

# The Sūfi Theory of Knowledge: A Study of 'Ain Al-Quḍāh's Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq

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## **Abstrak**

### **Teori Sufi tentang Ilmu Pengetahuan**

Ini adalah studi tentang teori ilmu pengetahuan yang dikembangkan oleh 'Ain al-Quḍāh Hamadānī (1098-1131), seorang hakim yang sekaligus juga seorang sufi. Pada usia tigapuluh tiga tahun dia dihukum mati karena dituduh mempunyai tendensi Ismaili seperti al-Ḥallāj (w.992) dan dituduh bisa mencapai keadaan Nabi seperti Suhrawardī (w.1191).

'Ain al-Quḍāh merasa tidak memperoleh kepuasan dalam mencari ilmu, dalam hal ini adalah ilmu Kalam. Dia akhirnya merasa diselamatkan dari kekafiran, kesalahan, kebingungan dan kebutaan dengan membaca karya-karya Imam al-Ghazālī (w.1111).

Menurut pendapat 'Ain al-Quḍāh, Tuhan itu maha tahu segala hal baik hal-hal yang besar maupun hal-hal yang sangat kecil. 'Ain al-Quḍāh mendasarkan pendapatnya pada ayat 2:115 yang berbunyi, "... ke manapun kamu menghadap, di situlah wajah Allah. Sesungguhnya Allah itu maha luas lagi maha mengetahui." Ayat ini, menurut dia, menunjukkan bahwa ke mana saja manusia menghadap, dia melihat bahwa wajah Allah ada di sana. Ini adalah merupakan indikasi yang lembut namun jelas bahwa setiap benda yang ada itu mempunyai hubungan tertentu dengan wajah Tuhan, atau dengan kata lain berada dalam pandangan Tuhan. Logika kebalikannya adalah bahwa segala sesuatu yang di luar pengetahuan Tuhan berarti tidak ada, atau merupakan hal yang tidak ada.

Lebih lanjut, 'Ain al-Quḍāh mengutip ayat 7:7 yang berbunyi, "Sungguh Kami akan menceritakan kepada mereka dengan ilmu pengetahuan. Sesungguhnya Kami tidak akan absen." Menurutnya, ayat ini menunjukkan bahwa segala sesuatu itu berada dalam pengetahuan Tuhan dan Dia selalu hadir bersama dengan segala sesuatu. Tidak ada satu hal pun yang bisa menghindar dari pengetahuan Tuhan. Karena alasan inilah,

'Ain al-Quḍāh lebih jauh mengatakan bahwa sebenarnya Tuhan itu sesuatu yang banyak (*al-kathīr*) dan merupakan keseluruhan atau totalitas dari benda-benda (*al-kull*). Segala sesuatu selain Tuhan adalah hal-hal kecil, merupakan bagian dan khusus.

'Ain al-Quḍāh mengakui bahwa penjelasannya di atas itu sangat tidak jelas (*ambiguous*). Untuk memperjelas pemikirannya dia menggunakan permisalan matahari. Dia mengatakan bahwa memang betul matahari itu satu, namun cahaya yang memancar dari matahari itu adalah banyak. Tetapi ketika dia berkesimpulan bahwa matahari itu banyak dan masing-masing sinar itu satu, maka hal ini menunjukkan bahwa dia melihat matahari itu merupakan akumulasi dari sinar, suatu keseluruhan yang meliputi semua sinar, sedangkan sinar-sinar itu adalah perwujudan kolektif dari matahari.

Sebagai kesimpulan dari kemahatahuan Tuhan, maka sangatlah tidak mungkin intelek manusia itu bisa mengetahui ilmu Tuhan. Intelek manusia itu hanya suatu bagian kecil dari wujud yang ada di alam ini. Oleh karena itu, maka intelek yang merupakan bagian kecil dari wujud alam semesta ini tidak bisa mengetahui ilmu Tuhan yang merupakan keseluruhan dari wujud apa saja yang ada.

Dalam soal ilmu pengetahuan manusia, 'Ain al-Quḍāh mengemukakan suatu pola pemikiran yang mempunyai dua struktur, pertama wilayah akal, dan yang kedua wilayah di luar akal. Yang dimaksud dengan wilayah akal adalah wilayah pengalaman empirik yang berdasar pada penginderaan dan interpretasi rasional. Sedangkan yang dimaksud dengan wilayah di luar akal adalah wilayah mereka yang telah mencapai batas paling akhir dari wilayah akal kemudian ada cahaya yang memancarkan dalam hatinya. Dalam kaitan ilmu manusia, dibahas juga perbedaan antara ilmu dan ma'rifah dan perbedaan bagaimana seorang *'ālim* dan seorang *'ārif* memandang suatu persoalan atau suatu hal.

