

Al-Ghazālī, Nativism, and Divine Interventionism

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Abstract: Al-Ghazālī's engagement with scepticism in the *Deliverance from Error* has received much attention in recent literature, often in the context of comparing him with Descartes. However, there is one curious text that has gone largely unnoticed by commentators. In his account of how he overcame scepticism vis-à-vis a divine light cast unto his heart, al-Ghazālī makes a cryptic claim that suggests that primary truths are inherent to the mind, and that said cognitive status of primary truths is related to his overcoming of scepticism. Although this one text does not straightforwardly prove that al-Ghazālī is a nativist, I argue that there are other texts that plausibly reveal his nativism. As such, I argue that al-Ghazālī *can* be read as a nativist, and I reconstruct a way in which his nativism helps explain how he overcomes scepticism. In doing so, I defend the (standard) *strong divine interventionist* reading of al-Ghazālī's response to scepticism, against Hadisi's recent *weak divine interventionist* reading.

Keywords: Al-Ghazālī, Scepticism, Nativism, Mysticism

There was what was of what I do not mention: So think well of it, and ask for no account.

- Ibn al-Mu'tazz

1. Introduction

Al-Ghazālī’s sceptical crisis in the *Deliverance from Error* [*al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*] has received increasing attention by historians of philosophy in recent years.¹ The story, in broad strokes, is clear enough.² Al-Ghazālī seeks to attain true and absolutely certain knowledge, and for the sake of that pursuit he raises sceptical arguments—about the reliability of the senses and the intellect—which ultimately undermine the possibility of both sensory and rationally based knowledge. Al-Ghazālī realizes that the only way to respond to scepticism is with a rational proof. But given his scepticism about the intellect—i.e. that primary truths (*al-awwaliyyāt*) might be false and that the intellect more generally is unreliable—proofs cannot be constructed. Thus, al-Ghazālī sees no way out, and becomes a sceptic. After two months, however, he claims that

¹ I employ the following abbreviations for editions of primary texts: ‘DE’: *Deliverance from Error*; ‘MD’: *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl* [Ayyad and Saliba Edition]; ‘FT’: *Fayṣal al-Tafrīqa*; ‘MF’: *al-Maqāsīd al-Falāsifa*; ‘NL’: *Niche of Lights; The Revival of the Religious Sciences* is cited by book title and page.

² See, for example, Hadisi, “Ghazālī’s Transformative Answer”; Kukkonen, “Al-Ghazālī’s Skepticism Revisited”; Menn, and “Tradition of Intellectual Autobiography”. For studies of the relationship between al-Ghazālī and Descartes, see, for example, Albertini, “Crisis and Certainty”; Azadpur, “Unveiling the Hidden”; Götz, “The Quest for Certainty”; Lewes, *The Biographical History*; Moad, “Comparing Phases of Skepticism”; Naumkin, “Some Problems”; Ruddle-Miyamoto, “Regarding Doubt and Certainty”; Sharif, *A History*; Van Ess, “Quelques Remarques”; and Zamir “Descartes and al-Ghazālī”.

God intervened and rescued him from his sceptical condition through a divine light (*nūr*) cast unto his heart, which restored his trust in the primary truths of the intellect.³

Many of the details of al-Ghazālī's bout with scepticism have been discussed in the literature. However, there is one peculiar feature of al-Ghazālī's solution to scepticism which has been neglected by commentators. The issue concerns a detail about the divine light that is cast unto al-Ghazālī's heart, and its relation to the foundations of knowledge that al-Ghazālī secures. Al-Ghazālī seems to claim, in a brief paragraph, that this divine light is the true source of certain knowledge, because it illuminates foundational primary truths that are *already present in the mind*. This is a striking claim, for *prima facie* it sounds like al-Ghazālī is espousing a form of *nativism*. And as is well-known, nativism has been a key instrument for some philosophers to counter scepticism.⁴

In broad strokes, nativism is the theory that there are certain types of content or truths that are native or innate to the mind.⁵ Nativism is often contrasted with *empiricism*, which claims

³ Commentators often claim that al-Ghazālī's resolution of scepticism restores trust in both the senses and the intellect. However, as we will see, he never makes this claim. He only claims that the divine light helped restore primary truths.

⁴ Famously, Descartes's innate ideas—and his clear and distinct perceptions of them—are central to his defeat of scepticism. For an account of Descartes's nativism, see Nelson, "Cartesian Innateness".

⁵ For an excellent overview of nativism see Samet, "The Historical Controversies". In what follows, I will work with a non-controversial sufficient condition for nativism (see section 3), bracketing the controversial details for the purposes of this paper.

that the mind in its original form is a *tabula rasa*, and that all content is ultimately derived through sensory experience. On nativism, these innate truths are not acquired through sensory experience, rather they are—in some way or another—discovered as existing in the mind and accessed solely through a non-sensory faculty (i.e. the intellect).⁶ While nativism can be traced back to Plato's doctrine of *anamnesis* in the *Meno*, the heyday of nativism is the early modern period, where philosophers such as Descartes, Malebranche, Locke, and Leibniz wrote extensively about innate ideas (some for, some against), laying out the contours of the theory. Of course, one needs to be careful to not force ancient Greek or early modern concepts onto the Islamic context. However, the status of innate ideas in Islamic philosophy has been raised in the literature. For example, commentators claim that Avicenna denied that primary truths—indeed, the very ones that al-Ghazālī is interested in—are innate. For example:

It needs to be emphasized that Avicenna denies innate ideas. His theory of the rational soul, well studied by now, is unambiguous. Upon birth, the newly created intellect that is associated with the body is absolutely potential, a *tabula rasa*. (Gutas, “The Empiricism of Avicenna”, 404)⁷

⁶ While I will assume that on al-Ghazālī's view it is through the intellect that primary truths are accessed, this is a complicated claim given al-Ghazālī's views of the cognitive architecture of the heart, and the various faculties within it.

