-Ghazālī, *Mīzān al-‘Amal*, 216.

one to mistaking and erring. He also points out that the *madhhab* fanaticism is a stumbling block before the correct understanding and interpretation of the Holy Qur'ān²⁰. In the same way, he clarified in the *Munqidh*, one of his latest works, which the knowledge of truth cannot be attained through following a certain *madhhab* or person and that one should judge the people by the standard of truth, and not *vice-versa*²¹.

The fact that al-Ghazālī set forth concerning the same issues different views in his different works in different periods caught the notice of the later scholars, too. For example, Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198) criticized al-Ghazālī for positing contradicting views in his different works, claiming that he harmed both philosophy and people by making the difficult and controversial matters of philosophy accessible to the people through recording them in popular religious writings. He noted that al-Ghazālī changed opinion all the time and this is manifest in his works. He also claimed that al-Ghazālī is Asharite with the Asharites, Sufi with the Sufis, and philosopher with the philosophers²².

His other works too include allusions to the fact that he had some books that contain some views that should be concealed from the unqualified people. For example, in his *Fayṣal al-Tafriqah*, a certainly authentic work, he addressed the thorny issue of the interpretation of the Scripture as well as the stands of the Islamic legal and doctrinal schools vis-à-vis this issue. In attempt to resolve this problem, he developed a new method based on of a fivefold categorization of the beings: being in reality or real being, being in sense or sensual being, being in imagination or imaginal being, being in mind or mental being, and being in allegory or allegorical being. He requires following this order of being in performing the task of interpretation. In discussing the sensual mode of being, he mentions as example the phenomena of inspiration, revelation, and Gabriel's appearing and bringing the divine message in human form. In this context, he explains the appearance of the Prophet Muhammad in one's dream as his presence to the senses of the dreamer, and not as his really getting out of his tomb, i.e., *al-Rawḍah al-Muṭahharah*, to appear to the dreamer. Just in this point, he refers the reader to some of his works without naming them as opposed to his practice of recommending his books by their names in other contexts. "The reason and mystery for this", he says, "is a long issue, which I have

²⁰ Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, (Egypt: Dāru Nahri Nīl, no date), I, 804-805.

²¹ Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*, (in *Majmū'atu Rāsaili al-Imām Ghazālī*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1416/1996), 546.

²² Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, (Lebanon: Markazu Dirāsāti al-Wahdah al-'Arabiyyah, 1999), edited under the supervision of M. 'Ābid al-Jabirī, Second Edition, 113.

explained in some of my works.”²³ But since the topics of his discussion are dream, inspiration, and the appearance of the angels and the jinns, we can infer that he had addressed these subjects in the works to which he referred.

Similar allusive references occur in *Jawāhir al-Qur’ān*, another certainly authentic work of al-Ghazālī, too. In this text, too, he makes allusive references to his works in the context of discussing the creedal subjects. “These four kinds of knowledge”, he says, “namely, the knowledge of God’s essence, that of His attributes, actions, and that of the afterlife, we have recorded them in some of our works to the extent of the divine dispensation in spite of the many troubles, distractions and of the scantiness of friends. We have not divulged these sorts of knowledge because they may tire the people of meager understanding and harm the weak. These are interested only in the form of knowledge. Therefore, it is not right to reveal these kinds of knowledge to anyone except those who have a strong footing in exoteric sciences, purified his lower self of evil features through spiritual exercises and guided it onto the straight path, sought no worldly interest and searched after nothing other than truth. But they should have further a fiery understanding, a strong capacity, a sharp intelligence, and a pure mind. It is impermissible for the holder of that book to reveal its contents except to those who are possessed of these features.”²⁴

From these remarks it is clear that al-Ghazālī wants to keep some of his works inaccessible to the public. It is also clear that he dealt in this restricted work with the subjects of God’s essence, His attributes and actions, and the afterlife.