Terakhir dalam tulisan ini adalah penelusuran secara ringkas mengenai keorisinalan pemikiran 'Ain al-Quḍāh dalam soal ini.

## ملخص

### نظرية المعرفة الصوفية: دراسة عن زبدة الحقائق لعين القضاة

تناقش هذه الدراسة نظرية المعرفة كما بسطها عين القضاة الهمداني (١٠٩٨-١١٣١ م.)، القاضي الذي هو في الوقت ذاته صوفى. تم إعدامه وهو في الثلاثين من عمره لسبب ما اتهم به من أن فيه نزعة إسماعيلية كالحاج (المتوفى ٩٩٢) وأنه ادعى بلوغ حالة النبوة كالسهروردي (المتوفى سنة ١١٩١).

أحس عين القضاة بأن العلم الذي طلبه ويبحث عنه، وهو علم الكلام، لم يشف غليظة، إلا أنه أخيراً شعر بأنه قد أنقذ من الكفر والضلال والشك والغواية بعد أن اطلع على مؤلفات الإمام الغزالي (المتوفى سنة ١١١١).

من آراء عين القضاة أن الله عليم يعلم كل شيء علماً كلياً وجزئياً وأسس رأيه هذا على الآية الـ ١١٥ من سورة البقرة وهي قوله تعالى ﴿أينما تولوا فثم وجه الله إن الله واسع عليم﴾. فهذه الآية، على حسب رأيه، تدل على أن الإنسان أينما تقع أنظاره يرى وجه الله موجوداً هناك. هذا دليل لطيف ومع ذلك فهو يدل بوضوح على أن كل شيء مربوط ببعض ربط إضافة بوجه الله، وبعبارة أخرى يكون في نظر الله. وعكس هذا المنطق يعني أن كل شيء خارج علم الله غير موجود أو هو شيء معدوم. ثم ساق عين القضاة الآية السابعة من سورة الأعراف ما نصه ﴿فلنقصن عليهم بعلم وما كنا غائبين﴾. تدل هذه الآية، حسب رأيه، على أن كل شيء كائن في علم الله وأن الله موجود مع كل شيء، ولا شيء

يخرج من علمه تعالى. فبناء على هذا أضاف قائلا إن الله شيء كثير ويمثل الكل، وما عداه فجزئيات صغيرة خاصة.

اعترف عين القضاة بأن بيانه السابق جد غامض فللمزيد من البيان عن تفكيره مثل له بالشمس بحيث يقول إن الشمس لا شك واحدة مع ذلك فإن النور الذي يشرق منها كثير. وعندما استخلص أن الشمس كثيرة وأن كل جزء من أجزاء نورها واحد. فهذا يعني اعتقاده بأن الشمس عبارة عن تكديس النور وهي كل يجمع الأنوار كلها، وهذه الأنوار تجسيد كلي لها. ولزم من سعة علم الله أنه لا يمكن للعقل الإنساني بوجه من الوجوه أن يحيط بعلم الله، فالعقل الإنساني ما هو إلا جزء صغير من الوجود كله. فلذلك كان هذا العقل الذي إنما هو جزء صغير من كل الوجود لا يتمكن من معرفة علم الله الذي يمثل وجود كل شيء كائنا ما كان.

وبخصوص المعرفة الإنسانية ذهب عين القضاة إلى أن الفكر ذو طورين: الأول طور العقل والثاني طور ما وراء العقل. والمراد بطور العقل هو المنطقة التي فيها مجال للتجربة الإنسانية القائمة على أساس الحس والتأويل العقلي، وأما طور ما وراء العقل فالمراد به منطقة أولئك الذين بلغوا أقصى حدود طور العقل ثم وجدوا النور المشرق في قلوبهم. وفيما يتعلق بالمعرفة الإنسانية يناقش أيضا التفريق بين العلم والمعرفة وكيف ينظر العالم والعارف إلى أمر من الأمور.