⁷ Like al-Ghazālī, Avicenna's standard examples of primary truths include: “The whole is greater than the part”; “All things that are equal to one thing, are equal to each other”; “There is no middle between the negative and the affirmative”, etc. For a detailed account of how Avicenna views primary truths as being ultimately abstracted from experience see Gutas, “The Empiricism

Moreover, at least one commentator has claimed that al-Ghazālī espouses a form of nativism (Kukkonen, “Receptive to Reality”),⁸ while others have denied it (Griffel, “Al-Ghazālī’s Use”; Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge*). Thus, exploring whether al-Ghazālī ascribes to a stripe of nativism is motivated, and could prove fruitful. In this paper, I argue that al-Ghazālī *can* be read as a nativist, and that doing so has interpretive benefits with respect to understanding his response to scepticism.

Before proceeding, four clarifications are in order. First, I do not take a stand on whether the original nature of the human being (*fiṭra*) has an innate conception of God. Indeed, there are texts where al-Ghazālī seems to endorse this canonical Islamic view, for example:

Therefore the prophets were sent to call humanity to [God’s unity], that they might say, “There is no god but God.” They were not commanded to say, “We have a God and the world has a God,” because this was naturally inherent in their minds [*majbūlan fī fiṭrat ‘uqūlihim*] from the time of their childhood and the prime of [their] youth. (*Principles of the Creed*, 60; see also *Book of Knowledge*, 258-9)

of Avicenna”. Black also denies that Avicenna ascribes to innate ideas, (“Certitude, Justification”, 126). For a more recent treatment of Avicenna on primary truths see Mousavian and Ardeshir, “Avicenna on the Primary”.

⁸ Hadisi also claims that primary truths are innate for al-Ghazālī, but as we will see, the status of their innateness does not play a role in his reading (Hadisi, “Ghazālī’s Transformative Answer”, 121).

While figuring out how an innate conception of God would fit with al-Ghazālī's conception of *fiṭra* and nativism (and his engagement with scepticism) is worthwhile, in this context I am only interested in the cognitive status of primary truths.⁹

The second clarification is methodological: I do not pretend that there is knock-down textual evidence for al-Ghazālī's nativism. Indeed, al-Ghazālī has grounds for concealing how he overcame scepticism. As our epigraph suggests, al-Ghazālī has philosophical and theological reasons for maintaining that encounters with the divine simply cannot be described discursively. As he writes in the *Deliverance*: “if anyone tries to express them, his words contain evident error against which he cannot guard himself” (DE: 82). One might think that this concession implies that the aim at hand is a non-starter. However, I do not think that the texts are underdetermined. Although al-Ghazālī does not have a systematic epistemology, he leaves us with hints, clues, and indications which are well worth fleshing out.

Third, in offering this reading, I will defend the standard reading of al-Ghazālī's response to scepticism that has recently come under attack by Hadisi (“Ghazālī's Transformative Answer”). On the standard view, it is through a divine intervention that al-Ghazālī is rescued from scepticism. Hadisi and other commentators regard this as a form of *fideism*, however, I find that this term is misleading with respect to al-Ghazālī's considered views (Wilson, “Modern Western Philosophy”, 1820; Khalidi, *Medieval Islamic Philosophical Writings*, xxvi).¹⁰ Instead, I

⁹ For a detailed account of al-Ghazālī's conception of *fiṭra* see Griffel, “Al-Ghazālī's Use”.

¹⁰ I do not think that al-Ghazālī's divine intervention commits him to the claim that knowledge depends on faith or revelation. His view of the divine light is more philosophical and subtle than that. This may be a verbal dispute, but I nonetheless want to avoid the terminology of ‘fideism’.

will call this *divine interventionism*, distinguishing between *strong divine interventionism* and *weak divine interventionism*. The standard view is strong divine interventionism. On this reading, al-Ghazālī is wholly *passive* with respect to his sceptical state, and requires God to intervene via a divine light and rescue him from scepticism. Hadisi defends *weak divine interventionism*. On this view, while God does have a role in rescuing al-Ghazālī, al-Ghazālī cannot be passive but must be *active*: he must engage in a variety of Sufi transformative practices that cultivate his imaginative capacities, making him receptive to an experience of the divine light. To be clear, while I think that Hadisi's *weak divine interventionist* reading might be more philosophically attractive, I claim that it is not textually defensible. Alas, al-Ghazālī might be "hopelessly fideist", as Hadisi claims ("Ghazālī's Transformative Answer", 109).

Fourth, Hadisi is right to complain that commentators have over-emphasized and over-simplified the similarities between al-Ghazālī and Descartes, and this can obfuscate the details of al-Ghazālī's considered views (Ibid. 109-10). The result of this paper, however, may convince some that al-Ghazālī and Descartes are even more similar than commentators have allowed. For if I am right, then not only are Descartes and al-Ghazālī's sceptical arguments similar, but they also both use nativism to (in part) counter scepticism. However, I aim to read al-Ghazālī on his own terms. This is not a comparative study, and so the interpretive results will be what they are. It is out of the scope of this project to determine whether al-Ghazālī and Descartes really are similar on this score as well.

2. Nativism in the *Deliverance*?

In the *Deliverance*, al-Ghazālī raises two sceptical arguments that generate scepticism. These sceptical arguments have received considerable attention in the literature, thus I will offer a brief

review of these arguments. My target is al-Ghazālī's cognitive position with respect to the scepticism he generated, focusing on the divine light that rescues him from scepticism, and of course, the *prima facie* nativist passage that seems to be a key piece to figuring out how this divine intervention actually works.