Similar allusive words occur in his Persian work *Kimyā-yi Sa’ādat*, another certainly authentic text. In discussing the subject of the resurrection and the afterlife in this work, he refers the reader to an Arabic work of his without naming. He notes that just as man is made of the body and the soul, the afterlife, namely, Paradise and Hell are divided into the physical and the spiritual, too. He says that he elaborated upon the physical Paradise and Hell in the *Ihyā* and explained the spiritual Hell at the beginning of the *Kimyā*. As for the spiritual Paradise, he makes the following remarks without mentioning a book title in contrary to his general practice of clarifying the names of the books: “This [knowledge of the spiritual Paradise] is a very precious and exalted knowledge. Many so-called scholars ignore and even deny it, saying no words beyond the bodily Paradise and Hell. As regards the knowledge of the afterlife, they know and recognize no way other than that

²³ Al-Ghazālī, *Fayṣal al-Tafrīqah*, (in *Majmū’atu Rāsaili al-Imām Ghazālī*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1416/1996), 240.

²⁴ Al-Ghazālī, *Jawāhir al-Qur’ān*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Lubnānī, 1992), First Edition, 29.

of “hearing and following”. But we have an evidenced and lengthy book about the truth of this subject and it is in Arabic.”²⁵

As it is seen, al-Ghazālī speaks of an Arabic work of his apart from his two important works, the *Ihyā* and the *Kimyā*. He gives another clue about the title of that work by saying that he dealt in it with eschatological issues like the nature of the afterlife and the spiritual Paradise. As opposed to his general attitude, he in this context avoids naming that work and suffices to say that he dealt in it with the spiritual life of Paradise, which is one of the subjects regarding which he declared the philosophers to be infidel.

Another evidence that supports al-Ghazālī’s authorship of the *Maḍnūn* occurs in *Kitāb al-Arba‘īn fī Uṣūl al-Dīn*, over the authenticity of which there is no disagreement among the scholars. In fact, al-Ghazālī himself clarified that he composed the *Kitāb al-Arba‘īn* as the continuation of *Jawāhir al-Qur’ān*. At the beginning of the *Jawāhir*, he says that one can take these two texts either as the two treatise of one whole work or as two separate books. Thus, he mentions the *Kitāb al-Arba‘īn* by name in the beginning²⁶.

In elucidating the tenets of the Islamic creed at the beginning of the *Kitāb al-Arba‘īn*, al-Ghazālī addresses the subject of the divine attributes and opens a concluding discussion on the truth of belief where he asserts that the views he posited about the tenets of the Islamic creed are the results of the Qur’ānic sciences and that he drew the former from the latter. He refers the inquirers about the Islamic tenets to the chapter *Kitāb al-Tawbah* in the *Ihyā*. In the same context, he recommends those who just want to know about the Islamic creed to read the chapter *Qawā'id al-'Aqā'id* in the *Ihyā* and especially the *Risālat al-Qudsiyyah*, being part of the latter. He refers those who want evidenced knowledge to his *al-Iqtisād fī al-'Itiqād*. He recommends those who wish to smell the scents of gnosis and sniff the fragrances to read the chapters *Kitāb al-Ṣabr wa al-Shukr*, *Kitāb al-Maḥabbah* as well as the chapters on *Tawḥīd* in the *Ihyā*. He notes that they can also refer to the beginning of the chapter *Kitāb al-Tawakkul* in the *Ihyā*. He refers those who want to knock at the door of gnosis to his *al-Maqṣad al-Aqṣā fī Ma‘ānī Asmā'illāh al-Ḥusnā* and especially to its discussion of the names derived from the verbs, namely, gerunds. Upon having made clear references to the books and their chapters up to that point, he recommends those who want to know the truths of this belief in a clear and

²⁵ Al-Ghazālī, *Kimyây-ı Saâdet*, Turkish translation by A. Faruk Meyan, (Istanbul: Bedir Yayınevi, 1979), 57.