وأخيرا وليس آخرا في هذه الكتابة استقصاء موجز لأصالة أفكار عين القضاة

في هذا المضمار.

This is a study of the sufi theory of knowledge developed by 'Ain al-Quḍāh al-Hamadānī (1098-1131), a judge by profession, who is of an extraordinary character since he teaches that those who wish to find the Truth must go beyond the law. At the age of thirty-three, he was executed on the order of the Seljuk vizier of Iraq, Qiwām al-Dīn Darguzīnī. 'Ain al-Quḍāh has been accused of Ismailian tendencies like Ḥallāj (d. 992) and of pretending to the prophetic state like Suhrawardī (d. 1191).<sup>1</sup>

In the preface to his *Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq*, written at the age of twenty-four, 'Ain al-Quḍāh tells his reader that he finds no spiritual satisfaction in seeking knowledge. He considers that he was finally delivered from unbelief, error, confusion, and blindness by the grace of God and by reading the works of al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) for the period of four years.<sup>2</sup>

#### Divine Knowledge

'Ain al-Quḍāh believes that God knows particulars. To support his belief, he quotes a Qur'ānic verse (2: 115) which says: "whithersoever you turn, there is the Face of God; God is All-embracing, All-knowing." This verse, according to him, shows that wherever man turns, he sees that God's face is there. This is a subtle and clear indication that every existent thing (every particular thing) has a certain relation with His face (is within the sight of God).<sup>3</sup> 'Ain al-Quḍāh further elaborates his argument that the face of God faces everything. Everything is present to (within the knowledge of) God. Anything which is not within the knowledge of God is non-existent. Were it not for the face of God, no existent thing would exist. In ordinary language, 'Ain al-Quḍāh compares God's knowledge of everything with the sun. Had it not been for the face of the sun which is the sustainer of rays that are scattered over the earth, these rays would have never existed. Since God's face is everpresent, He will necessarily know every particle in existence. Because of the vastness of God's knowledge, everything is nothing compared to God; the relation of all things to God's knowledge is like the relation of nothing to something infinite.<sup>4</sup>

To support his argument, 'Ain al-Quḍāh quotes some further verses of the Qur'ān, such as verse 7: 7 which says "...and We shall relate to them with knowledge; assuredly We were not absent". According to him, this implies that everything is within the knowledge of God and that He is present with everything. Thus nothing escapes His knowledge. The Qur'ān (20: 98 and 65: 12) says that God's knowledge encompasses everything. 'Ain al-Quḍāh inter-

prets this as meaning that all existent things are derived from God's knowledge. In reality, according to him, God is the multiplicity (*al-kathīr*) and the totality (*al-kull*). Everything other than Him is particular and partial or, to put it more boldly, everything other than God is neither particular nor partial except by virtue of God's face which represents His totality and multiplicity.<sup>5</sup>

'Ain al-Quḍāh admits that his explanation, as described above, is very ambiguous. To clarify his thought, he uses the parable of the sun. He explains that while it is true that the sun is one, nevertheless the rays which emanate from it are multiple. But when he concludes that the sun is multiple, and that its rays are one, this implies that he sees the sun as the accumulation of the rays, an all-encompassing whole, and the rays as a collective manifestation of the sun. Furthermore, the use of the words "God is the multiple" by 'Ain al-Quḍāh sounds very unorthodox and unconventional, besides being confusing. However, in another part of his *Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq*, 'Ain al-Quḍāh makes the excuse that for one who knows God, his tongue becomes dull; he is unable to find words suitable to express the real concept which he knows so that other people can understand.<sup>6</sup>

According to 'Ain al-Quḍāh, God knows particulars because His knowledge does not depend on the existence of existent things. But the existence of everything depends on the existence of God's eternal knowledge. Thus the changes which occur in existent things do not necessitate changes to His knowledge, but they do in the case of the creature's knowledge.<sup>7</sup>

'Ain al-Quḍāh asserts that the relation of all things to God is one and the same. There is no distinction between present, past, and future in their relation to God. They have the same relation to Him. When existent things are rationally considered they will be seen in levels: some precede others. However, when they are referred and related to God, their relation to Him becomes equal and timeless. God's knowledge is eternal. It exists before time, before all existent things, and before the before just as it exists right now. God's knowledge is above the intellect and encompasses it. It cannot be imagined that the intellect will encompass God. It is absurd to think that the particular encompasses the whole. The intellect is merely a particle of existence which results from Him.<sup>8</sup>