To start, we need to set forth al-Ghazālī's definition of knowledge in the *Deliverance*:
Sure and certain knowledge [*al-‘ilm al-yaqīnī*] is that in which the thing known is made so manifest that no doubt [*rayb*] clings to it, nor is it accompanied by the possibility of error and deception. (DE: 55/MD: 64)

As Hadisi and other commentators have noted, al-Ghazālī is an internalist (“Ghazālī's Transformative Answer”, 111). More specifically, al-Ghazālī's conception of knowledge is as follows:

GHAZALIAN KNOWLEDGE: A subject, *S*, knows that *p* iff:

[1] *S* believes that *p*.

[2] *p* is true.

[3] *S* has absolute certainty that *p*.¹¹

The key feature of GHAZALIAN KNOWLEDGE is absolute certainty. According to al-Ghazālī, “with regard to the proponents of speculation and the theologians, they use it [certainty] to express an absence of doubt” (*Book of Knowledge*, 216). As Hadisi has interestingly clarified, the criterion

¹¹ Plausibly, there might be an *infallibility criterion* as well, that al-Ghazālī is conflating with the absolute certainty criterion. That is, al-Ghazālī might also be claiming that knowledge must be infallible, in the sense that there it is not possible for the subject to be in error. I will bracket this issue, and focus on the absolute certainty criterion instead.

of absolute certainty can be unpacked into the following three conditions (“Ghazālī’s Transformative Answer”, 113):

actual-certainty: *S* has no doubt about *p*.¹²

modal-certainty: *S* cannot doubt *p*.

proof-certainty: *S* can establish the impossibility of doubting *p*.

I myself do not see the reason to ascribe proof-certainty to al-Ghazālī, and thus I will only reference actual-certainty and modal-certainty in explaining the sceptical arguments.

With this definition in mind, we can now turn to his two sceptical arguments. First, in the *sensory perception doubt* he argues that the senses are dubitable because they provide the mind with misrepresentational content, and thus cannot serve as the grounds for true and certain knowledge about properties of the external world:

The strongest of the senses is the sense of sight. Now this looks at a shadow and sees it standing still and motionless and judges that motion must be denied. Then, due to experience and observation an hour later it knows that the shadow is moving, and that it did not move in a sudden spurt, but so gradually and imperceptibly that it was never completely at rest...In the case of this and of similar instances of sense-data the sense-judge makes its judgments, but the reason-judge refutes it and repeatedly gives it the lie in an incontrovertible fashion. (DE: 56; cf. NL: 6)

Here is the argument reconstructed:

¹² What Hadisi calls ‘actual-certainty’ could be aptly described as a form of *psychological certainty*, and thus it cannot satisfy the conditions for GHAZALIAN KNOWLEDGE.

1. If the senses provide *S* with misrepresentational content about the external world, then sense-data cannot provide content to *S* that satisfies modal-certainty.

2. The intellect can detect sensory discrepancies, and reveal that the senses do misrepresent what external objects are like to *S*.

Therefore: Sense-data cannot provide content to *S* that satisfies modal-certainty.

Therefore: Sense-data cannot be a source of knowledge for *S* about the external world.

Therefore: For *S*, the senses are unreliable.

Having lost sense-data, al-Ghazālī claims that “Perhaps, therefore, I can rely only on those rational data which belong to the category of primary truths (*al-awwaliyyāt*)” (DE: 56).

However, in the *dream doubt* he argues that necessary truths or “primary truths” are also dubitable. Primary truths are self-evident or basic (*awwalī*): they are supposed to be foundational to proofs, and the acquisition of GHAZALIAN KNOWLEDGE more generally. Here are al-Ghazali’s examples:

1. One and the same thing cannot be simultaneously affirmed and denied
2. One and the same thing cannot be incipient and eternal, existent and non-existent, necessary and impossible.

Al-Ghazali argues that we may be in a dream state with respect to primary truths. That is, our current waking state might be like a dream with respect to a higher-cognitive state that we could enter. If such a higher-cognitive state is possible, then we could raise an intelligible doubt against primary truths:

Don’t you see that when you are asleep you believe certain things and imagine certain circumstances and believe they are fixed and lasting and entertain no doubts about that being their status? Then you wake up and know that all your imaginings and beliefs were

groundless and insubstantial. So while everything you believe through sensation or intellection in your waking state may be true in relation to that state, what assurance have you that you may not suddenly experience a state which would have the same relation to your waking state as the latter has to your dreaming, and your waking state would be dreaming in relation to that new and further state? If you found yourself in such a state, you would be sure that all your rational beliefs were unsubstantial fancies. (DE: 57)

Here is the argument reconstructed:

1. In *S*'s current cognitive position, C_1 , *S* does not doubt primary truths (i.e. actual certainty is satisfied).
2. However, if it is possible that C_1 is akin to a dream state for *S* where what *S* perceives is false, then *S*'s belief in primary truths cannot amount to knowledge (i.e. *S* cannot satisfy modal certainty).
3. It is possible that C_1 is a dream state for *S*, that is, it is possible for *S* to transition from C_1 into a new cognitive position, C_2 , and realize that the beliefs held in C_1 were false.

Therefore: *S* does not have knowledge of primary truths in C_1 (i.e. *S* cannot satisfy modal-certainty)

Therefore: For *S*, in C_1 , the intellect is unreliable.

Having generated scepticism, al-Ghazālī finds himself backed into a corner:

My effort was unsuccessful, since the objections could be refuted only by proof [*dalīl*].

