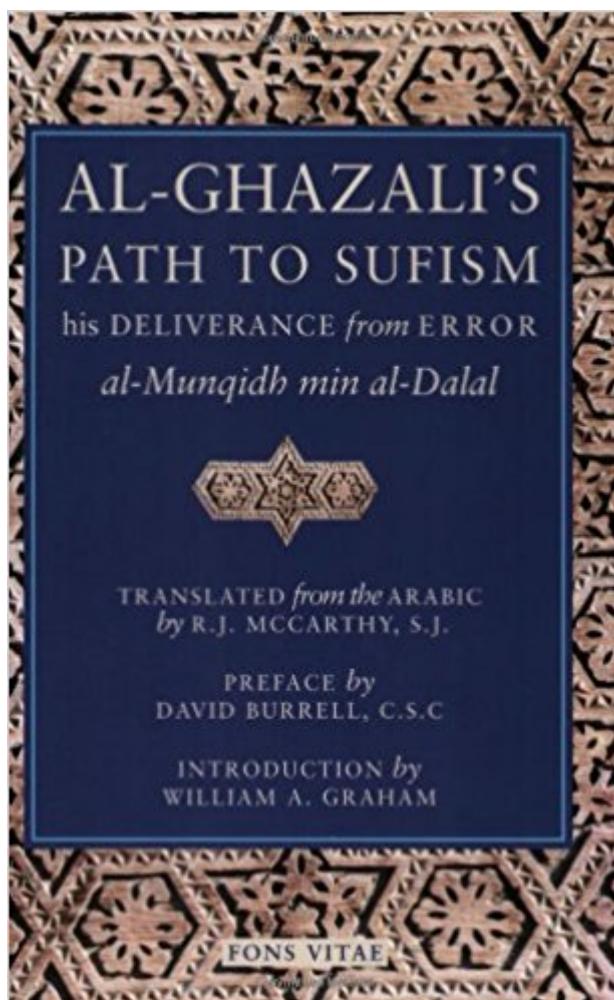


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Al-Ghazali's Path To Sufism: His Deliverance From Error (al-Munqidh Min Al-Dalal)



Synopsis

This text has long been recognized as not only an Islamic classic, but also as a great spiritual autobiography of one of the world's greatest religious thinkers. It is the narrative of how one dedicated seeker of true knowledge and salvation, having probed various systems of thought and differing paths of learning and enlightenment, discovered the peace of the inner life and discipline of mystical spirituality.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali is generally acclaimed as the most influential thinker of medieval Islam; his writings have been regarded as the greatest in spirituality and have been, for centuries, the most read work after the Qur'an in the Muslim world.

This is a new translation of al-Ghazali's "Al Munqid," which is essentially his intellectual autobiography. The interesting thing about this book is that it essentially parallels Descartes' "Discourse on Method" centuries before Descartes wrote it. Al-Ghazali actually experienced a crisis of faith, while Descartes did not; he simply intellectualized one, and followed the steps that he thought he would take in order to achieve a universal doubt -- concluding with the famous "I think, [therefore] I am." This, then, becomes the fundamental rock-solid principle on which he can build a system of knowledge. Al-Ghazali also gives his conclusion a religious tinge which it does not have in the formulation of Descartes. But basically the processes are the same. And it is not at all proven that Descartes had read al-Ghazali's book, though he had apparently read al-Ghazali's treatise on

logic, which had been translated. Descartes' "I think, [therefore] I am" had, of course, been formulated by St. Augustine, one thousand years before. Augustine had imagined that someone argued against him, "What if you are mistaken?" And he had answered, "If I am mistaken, I am; for he who is not cannot be mistaken." This is essentially what Descartes said. So this new translation makes available al-Ghazali's book in an inexpensive edition, and this is a good thing.

I love Ghazali and find his writing (paired with this particular translation's style) incredibly exciting to read. His insight and systematization of thought and differing opinions is very useful. Much of this book works as a short autobiographical work. As well, as a non-Muslim and someone not qualified as a scholar of Islamic theology (especially not historically), this work introduced me to lots of new and specialized terms important for both orthodox and heterodox Islamic theology (particularly in the Medieval/Scholastic era). Of course I beg forgiveness if I say anything not worthy of respect in regards to this wonderful man. The only thing missing in the work is a sense that the author never offers a fully workable answer to his own inquiries. Instead, one enjoys seeing his questioning, his experimentation and exploration, and then the fact that he finds sufficient reason for his own answers. His answers, however, are insufficient outside the realm of subjective conviction (not belief, but conviction). Instead of a well worked philosophical answer, he provides his account of an experience of illumination, fully acceptable within mystical thought but not within theological inquiry. All in all I give the book a 5/5 for many reasons. It is more than worth the read and at the end you will almost certainly want to read and study it more in depth. It is inspiring as well to the mystic who has unresolved questions of religious import. Read it and see for yourself :)!

Astonishing and superlative. This is a must read if you are into spirituality and theology. I cannot believe how I haven't read this book all this time. I completed the book on one sitting soon after it was delivered. It's like poetry but logic, storytelling but references from Ibn-Sina like scholars. Very direct but the translation was riveting. It is a short read but it does impact you with some analogies and references. The extensive notes were also helpful to understand the context. The book isn't really about Islam as much as it's about "learning" and "knowledge", it asks for you to... Well, I won't spoil the suspense!! :) Super read, best I've read in recent time!!

Great book, and very enjoyable. However a word of caution, this edition only contains The Deliverance from Error (al-Munqidh min al-Dalal) ie his short autobiography. It does NOT contain the five key texts. If you want it to include the five key texts, it appears that you have to get the other

edition with the same name. Look at the table of contents to verify that it has what you want. The other edition is about 200 pages longer and has those five texts.

I hadn't read any Al Ghazali texts until this one. I bought it because I was interested in a man who heavily influenced the Muslim religion. This book did not disappoint.

It was a gift for a friend and she loved it!

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