### **Human Knowledge**

In reading his *Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq*, it becomes very obvious that 'Ain al-Quḍāh has a pattern of thinking or a system of thought which is structured

with reference to two different levels of cognition at one and the same time. 'Ain al-Quḍāh defines the first level as the "domain of reason" (*Ṭaur al-'aql*) and the second as the "domain beyond reason" (*Ṭaur warā' al-'aql*). Toshihiko Izutsu refers the former as the domain of empirical experience based on sensation and rational interpretation, and the latter as the domain of trans-rational faculty of the mind. This is the domain of those who have reached the utmost limit of the domain of reason where at the extremity of one's rational power, an all-illuminating light suddenly emerges in his heart.<sup>9</sup>

These two different levels of cognition will result in two different concepts of knowledge. The word *al-'ilm*, according to 'Ain al-Quḍāh, represents any concept which can be expressed univocally, like the knowledge of a student which is derived from his teacher. Whereas, *al-ma'rifa* is any concept which cannot be explained in any fashion except equivocally. However, 'Ain al-Quḍāh goes on to explain that in the Qur'ān, the term *al-'ilm* may also mean *al-ma'rifa* (see for examples 29: 49; 3: 18; and 18: 66). The knowledge referred to in verse 18: 66, which the sufis call *al-'ilm al-ladunīyah* (the divine knowledge), is the same as *al-ma'rifa*.<sup>10</sup>

Disregarding the Qur'ānic context, 'Ain al-Quḍāh attributes the term *'ālim* to someone who is confined within the domain of reason, and the term *'ārif* to someone who has reached the higher level, that is, the domain beyond reason. In the Qur'ān, however, we see that *'ālim* is an attribute of God, not *'ārif*. God is the *'ālim* (the Knower) of the unseen and the visible (see for examples 6: 73; 9: 94; 13: 9; and 21: 81). Therefore, the Qur'ān uses the term *'ālim* in the superior sense, while it would seem that 'Ain al-Quḍāh attributes the term *'ālim* to an ordinary jurist or theologian who has not reached *al-ma'rifa*.

The way in which one acquires his knowledge will determine what kind of knowledge he has. Knowledge which is derived from books and teachers is *al-'ilm* while that which is acquired directly from God is *al-ma'rifa*. 'Ain al-Quḍāh firmly states that whoever acquires his knowledge from books and teachers is not, insofar as his knowledge is concerned, among the heirs of prophets, except if one wishes to use the term "heritage" loosely.<sup>11</sup> It seems to me that this is an allusion to a popular prophetic saying that the scholars (*'ulamā*) are the heirs of prophets.<sup>12</sup>

'Ain al-Quḍāh argues that the prophets' knowledge is divine knowledge. It is acquired from no other source than from God Himself. The Qur'ān 96: 3-5 reads: "And thy Lord is the Most Generous, who taught by the Pen, taught

Man that he knew not." 'Ain al-Quḍāh further states that God's knowledge does not exclusively belong to the prophets. Whoever, in his mystical path, reaches the stage of real piety (*al-taqwā*, godfearing), God will certainly teach him what he does not know. God says in the Qur'ān (2:282): "Fear God; God teaches you."<sup>13</sup>

It is important to note that 'Ain al-Quḍāh does not simply reject reason. He does not deny that reason was created to enable us to perceive great and ambiguous matters but he believes that it will not go beyond its domain. He ascribes to reason whatever is in its domain. He also believes that reason is an accurate tool with which to measure truth and that its judgment is certain and correct without any doubt. However, it cannot weigh everything, especially the matters of the Hereafter, the reality of the prophecy, and those of the eternal attributes. In fact, he describes the "domain of reason" and the "domain beyond reason" as two contiguous regions, the latter being directly consecutive to the former. The end of the former domain is linked to the beginning of the latter domain. In worldly life, reason has its important role to fulfill. However, in spiritual life, rational knowledge can deceive someone who is engaged in the mystical path. It can lead him astray without his realizing it. If an *'ālim* is perfect in his knowledge, he will certainly know that he is incapable of perceiving the eternal reality. Reason is even incapable of realizing its real inability to achieve the understanding of an *ārif*.<sup>14</sup>