But the only way to put together a proof was to combine primary cognitions. So if, in my case, these were inadmissible, it was impossible to construct the proof. (DE: 57/MD: 67)

Reconstructed, here is the sceptical challenge:

1. The only way for *S* to counter scepticism is through a proof.
2. A proof requires appeal to primary truths.
3. Primary truths are undermined by the dream doubt.
4. *S* cannot construct a proof to counter scepticism.

Therefore: *S* has no way to defeat scepticism.

Internalizing the scepticism, al-Ghazālī sees no way out, claiming that “this malady was mysterious and it lasted for nearly two months. During that time I was a skeptic in fact, but not in utterance and doctrine” (DE: 57).¹³ Al-Ghazālī, of course, does not remain a sceptic. So how does he defeat scepticism? This, actually, is not the right question. For although al-Ghazālī overcomes these sceptical arguments, there is only a thin sense in which *he* defeats scepticism:

At length God Most High cured me of that sickness. My soul regained its health and equilibrium and once again I accepted the self-evident data [*al-ḍarūriyyāt*] of reason and relied on them with safety and certainty [*yaqīn*]. But that was not achieved by constructing a proof [*dalīl*] or putting together an argument [*tartīb kalām*]. On the contrary, it was the effect of a light [*nūr*] which God Most High cast into my breast [*al-ṣadr*]. And that light is the key [*miftah*] to most knowledge [*al-ma‘ārif*]. Therefore,

¹³ It is important to note that (unlike Descartes), al-Ghazālī does not regard himself as generating hyperbolic doubt or global scepticism, particularly because he never questions the existence of God in these sceptical arguments. This implies that the experience of the divine light is not supposed to reveal or prove that God exists to al-Ghazālī, rather its function lies elsewhere (see section 4).

whoever thinks that the unveiling of truth [*al-kashf*] depends on precisely formulated proofs has indeed straitened the broad mercy of God. (DE: 57/MD: 67-68)¹⁴

Al-Ghazālī claims that God rescued him from his sceptical condition by “the effect of a light which God most high cast into my breast. And that light is the key to most knowledge”. In other words, al-Ghazālī claims that the only way out of scepticism is through the experience of a divine light, which is a type of divine intervention. With the experience of this divine light, al-Ghazālī is able to reject premises (1) and (3) of the above argument. Although one cannot defeat scepticism through a proof, one can (somehow) overcome scepticism when the divine light—i.e. assistance from God—effects a recovery of the intellect and its primary truths.¹⁵

But what exactly is the nature of this divine light, and how does it help al-Ghazālī overcome scepticism? Al-Ghazālī does not tell us much, and what he does say seems confusing and underdeveloped. In the paragraph following his initial discussion of the divine light, al-Ghazālī proceeds to quote a variety of prophetic traditions (*ḥādīth*) and Qur’anic verses about the

¹⁴ Notice that what al-Ghazālī earlier called *al-awwaliyyāt* (primary truths) he now calls *ḍarūriyyāt* (necessary truths or self-evident truths). Later, the translation of *ḍarūriyyāt* in the *Revival* will be rendered as ‘axiomatic knowledge’. Although primary truths and necessary truths would be the best translations for these terms, respectively, for our purposes we will treat them synonymously (in part because al-Ghazālī employs the same examples to illustrate both concepts).

¹⁵ Notice that al-Ghazālī claims that the divine light only helped restore his trust in the intellect and its primary truths. He does not make any claims about restoring an unqualified trust in the senses (see also DE: 59-60).

divine light, with some interspersed comments. For example, al-Ghazālī says: “from that light, then, the unveiling of truth must be sought” (DE: 58). But this is not helpful at all. *Prima facie*, this is a fairly standard claim—made by many Islamic thinkers—that God is the source of truth. The sceptical challenge concerns how to validate primary truths so that we can be justified in making genuine epistemic claims, i.e. satisfy GHAZALIAN KNOWLEDGE. Merely claiming that God is the source of truth, while indicative, does not serve as a genuine philosophical explanation.

However, in the next paragraph, al-Ghazālī makes a striking claim that offers a clue to his considered position. This is the *prima facie* nativist passage:

The aim of this account is to emphasize that one should be most diligent in seeking the truth until he finally comes to seeking the unseekable. For primary truths [*al-awwaliyyāt*] are unseekable, because they are present [*hādīra*] in the mind; and when what is present is sought, it is lost and hides itself. (DE: 58/MD: 68)¹⁶

What seems nativist about this passage is al-Ghazālī’s claim that “primary truths are unseekable, *because they are present in the mind*”. Given that al-Ghazālī makes this claim after having

¹⁶ It is important to note that the phrase “in the mind” was, understandably, added in the McCarthy translation, but is not present in the Arabic. The original Arabic only claims that primary truths are present (*hādīra*), but the implication is that their presence is located in the mind. Watt offers the following translation: “For first principles are not sought, since they are present and to hand” (*The Faith and Practice*, 26). Again, the Arabic does not claim that primary truths are “to hand”; however, it seems that Watt is grasping for the sense in which primary truths are readily available. The best reading is that they are present or *ready at hand* in the mind.

generated and refuted scepticism, a natural reading of this passage suggests that primary truths are present in the mind in virtue of being innate to the mind. But this text alone cannot settle the matter; we must look elsewhere to find evidence for al-Ghazali's nativism.

3. A Nativist Reading

There are different varieties of nativism throughout the history of philosophy, but the main contention of nativism is clear. Nativists claim that the mind innately contains certain types of information or content in the form of ideas, concepts, principles, etc. In other words, the mind is not a *tabula rasa* that acquires all of its content through some sort of sensory experience. Let us propose, then, the following sufficient condition for nativism:

NATIVISM: A theory of the mind, *T*, counts as nativist *if*:

[1.] *T* admits that some type of content, *C*, is innate to the mind.