²⁶ Al-Ghazālī, *Jawāhir al-Qur’ān*, 10.

straightforward manner to consult his work *al-Maḍnūn bihī ‘alā ghayri ahlih*.²⁷

“If you want”, he says, “to know the belief of God and the afterlife in a clear and straightforward manner, you can find it in some of our works that should be kept away from those who are not qualified and worthy (*Fa lā-tuṣāḍifuhā illā fī ba‘ḍi kutubinā al-maḍnūni bihā ‘alā ghayri ahlihā*). Avoid being misguided to think that you are qualified for it. Do not ask for it openly, nor reject it clearly. Yet you should combine three features in yourself: First, you should be independent in exoteric sciences and rise to the rank of an imam. Second, you should do away with your evil traits and free your heart from the love for the world so that you feel no thirst except for the Real, pay no attention except to Him, and have no interest except in Him and in rising to Him. Third, you should be granted a noble nature, a strong talent, and a sharp intelligence.”²⁸

As it is seen, al-Ghazālī have stated in the *Fayṣal*, the *Jawāhir al-Qur’ān*, and in the *Kimyā* that he authored some works that must be read only by the qualified people and be kept away from those who are not qualified. The phrase quoted above “*kutubinā al-maḍnūni bihā ‘alā ghayri ahlihā*” both means “the books written for those who are qualified for them” and is the title of the work the authenticity of which we have been trying to verify. So, the matter becomes clear when we consider al-Ghazālī’s references and allusions together. In other words, if the contents of the *Maḍnūn* are consistent with his references and allusions in his certainly authentic works, the authenticity of the work shall become established.

To sum up the clues that we have traced to this point, one can say that al-Ghazālī noted in the *Fayṣal* that he in his restricted work addressed the subjects of the divine revelation and inspiration and the appearance of the angels and the jinns²⁹. In the *Jawāhir*, he pointed out that in that work he dealt with the subjects of God’s essence, attributes and actions, and the afterlife³⁰. In the *Kimyā*, he mentioned that in that work he discussed the subject of the afterlife and the spiritual Paradise in particular³¹. In the *Kitāb al-Arba ‘īn*, he noted that he made in it clear explanations about the belief of God and the afterlife³².

²⁷ Al-Ghazālī, *Kitāb al-Arba ‘īn fī Uṣūl al-Dīn*, (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1424/2003), First Edition, 39; for the other edition, see (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1988), 17.

²⁸ Al-Ghazālī, *Kitāb al-Arba ‘īn*, 17.

²⁹ Al-Ghazālī, *Fayṣal al-Tafrīqah*, 240.

³⁰ Al-Ghazālī, *Jawāhir al-Qur’ān*, 30-31.

³¹ Al-Ghazālī, *Kimyā-yī Saādet*, 57.

³² Al-Ghazālī, *Kitāb al-Arba ‘īn*, 17.

We can now proceed to analyze the foreword of the *al-Maḍnūn al-Kabīr*. In the foreword, the author dedicates the work to his brother Ahmad al-Ghazālī and emphasizes that it must be kept away from the unqualified people, noting that it would be injustice to hand the work to such people. The author gives information about the contents of the work as al-Ghazālī does with his works. Hence, he points out that he shall address the following subjects: 1. the knowledge of God; 2. the knowledge of the angels; 3. the truth of the miracles; 4. the eschatological knowledge and the knowledge of the passage from this world to the next one³³.