'Ain al-Quḍāh describes a person who is not endowed with a light in his heart and who thus is unable to perceive things in the "domain beyond reason" as a blind man who cannot comprehend visible things except through touching. As for something beyond sensation, for instance, the reality of color, it is impossible for the blind man to perceive such a thing. A color cannot be comprehended through a deductive method or through touching. It can only be comprehended through a seeing eye. A seeing eye which sees things beyond reason is called by 'Ain al-Quḍāh the eye of *al-ma'rifah*. The more perfect and prepared the eye of *al-ma'rifah*, the more the subtle divine matters overflow on him; and the more they overflow on him, the more familiar he becomes with the spiritual world, the more intimate he is to the grace of God, and the more he loves the beauty of the eternal presence. Thus, his intimacy with this world would decrease gradually and in the same manner his intimacy with the divine world would increase. However, he is aware that one who is not endowed with the eye of *al-ma'rifah*, will not believe in the existence of the eye of *al-ma'rifah*, since his reason will not allow him to.<sup>15</sup>



Again, to clarify his thought, 'Ain al-Quḍāh uses the sun for comparison. He compares the *'ārif* who has reached the "domain beyond reason" with the sun, and the *'ālim* who is still in the "domain of reason" with a star. Thus, when the dawn of the "domain beyond reason" has appeared, the light of the stars, that is the "domain of reason", gradually disappear. In the mystical path, when a person reaches a stage where the dependence on the reason decreases, then he may have reached the point of the dawn of the mystical path. Perhaps the sun will rise and he will see the beauty of the Original or the beauty of eternity which is the water of life. Therefore, it is not surprising that 'Ain al-Quḍāh claims that the *'ārif* sees with the light of God. Again he quotes a Qur'ānic verse (39: 22): "Is he whose breast God has expanded unto Islam, so he walks in a light from his Lord...?"<sup>16</sup>

'Ain al-Quḍāh calls those who have experienced the vision of the beauty of eternity, the people of taste (*ahl al-dhawq*). The people of taste are those who have purified their souls of vice and who are overflowing with God's grace, which is impossible to express it in words. Again, according to 'Ain al-Quḍāh, the tongue of one who knows God becomes dull: he will not find suitable words to express the real concept which he has experienced so that other people can understand.<sup>17</sup>

### Seeing Through the Eye of Mystical Knowledge

The whole short chapter 42 of *Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq* gives an example of how the ordinary sense of sight differs from the eye of mystical knowledge (*al-ma'rifaḥ*) in seeing existent things. When one sees a picture in the mirror, it is a fact that the picture in the mirror is in reality non-existent. There is no permanence except for the external picture. This view is true according to 'Ain al-Quḍāh in so far as it is concerned with tangible things. However, 'Ain al-Quḍāh, who implicitly but obviously claims to be an *'ārif*,<sup>18</sup> sees that the external picture together with the mirror are also non-existent (they will perish), in the same manner that the internal picture in the mirror is non-existent. In reality, according to 'Ain al-Quḍāh, every existent thing is non-existent (perishable). There is no eternal existence for anything except for the existence of God, the Everlasting and self-subsisting Being.<sup>19</sup>

An *'ārif* ('Ain al-Quḍāh) believes that God is spaceless and timeless. God encompasses time, space, and all other existent things. God is not a body; He precedes the future in the same manner that He precedes the past. The scholars (*'ulamā'*), however, are unable to perceive this. They, according to 'Ain

al-Quḍāh, believe that bodies came into existence from the moment of the existence of God. To them, God is a body like any tangible object. He is not beyond time, just as He is not free of space. According to 'Ain al-Quḍāh, their view is totally wrong.<sup>20</sup>

In the case of the concept of pre-eternity (*al-azaliyah*), an *'arif* believes that there exists neither past nor future because it encompasses the future in the same manner that it encompasses the past. The time of Adam, according to 'Ain al-Quḍāh, is not closer to pre-eternity than that of 'Ain al-Quḍāh. The concepts of pre-eternity and of human time are different. Therefore, 'Ain al-Quḍāh goes on to explain that the relation of any time to pre-eternity is the same. If one has to make a comparison, the relation of pre-eternity to human time is like the relation of knowledge to the location of all objects of knowledge. In this regard, knowledge cannot be described as being close to an object or far from it, rather its relation to all objects is the same. The knowledge exists everywhere, yet all places are empty of it. 'Ain al-Quḍāh says that pre-eternity is with all time and in every time.<sup>21</sup> It encompasses all time, its existence precedes all time, and no time extends over it, just as a place does not extend over knowledge.<sup>22</sup>