[2.] *C* is not derived from sensory experience.¹⁷

Al-Ghazālī distinguishes between two kinds of knowledge that can be present in the heart (or mind): *intellectual knowledge* and *knowledge of divine law*.¹⁸ We will set knowledge of divine

¹⁷ Related to the issue of NATIVISM is one aspect of the epistemic status of primary truths, namely, that they are necessary truths (*Principles of the Creed*, 60; MF: 12). It is important to make the distinction between a content *C* being a necessary truth and whether *C* is *innate* to the mind. We are interested in the latter question regarding the cognitive status of the primary truths.

¹⁸ The spiritual heart or what we would call the 'mind' constitutes the essence of a person. It is where perception, experience, and knowledge obtains, and it is the aspect of the person that is

law aside, focusing on intellectual knowledge. By ‘intellectual knowledge’ al-Ghazālī means “that by which the innate intellect makes its judgments and which does not come into existence

subject to moral responsibility. Expanding on the nature of the heart and its epistemic capacities, al-Ghazālī writes:

Know that the seat of knowledge is the heart, by which I mean the subtle tenuous substance that rules all the parts of the body and is obeyed and served by all its members. In its relationship to the real nature of intelligibles, it is like a mirror in its relationship to the forms of changing appearances. For even as that which changes has a form, and the image of that form is reflected in the mirror and represented therein, so also every intelligible has a specific nature, and this specific nature has a form that is reflected and made manifest in the mirror of the heart. Even as the mirror is one thing, the forms of individuals another, and the representation of their image in the mirror another, being thus three things in all, so here, too, there are three things: the heart, the specific natures of things, and the representations and presence of these in the heart. The ‘intellect’ is an expression for the heart in which there exists the image of the specific nature of things. The ‘intelligible’ is an expression for the specific nature of things. ‘Intelligence’ is an expression for the representation of the image in the mirror. (*Marvels of the Heart*, 35)

In this passage, al-Ghazālī lays out what we might call the cognitive architecture of the heart or mind. Al-Ghazālī likens the heart to a mirror, which provides reflections of things which are effectively representational states. I will not take a stance on whether al-Ghazālī is an indirect or a direct realist; however, if al-Ghazālī is a nativist, then he must be committed to the claim that certain representations of intelligibles are innate to the heart.

through blind imitation and instruction” (*Marvels of the Heart*, 45). According to al-Ghazālī, “Intellectual knowledge (*‘ulūm ‘aqliyya*) is subdivided into axiomatic (*darūriyya*) and acquired (*muktasaba*)”. Acquired knowledge is “divided into that which deals with this [present] world, and with the world to come” and it “is gained by learning and deduction”. Regarding the present world, the objects of acquired knowledge are “such sciences as medicine, mathematics, engineering, astronomy, and other professions and trades” (Ibid. 49). Regarding the world to come, the objects of acquired knowledge are “the states of the heart, of defects in religious works, and of the knowledge of God, the Exalted, and His attributes and His acts” (Ibid.). Acquired knowledge concerning the present world and the world to come is ultimately obtained through instruction and deduction.

Given that acquired knowledge depends on both learning and deduction, it is clear that it does not meet our sufficient condition for nativism. Acquired knowledge is (broadly construed) derived from experience. However, this is not so when we turn to axiomatic knowledge or primary truths. Al-Ghazālī writes:

No one knows whence or how the axiomatic is attained. Such is a man's knowledge [for example], that one person cannot be in two places, and that one thing cannot both be created and eternal, existence and nonexistent at the same time. For man finds this knowledge to be a natural endowment of his soul from his youth, and does not know when or whence he attained it. I mean that he does not know any proximate cause for it. (Ibid. 45)

Al-Ghazālī, I contend, commits himself to some form of nativism in this passage. Al-Ghazālī claims that axiomatic knowledge is a natural endowment of the soul. A plausible reading of this claim is that axiomatic knowledge is innate knowledge. Given that axiomatic knowledge is

contrasted with acquired knowledge, this rules out the possibility that axiomatic knowledge is obtained through learning and deduction. Moreover, since axiomatic knowledge is intellectual knowledge, it is not acquired through blind imitation or instruction. Combining a process of elimination with al-Ghazālī's claim that axiomatic knowledge is a natural endowment of the soul, it is not far-fetched to read al-Ghazālī as making a nativist claim here.

But what about al-Ghazālī's claim that nobody knows where axiomatic knowledge comes from, i.e. its proximate cause? Does this rule out a nativist reading? While this is certainly puzzling, these theses about the origins of axiomatic knowledge are not mutually exclusive. On the one hand, al-Ghazālī seems to make the following cognitive claim:

1. Axiomatic knowledge exists, and it is innate to the mind.

Yet, al-Ghazālī also seems to endorse the following epistemic claim:

2. I do not know the proximate cause of axiomatic knowledge.

Al-Ghazālī can endorse both (1) and (2) without being inconsistent. As we will see, however, whether (2) represents al-Ghazālī's considered position will be a point of interest when we turn back to the *Deliverance*. As I will argue, al-Ghazālī discovers that God is, in some sense, the proximate cause of primary truths or axiomatic knowledge.

Let us look at another key text:

Know that the sciences that are not axiomatic, but which come into the heart at certain times, differ in their manner of attainment. Sometimes they come upon the heart as though something were flung into it from a source it knows not. At other times they are gained through deduction [*istidlāl*] and study. That which is not attained by way of acquisition nor through artful proof is called general inspiration [*ilhām*], and that which is

attained through inference is called reflection [*i'tibār*] and mental perception [*istibṣār*].