These four subjects are in a complete harmony with the subjects he referred to in his other works. In parallel to his remarks in the *Fayṣal*, al-Ghazālī deals in the *Maḍnūn* with the subject of dream and seeing the Prophet and the angels in dream. He interprets the seventeenth verse of the Surah al-Maryam in the *Maḍnūn* on the same premises as he did in the *Fayṣal*. As he stated in the *Jawāhir*, he makes explanations regarding God's essence, attributes, and actions. He does not deny the attributes of God, approving of the position of the Asharite theologians who assert that the attributes of God are neither identical with Him nor other than Him³⁴. Just as he referred to in the *Kimyā*, he deals in the *Maḍnūn* with the subject of the afterlife and opens a separate discussion on Paradise, asserting that the life in Paradise is both physical and spiritual. He disapproves of the view of the philosophers that the life in Paradise is only spiritual, calling on to confirm the Law on this issue. In parallel to his remarks in the *Kimyā*, he asserts in the *Maḍnūn* that Paradise is of three kinds according to the pleasures it contains, namely, the sensual, the imaginal, and the rational Paradise, elaborating upon each of them. In addition, he makes an allegorical interpretation of such eschatological issues as the calling to account, the Scale, and the Bridge that is not found in his other works³⁵. In all his discussion, he employs a clear and straightforward language just as he remarked in the *Kitāb al-Arba'īn*. He tries to harmonize the position of the Asharite theologians and that of the philosophers by employing the views and terms of the philosophers. Hence, all these seem to be convincing enough to establish the authorship of the *Maḍnūn* by al-Ghazālī.

In his recent critical edition of the *al-Maḍnūn al-Kabīr*, being a doctoral dissertation, M. Afifī al-Akiti states that he is convinced that the *Maḍnūn* is an authentic work of al-Ghazālī. Since the dissertation has not been published yet, I have had no chance to access and examine it. But as far as I have understood from the summary of the dissertation, the author asserts that

³³ Al-Ghazālī, *al-Maḍnūn al-Kabīr*, (in *Majmū'atu Rāsaili al-Imām Ghazālī*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1416/1996), 335.

³⁴ Al-Ghazālī, *al-Maḍnūn al-Kabīr*, 340.

³⁵ Al-Ghazālī, *al-Maḍnūn al-Kabīr*, 353, 354-355.

his study has exterminated the doubts that have been raised about al-Ghazālī's authorship of the work and established its authenticity, adding that there must be put an end to the ongoing debates over the authenticity of the work³⁶.

Since I had no access to the study, I have no idea about how the author handled the doubts which classic and modern scholars raised about the contents of the *Maḍnūn*, claiming that the text includes some views conflicting with the views al-Ghazālī set forth in his certainly authentic works. However, I would like to call attention to an important point which I discovered during my doctoral study on al-Ghazālī: Montgomery Watt, who has a number of studies on al-Ghazālī, notes that since the copies of the manuscripts were in a limited number in old times, the scribes could easily alter the texts and make interpolations³⁷. During my doctoral studies, I came across such a case of alteration and interpolation in al-Ghazālī's *Kitāb al-Arbaʿīn*. I think that the same is highly possible to have occurred to his other works.

There is no disagreement about the attribution of the *Kitāb al-Arbaʿīn* to al-Ghazālī and we have already pointed out that the author himself referred to this work by name. However, some published editions of the text include some statements that are impossible to belong to al-Ghazālī. For instance, somewhere in the text there is a quotation regarding the interpretation of a Qurʾānic verse and it begins with the phrase, "The author of *al-Kashshāf* said as the following..." In case this quotation is accepted to be correct, it follows that al-Ghazālī used the *al-Kashshāf* of al-Zamakhsharī (d .538/1143)³⁸. Yet al-Zamakhsharī was born in the year 467/1075 and passed away in the year 538/1143. The biographers inform that he began writing the *Kashshāf* in the year 526 A.H., and it took him as long as the term of Abū Bakr's caliphate, namely, over two years to complete the work³⁹. Hence, the work completed in the year 528 A.H., i.e., some twenty years after the decease of al-Ghazālī. So, it is impossible for al-Ghazālī who passed away in the year 505 A.H./1111 A.D. to have used al-Zamakhsharī's exegesis of the Qurʾān that completed in the year 528 A.H. This example shows that the scribes most likely made interpolations into the works of al-Ghazālī. Therefore, the manuscript copies of the *al-Maḍnūn al-Kabīr* must be seriously compared to determine if the controversial statements in the *al-*

³⁶ M. Afifi al-Akiti, "The Madnun of al-Ghazali: A Critical Edition of the Unpublished Major Madnun with Discussion of His Restricted Philosophical Corpus", (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis), 3 vols., Worcester College, Oxford University, Supervised by Prof. F. W. Zimmermann, Oxford, 2007.