Speaking from the point of view of the "domain of reason", there is still another problem, namely, the concept of post-eternity (*al-abadīyah*). Thus, there are two kinds of eternity: pre-eternity (*al-azaliyah*) and post-eternity (*al-abadīyah*). Pre-eternity is envisioned as tending towards the past: it is beginningless past. On the contrary, post-eternity is envisioned as tending towards the future: it is endless future. These two concepts, according to 'Ain al-Quḍāh, are needed in order not to confuse the ordinary people who are still confined in the domain of reason. These two terms are perfectly correct as long as they are seen through the eye of reason. But seen from the point of view of an *'arif* who is in the domain beyond reason, it is a gross mistake to think that pre-eternity is a matter of the past and post-eternity a matter of the future. In this domain, there is neither past nor future. It is timeless. Thus, the meaning of pre-eternity and that of post-eternity have no difference at all; they are the same.

On the concept of perpetual creation, 'Ain al-Quḍāh asserts that the ordinary people who are short-sighted, feeble-minded, and still in the domain of reason, are unable to perceive this concept rightly. They think that the rays of the sun which exist at each moment are the same rays which existed at the moment before or after that moment. In other words, they believe that the

light of the sun which is illuminating the earth right now is the same light which illuminated the earth a moment ago, just as it is the same light which will illuminate the earth a moment later. According to 'Ain al-Quḍāh, this perception is wrong. He believes that an *'arīf* who sees things through the eye of mystical knowledge sees that the illumination of the earth by the light of the sun necessitates a particular relation between the earth and the sun. If the relation were negated, the readiness of the earth to receive the light of the sun would also be negated; but if the relation remains established between the two, the receptivity of the earth to the light of the sun remains.<sup>25</sup>

At every moment, according to 'Ain al-Quḍāh, a new relation is established between the earth and the sun. But since the successive relations at successive moments are so similar to each other, ordinary people will think that they are the same. 'Ain al-Quḍāh believes that the relation at every single moment is unique; it is peculiar to that very moment. This kind of relation applies to all things without exception. It implies that all things are constantly changing because the relation of every existent thing to the source of its existence is also constantly changing. At every moment, the relation is different from that at other moments. It means that everything derives its existence from the ultimate source of existence by a particular relation between the two. At every moment, this relation is renewed and re-established in order for the thing to continue to exist for more than one moment. So, every existent thing goes on receiving a new existence at every moment. The existence of all existent things which one sees in a given moment is different from the existence which he will see later or which he has seen before. Furthermore, 'Ain al-Quḍāh asserts that every existent thing whose existence is permanent is always being recreated by the Everlasting and self-subsisting One; and at every moment, another existence similar to that before it is being renewed.

The problem of whether or not there is a hierarchy in existent things is also discussed by 'Ain al-Quḍāh. An *'ālim* who sees through the eye of reason believes that there is a hierarchy in existent things: some of them come to exist early, like the single; others come to exist late, like the composite. This view is true when considered from the domain of reason; but it is false when seen through the eye of mystical knowledge. Also, an *'ālim* believes that in terms of hierarchy, some of those things are nearer to God than the others, that the source of existence is one, and that the existent things which emanate from Him (the source) are many. On the contrary, an *'arīf* believes that

the nearness of God to all things is the same without any difference. Even, the relation of bodies and spirits to Him are equal because the existence of God is simultaneous with the existence of every existent thing; there is no difference in God's simultaneity with the existent things. God is with everything, and yet in spite of that, He is before everything in an infinite priority and nothing exists either with God or after Him; nothing exists whose existence is simultaneous with the existence of God. An *'ārif* also believes that the source of existent things is many<sup>24</sup> and that all existent things compared to His greatness are like a single mote. This perception, according to 'Ain al-Quḍāh, does not need to be reconciled with the problem of the emanation of many from the one, because in reality it is the one which emanates from the many.<sup>25</sup>

### Historical Perspective

In reading 'Ain al-Quḍāh's *Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq*, one is struck by his mode of thinking. However, if we look at the older sufi treatises, we find that much of what 'Ain al-Quḍāh writes has been discussed in a similar way, reflecting how a young person usually absorbs the tradition into which he is born. Of course, 'Ain al-Quḍāh also develops his own characteristic approach to the issues, which contributes and enriches the existing tradition.