(Ibid. 51)

Al-Ghazālī once again implies that axiomatic knowledge is innate, by claiming that axiomatic knowledge is not the kind of intellectual knowledge that enters “*into the heart at a certain time*”. If all other forms of intellectual knowledge enter into the heart into a certain time by either being “flung into the heart” from an unknown source, or acquired through deduction, study, inspiration, reflection, and perception, then a reasonable reading is that axiomatic knowledge has always been present in the heart.

There is one more text that fits the nativist story. In the *Niche of Lights*, al-Ghazālī writes:

Know that although rational faculties see, the objects that they see are not with them in the same manner. On the contrary, some of [the objects] are with them as if they were actually present [*'indahā ka'innahū ḥāḍir*], such as self-evident knowledge [*darūriyya*]. For example, the rational faculty knows that a single thing cannot be both eternal and created, or both existent and nonexistent; that a single statement cannot be both true and false. (NL: 9-10)

Again, al-Ghazālī claims that self-evident knowledge (unlike other objects of knowledge) are somehow present in the rational faculty.

I contend that the above texts show that al-Ghazālī can plausibly be read as a nativist.

There is a well-known text, however, which seems to contradict this reading. Interestingly, it is from the *Deliverance*:

Know that man's essence [*jawhar al-insān*], in his original condition [*aṣl al-fiṭra*], is created in blank simplicity [*khāliyan sādhijan*] without any information [*khābar*] about the “worlds” of God Most High. These “worlds” are so many that only God Most High

can number them, as He has said: “No one knows the hosts of your Lord but He”. Man gets his information about the “worlds” by means of perception. Each one of his kinds of perception is created in order that man may beget to know thereby a “world” of the existents—and by “worlds” we mean the categories of existing things. (DE: 83/MD: 110)

It seems that al-Ghazālī is denying nativism, as he makes a type of *tabula rasa* claim: “man’s essence, in his original condition, is created in blank simplicity without any information”. Indeed, both Treiger and Griffel read al-Ghazālī as effectively an Avicennan here, denying nativism. Griffel writes: “The *fiṭra* is for al-Ghazālī a means that enables all humans to reach the truth. While it initially knows nothing about the world, once it begins working it is not empty” (“Al-Ghazālī’s Use”, 6). Similarly, Treiger writes: “the second meaning of intelligence refers to knowledge of *a priori* truths, acquired by human beings at approximately the age of seven, such as the knowledge that the whole is greater than any of its parts” (*Inspired Knowledge*, 24).

Avicenna divides the intellect into four stages, the first three of which are stages of potentiality (Davidson, *Al-Farabi, Avicenna, & Averroes*, 84-5). First, the material intellect (*al-‘aql al-hayūlānī*) is a stage of unqualified potentiality, and corresponds to a blank *fiṭra*, considered as a disposition to acquire content and knowledge (“Al-Ghazālī’s Use”, 11-14; Gutas, “The Empiricism of Avicenna”, 406). The primary truths are not present at this stage, which implies that Avicenna denies innate content. Second, the intellect *in habitu* (*al-‘aql bi’l malaka*) is the stage where one acquires first intelligibles, such as primary truths, which are abstracted from sensory experience:

Man is naturally endowed [*fuṭira ṭab‘an*] to come into possession of knowledge and to perceive things by way of the senses and then by way of estimation [*wahm*], which is their counterpart. As for what he perceives by the intellect, it comes about after

acquisition, not naturally ... As for the primary notions [*al-awā'il*] that come about in him, they come to pass from induction [*istiqrā'*] and testing and proving [*tajriba*], and from Experience [*šahāda*]. (*The Annotations*, 22/95-96, trans. by Gutas, “The Empiricism of Avicenna”, 406-7)¹⁹

Third, the actual intellect (*al-'aql bi'l fi'l*) is the stage where one acquires second intelligibles and intelligible forms, namely, “derivate propositions and concepts” (Davidson, *Al-Farabi, Avicenna, & Averroes*, 84). Fourth, the acquired intellect (*al-'aql al- mustafād*) is a state of actuality where the intellect attends to the various intelligibles via the active intellect (*al-'aql al- fa' 'āl*), which is “the locus of all intelligibles” (Gutas, “Ibn Sina”).

Griffel claims that although al-Ghazālī masks his debt to Avicenna’s psychological framework, he effectively “reproduces most of the teachings of Avicenna” (“Al-Ghazālī’s Use”, 28). Treiger distinguishes four different stages of intelligence for al-Ghazālī, the first three of which he claims corresponds to Avicenna’s material intellect, intellect *in habitu*, and actual intellect (*Inspired Knowledge*, 25). These are:

1. *aṣl al-fiṭra/gharīza*: the original nature as a *tabula rasa*.
2. *tamyīz*: Discernment of primary truths.
3. *'aql*: Intelligence through syllogistic reasoning.
4. *al-'aql al-qudsī*: Sacred intellect or the eye of prophecy. (Ibid. 23)

The texts certainly indicate these stages of intellectual development. For example, after

¹⁹ For a more detailed account of how primary truths are abstracted from sensory experience on Avicenna's account, see Gutas, “The Empiricism of Avicenna”; Taylor, “Avicenna and the Issue”; and Black, “Estimation (*wahm*) in Avicenna”.

accounting for *aṣl al-fiṭra* and the development of sensory faculties in the *Deliverance*, al-Ghazālī writes:

Then, when he is about seven years old, *discernment* [*tamyīz*] is created for him. This is another of the stages of man's existence; in it he perceives things beyond the "world" of the sensibles, none of which are found in the "world" of sensation.