³⁷ Watt, "The Autenticity of The Works Attributed to al-Ghazali", *JRAS*, 24.

³⁸ Al-Ghazālī, *Kitāb al-Arbaʿīn*, 7.

³⁹ İsmail Cerrahoğlu, *Tefsir Tarihi*, (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1988), I, 354.

Maḍnūn al-Kabīr are later insertions or not and the allegedly unorthodox views belong to al-Ghazālī or not.

I hope that such a critical edition of the *al-Maḍnūn al-Kabīr* shall put an end to the confusion of it with the *al-Maḍnūn al-Saghīr*. I would like to note that during my doctoral studies, I was able to compare a number of different manuscript copies of the two texts extant in the Süleymaniye Library at Istanbul, discovering that they were confused sometimes. I then came to the conclusion that both texts begs for a careful comparison and a serious critical edition⁴⁰. This task seems to have been partly accomplished by al-Akiti. I hope that the *al-Maḍnūn al-Saghīr* too be studied and published with a serious critical edition.

Conclusion

Though there have been made many studies to have an accurate list of the authentic works of al-Ghazālī, the debates and doubts about the authenticity of some of his works still persist. The issue of the authenticity of the *al-Maḍnūn al-Kabīr* in particular has occupied the contemporary scholars of Islamic studies, Western and Eastern, as it confused the classical Muslim biographers. Started by al-Subkī and Ibn Ṣalāḥ, the debates about the authenticity of this work have persisted until the present time.

In this study, I have tried to establish the authenticity of this text on the basis of the references al-Ghazālī makes to it in his other works such as *Mizān al-'Amal*, *Fayṣal al-Tafrīqah*, *Iḥyā' Ulūm al-Dīn*, *Kimyā-yi Sa'ādat*, *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān*, and *Kitāb al-Arba'īn*, the authenticity of which has been considered certain. By comparing the references in his certainly authentic works with the contents of the *al-Maḍnūn al-Kabīr*, I have come to the conclusion that this text is definitely authored by al-Ghazālī. This conclusion is supported by a recent English doctoral study which argues the authenticity of the text and calls on to put an end to the debates over this issue.

As regards the argument that the *Maḍnūn* is an apocryphal Ghazālīan text on the basis of the contents which are opposed to the Asharite formulation of the Islamic creed, we can say that since books in the old times were copied by the scribes with hand, a copy that underwent alterations and interpolations in the hand of a certain scribe would influence the succeeding copies. The same might have happened to the *Maḍnūn*, which its author wanted to prevent from the public access, because some of al-Ghazālī's works suffered such alterations and interpolations, as we have already pointed out. I hope this matter is clarified by the critical edition of the text

⁴⁰ Mesut Okumuş, *Kur'an'ın Çok Boyutlu Okunuşu -İmam Gazzali Örneği-*, (Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, 2006), 59.

prepared as a doctoral dissertation that I have not yet been able to access and examine.

If the text of the *Maḍnūn* has undergone no alteration and come down to us as original, it is most likely that al-Ghazālī composed it during his teaching years in the Nizāmiyya Madrasa when he was under the sway of philosophy or composed immediately after his resignation from his teaching office. This is because the text seems to attempt at harmonizing the views of the philosophers and the Asharite theologians. Therefore, I think that he must have composed the *Maḍnūn* before the *Mīzān* and the *Fayṣal*.