In *Kitāb al-Luma' fī al-Taṣawwuf* by al-Sarrāj (d. 988), for example, we find that the parable of the sun is employed there.<sup>26</sup> Speaking of the concept of eternity, al-Sarrāj does not distinguish between pre-eternity and post-eternity, because in his view there is no difference between the two. Also on the question of distance between created being and God, there is no distinction between the concept of closeness and remoteness.<sup>27</sup> Al-Sarrāj also quotes a Sufi saying which states that God is known only through Himself and that the intellect (reason) cannot know Him.<sup>28</sup>

Of course, we cannot necessarily say that 'Ain al-Quḍāh is under the influence of al-Sarrāj, but at least we can assume that this tradition of sufi thought had been common in 'Ain al-Quḍāh's era. Al-Kalābādhi (d. 990) also writes that the sufis believe that the intellect is weak; it can only perceive creation; it never reaches the creator. He relates that according to one of the great sufis, the only way to know God is through God Himself; God teaches the knowledge of God (*al-ma'rifa*) to an *'ārif* who thereby knows Him.<sup>29</sup>

Now let us look at al-Ghazālī "the proof of Islam". 'Ain al-Quḍāh admits that he read al-Ghazālī's works. It seems very obvious that 'Ain al-Quḍāh is

under the influence of him. Al-Ghazālī also speaks of the “domain of reason” although using different terminology. He uses the term *majāl al-‘aql* (the domain of reason) for all existent things.<sup>30</sup> On the relation of creation and God’s face, al-Ghazālī maintains that *‘ārif*s ascend from metaphor to reality. When they complete their ascent to *al-ma‘rifah*, they see, through their own eyes, that there is nothing in existence but God the most high. He quotes a Qur’ānic verse (28: 88) which reads: “All things perish, except His face.” Al-Ghazālī explains that they perish not in the sense of at some particular time, but rather they perish eternally, meaning that at the stage of *al-ma‘rifah*, all things except God are non-existent. However, when all things are seen by the face (aspect) from which they flow, i.e. God (in al-Ghazālī’s terminology *al-Awwal al-Ḥaqq*, the True First), they are existent. Therefore, he concludes that all things have two faces (aspects): they are non-existent in themselves and they are existent if considered by God’s face. Thus, there is no truly existent thing except God and His face.<sup>31</sup>

On the concept of *al-ma‘iyab* (with-ness), ‘Ain al-Quḍāh also seems to follow al-Ghazālī who states that there is nothing which exists with God or after Him. All things are non-existent except by virtue of God’s face.<sup>32</sup>

‘Ain al-Quḍāh differs from al-Ghazālī in certain matters. Of course, it is not proper to compare al-Ghazālī’s works with ‘Ain al-Quḍāh’s *Zubdat al-Ḥaqā‘iq*. But for the sake of analysis, it is necessary to mention in what areas of thought ‘Ain al-Quḍāh is different from al-Ghazālī. In his *Iḥyā’ Ulūm al-Dīn*, al-Ghazālī talks at length about knowledge, but does not clearly distinguish between *al-‘ilm* and *al-ma‘rifah*. However, ‘Ain al-Quḍāh discusses the theory of knowledge briefly and makes a sharp distinction between the two.<sup>33</sup>

On the concept of perpetual creation, al-Ghazālī believes that the intellect (reason) can perceive that a boy is constantly changing as he grows,<sup>34</sup> while ‘Ain al-Quḍāh believes that it is not reason but the eye of *al-ma‘rifah* which is able to perceive that all things, including a boy, are constantly changing.

What is characteristic about ‘Ain al-Quḍāh is that he has pattern of thinking or mode of thought which is structured with reference to two different levels of cognition at one and the same time: the domain of reason and the domain beyond reason. This means that everything is discussed in terms of these two levels of discourse which have different inner structures.<sup>35</sup>

One of the striking opinions of ‘Ain al-Quḍāh is his solution to the problem of “the many emanate from the One.” According to the emanatist doc-

trine, only one can be emanated from the One. 'Ain al-Quḍāh, in contrast, believes that in reality it is God who is the many and the whole; all things except God are the one and the part.<sup>36</sup>

### Conclusion

Throughout his *Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq*, 'Ain al-Quḍāh tries to rationalize his thought, be it when he discusses a matter in the domain of reason or in the domain beyond reason. He distinguishes sharply between *al-ma'rifah* and *al-'ilm*, maintaining that the former is superior to the latter. Again and again he forcefully depreciates the knowledge of an *'ālim*. His statement that God is the many and the whole is very courageous and unorthodox. All in all, 'Ain al-Quḍāh was an innovative thinker, while at the same time he obviously drew on the work of his predecessors, chiefly al-Ghazālī.