Then man ascends to another stage, and *intellect* [*al-'aql*] is created for him, so that he perceives the necessary, the possible, the impossible, and things not found in the previous stages. (DE: 83/MD: 110)²⁰

Similarly, al-Ghazālī writes in Book I of the *Revival*:

The second [meaning of *'aql*]: It is the science that comes or types of knowledge that come into being in the disposition of a child; it discerns the possibility of possible occurrences and the impossibility of the impossible. It is like the knowledge that two is more than one, and that one person cannot be in two places at the same time. This is the definition intended by a certain theologian when he defined 'the intellect' by saying, "It is a facet of the necessary sciences, like the knowledge of the possibility of possible occurrences, and the impossibility of the impossible". (*Book of Knowledge*, 225)

However, my contention is that these texts can be rendered consistent with nativism. In Avicennan terms, al-Ghazālī can be read as denying that the material intellect is devoid of content, in that the primary truths are present there.

²⁰ For a discussion of al-Ghazālī's varying and often inconsistent uses of *tamyīz* and *'aql* see Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge*, 23-5).

To see this consistency, a few clarifications are in order. First and foremost, I do not regard al-Ghazālī as offering a systematic epistemology. That is, he writes his texts with different purposes and different intentions, depending on the context and the audience. As such, sometimes he may be expressing nativism, whereas other times he may be expressing empiricism. The presence of a few problematic texts does not necessarily rule out the possibility of his nativism.

Second, Kukkonen has a plausible reconciliation of nativism with the *tabula rasa* passage in the *Deliverance*. According to Kukkonen, al-Ghazālī is only denying that the innate nature of the human being has any knowledge of *particular existents* in the world. Axiomatic knowledge is not knowledge of any particular existent, rather it is knowledge that provides the *possibility* for knowledge of particular existents:

Axiomatic knowledge is not representational: It is not yet knowledge of anything—it has not arisen out of the reception of some outside information, the *khobar* mentioned in the *Deliverer*—at the same that it is a condition for the knowledge of anything else. All of this is to say that necessary knowledge provides the matrix of possible relations in which objects of knowledge are to be set, even as it does not yet constitute actual knowledge of any real thing. (Kukkonen, “Receptive to Reality”, 548)

On such a reading, al-Ghazālī can affirm that both: (1) *fiṭra* contains axiomatic knowledge and (2) *fiṭra* is blank with respect to knowledge of the categories of existents. As such, axiomatic knowledge can be understood as innate for al-Ghazālī: “The intellect since its inception is

endowed with certain intelligible axioms (*'aqliyyāt*) which in the opening pages of the *Deliverer* are called first principles (*awwaliyyāt*)” (Ibid. 547).²¹

Third, it is important to note that, even in the allegedly problematic *Deliverance* passage discussed above (DE: 83), al-Ghazālī explicitly claims that knowledge of primary truths is not something that is derived from the previous stages of sensory development. As he writes, when *tamyīz* and *'aql* are created, the subject perceives “none of which are found in the ‘world’ of

²¹ In another context Kukkonen ascribes a Platonic form of nativism to al-Ghazālī:

[I]n good Platonic fashion, Ghazālī believes that everything in the sensible world—everything that can be cognized and apprehended, anyway—is merely a reflection or an after-image of an intelligible archetype. And he believes that knowledge is ultimately about recollection: if knowledge required reaching up to the heavens or into the bowels of the earth, nobody could ever retrieve it, which is why our only hope lies in the truth being in our hearts all the time. (2010: 49)

Indeed, al-Ghazālī seems to make such a claim in the *Revival*:

We mean that the heart is constantly in a state of change and being influenced by these secondary causes. The most important of these influences that come into the heart are involuntary suggestions [*khawāṭir*]. By involuntary suggestions I mean the ideas [*afkār*] and recollections [*adkhār*] that take place therein. By these I mean its perceptions of knowledge, either by way of renewal or recollection. (*Marvels of the Heart*, 77-8)

If Kukkonen is right that al-Ghazālī ascribes to a Platonic theory of recollection, then it would be true *a fortiori* that axiomatic knowledge is innate. However, I will not rely on that claim.

sensation” and “things not found in the previous stages”. As such, he can be read as implicitly denying the Avicennan view that primary truths are abstracted from sensory experience at the stage of intellect *in habitu*.

Fourth, there is a way to reconcile the nativist claim that primary truths actually are present in the soul upon its inception in *aşl al-fītra*—what Avicenna would call the material intellect—with al-Ghazālī’s claim that primary truths are acquired by the intellect later in childhood (e.g. in DE: 83 and Book of Knowledge, 225). Al-Ghazālī could be making a claim about *awareness* of primary truths, not their cognitive origins. It is at the age of seven (or some point in childhood), that children become aware or conscious of primary truths. But that is still consistent with the content of primary truths being inherent to the material intellect. The child just could not access the primary truths in infancy, and could only access them upon further intellectual development.

Again, my aim here has not been to argue conclusively that al-Ghazālī is a nativist. Rather, I merely wanted to put a plausible story on the table that could further motivate reading nativism into al-Ghazālī’s response to scepticism. What will, in part, tip the scales in favor of the nativist reading is the interpretive benefits it gives us with respect to understanding al-Ghazālī’s engagement with scepticism.