### End Notes:

<sup>1</sup>See Hermann Landolt, "Two types of Mystical Thought in Muslim Iran," *The Muslim World* v. 68, no. 2 (April, 1978), 192-193.

<sup>2</sup>'Ain al-Quḍāh Hamadānī, *Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq*, ed. 'Afif 'Usayrān (Tehran: Dānishgāhi Tihirān, 1961), 6. See also the translation of this book by Omar Jah, "A Critical Annotated Translation of *Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq* of 'Ain al-Quḍāh al-Hamadānī," M.A. Thesis, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal, 1969.

<sup>3</sup>'Ain al-Quḍāh, 26. All translation of the Qur'ānic verses in this paper are from Arthur J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 20-21. See also Landolt, 198-199.

<sup>5</sup>'Ain al-Quḍāh, 21.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 23-25.

<sup>9</sup>'Ain al-Quḍāh, 23, 26-27. See also Toshihiko Izutsu, "Creation and the Timeless Order of Things: A Study in the Mystical Philosophy of 'Ain al-Quḍāh." *The Philosophical Forum*, v. 4, no. 1 (Fall, 1972), 125-127.

<sup>10</sup>'Ain al-Quḍāh, 67.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>12</sup>A. J. Wensinck et al, *Concordance et Indices de la Tradition Musulmane* v. 4 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), 321.

<sup>13</sup>'Ain al-Quḍāh, 68.

<sup>14</sup>'Ain al-Quḍāh, 35-36, 48, 73-74, and 98.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 27-29.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 60, 86, 92, and 98-99.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 37, 65, and 71.

<sup>18</sup>'Ain al-Quḍāh always mentions an *'ārif* which simply means 'Ain al-Quḍāh himself when he refers how an *'ārif* sees or perceives anything which is different from the ordinary sense.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 47-48.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>21</sup>The use of the words "in every time" by 'Ain al-Quḍāh is inconsistent with his general thought because it implies that pre-eternity is included in time, not something totally different from time. In fact, in other places of his *Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq* what 'Ain al-Quḍāh means is that pre-eternity is different from time in the ordinary sense.

<sup>22</sup>On the problem of eternity see, *Ibid.*, 59-60. See also Izutsu, "Creation...", 137-138.

<sup>23</sup>On the concept of perpetual creation, see *Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq*, 60-62 and 65. See also Toshihiko Izutsu, "The Concept of Perpetual Creation in Islamic Mysticism and Zen Buddhism", *Melanges offerts a Henry Corbin*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Tehran: McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies, Tehran Branch, 1977), 130-131.

<sup>24</sup>This view is consistent with another of 'Ain al-Quḍāh's statements that God is the multiple (the many). See again, *Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq*, 21.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 63, 66, 76, and 78.

<sup>26</sup>Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-Luma' fī al-Taṣawwuf*, ed. R.A. Nicholson (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1914), 31.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 37-38.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>29</sup>Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Kalābādhi, *al-Ta'arruf li-madhbhab abl al-Taṣawwuf* (Cairo: 'Isā al-Bābi al-Ḥalabī wa Shirkah, 1960), 63-65. See also the translation of this book by A.J. Arberry, *The Doctrine of the Sufis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 46-49.

<sup>30</sup>Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Mishkāt al-Anuwār* ed. Abū al-A'lā 'Afifī (Cairo: Dār al-Qawmīyah lil-ṭibā'ah wa-al-nashr, 1964), 45.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 55-56.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>33</sup>See al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* v. 1 (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābi al-Ḥalabī, 1939). See also al-Ghazālī, *The Book of Knowledge* tr. Nabih Amin Faris (Lahore: S.H. Muhammad Ashraf, 1962).

<sup>34</sup>Al-Ghazālī, *Mishkāt*, 47.

<sup>35</sup>See again Izutsu, "Creation ...", 125.

<sup>36</sup>See the discussion of this problem in Landolt, 197-198.