4. Nativism and the Divine Light

Let us grant that al-Ghazālī ascribes to nativism about primary truths. How should this change our reading of his resolution to scepticism? Let us return to the nativist passage of the

Deliverance:

The aim of this account is to emphasize that one should be most diligent in seeking the truth until he finally comes to seeking the unseekable. For primary truths [*al-awwaliyyāt*] are unseekable, because they are present [*hāḍira*] in the mind; and when what is present is sought, it is lost and hides itself. (DE: 58/MD: 68)

There are two claims here that are noteworthy. The first is an epistemic claim:

1. Primary truths are unseekable.

The second claim is a cognitive claim:

2. Primary truths are present in the mind.

How should we unpack these two claims? My suggestion is that (2) just is al-Ghazālī's nativism, that is, he is claiming that primary truths are innate to the mind.²² The unseekability claim in (1) can be read in three ways:

A. Primary truths are not demonstrable.

B. Primary truths do not originate in any sensory sources.

C. Primary truths do not originate in any intellectual sources.

A is trivially true. For al-Ghazālī, primary truths are supposed to be self-evident; they are not theorems that require demonstrations. Thus, A would not be explanatorily useful. The cognitive

²² The claim that some types of knowledge are (in some sense) innately present in the mind is picked up by figures in post-Classical Islamic philosophy. For example, Griffel writes that “[Fakhr al-Dīn] al-Rāzī defends Meno’s paradox as it applies to conceptualizations and argues that concepts are not acquired. Rather, there is a ‘sheer presence’ (*ḥuḍūr mujarrad*) of concepts in the mind” (*The Formation*, 341). For a discussion of a similar view in the work of Yahyā al-Suhrawardī, see Griffel, *The Formation*, 355-358 and Eichner, “Knowledge by Presence”.

claim—NATIVISM—explains **B** and **C**. Given NATIVISM, it follows that primary truths do not originate from the senses or the (human) intellect. This raises the question: where do primary truths come from? This question is important because we must know the origins of primary truths in order to figure out whether our knowledge of them genuinely counts as knowledge. This is part of the sceptical challenge of the dream doubt—are primary truths merely the product of a dream, or do they have solid epistemic grounds? And it is precisely here where the divine light that is cast unto al-Ghazālī's heart becomes relevant.

Allow me to first sketch-out the view of how al-Ghazālī resolves his sceptical crisis, and then we can turn to the details and unpack my view and how it differs from Hadisi's. On my reading, when al-Ghazālī has an experience of the divine light, he first and foremost has a mystical experience that is non-propositional in nature, which is a type of *knowledge-by-acquaintance*. Al-Ghazālī is having the *direct experience* that God is the source of the primary truths innate to his mind. It is this experience that allows al-Ghazālī to secure primary truths and thus the foundations of knowledge. Primary truths now can meet modal-certainty, because God is the ultimate source of truth and certainty.

With respect to the experience of the divine light, two issues need to be addressed. First, we must unpack its epistemic status. Second, we must discuss what it takes to undergo such an experience. In his epistemological writings, al-Ghazālī makes fine grained distinctions between different types of epistemic states. Here, I want to distinguish between three states:

Ascertainment by apodeictic proof leads to *knowledge*. Intimate experience of that very state is *fruitful experience*. Favorable acceptance of it based on hearsay and experience of others is *faith*. (DE: 82; cf. NL: 37-8)

The first, and lowest, epistemic state a subject can be in is a state of faith (*īmān*) with respect to the truth of some state of affairs (here, al-Ghazālī is not using *īmān* in the sense of conviction and belief in God).²³ Faith obtains when a subject believes a proposition by conforming to the beliefs and experiences of other subjects.²⁴ The next epistemic state a subject can be in is a state of propositional knowledge (*‘ilm*) with respect to some state of affairs. A subject is in a state of *‘ilm* when their beliefs are based on apodeictic proof (*burhān*) (this is the type of knowledge, GHAZALIAN KNOWLEDGE, that al-Ghazālī is seeking at the outset of the *Deliverance*). The highest epistemic state a person can be in is one where they have or “tasting” (*dhawq*) or immediate intuition of some state of affairs. With the concept of *dhawq*, al-Ghazālī commits himself to (non-propositional) knowledge-by-acquaintance. Knowledge-by-acquaintance has a higher status than propositional knowledge because it does not depend on other truths, judgements, or beliefs. As such, it is *foundational knowledge* (Ali and Fumerton 2020).

In his account of the Sufis in the *Deliverance*, al-Ghazālī distinguishes knowledge-by-acquaintance of the Sufi from the propositional knowledge of (say) the philosopher as follows:

Then it became clear to me that their most distinctive characteristic is something that can be attained, not by study [*ta‘alum*], but rather by fruitional experience [*al-dhawq*] and the state of ecstasy and the “exchange of qualities.” How great a difference there is between your *knowing* [*ta‘allum*] the definitions [*ḥadd*] and causes and conditions of health and

²³ For an account of al-Ghazālī’s view on the conditions of (religious) faith see FT: 121-124; *Principles of the Creed*, 91-116; and *Faith in Divine Unity*, 9-16.

²⁴ A lower epistemic state than faith (as used in this context) for al-Ghazālī would be blind imitation (*taqlīd*) of the beliefs of others.

satiety and your *being* healthy and sated! And how great a difference there is between your knowing the definition of drunkenness—viz. that it is a term denoting a state resulting from the predominance of vapors which rise from the stomach to the centers of thought—and your actually being drunk! (DE: 78/MD: 101-2)

Al-Ghazālī is clear that a subject who has *dhawq* of some state of affairs, *p*, is in a higher epistemic state than a subject who has *‘ilm* of *p*. In his example, the person who has experienced drunkenness knows that state directly and thus better than the one who does not drink, yet indirectly knows drunkenness through its physiological and psychological descriptions.

Commentators have claimed that the experience of the divine light is an instance of *dhawq* (Götz, “The Quest for Certainty”; Hadisi, “Ghazālī’s Transformative Answer”). While I agree that the experience of the divine light is a form of knowledge-by-acquaintance, I do not think that al-Ghazālī has in mind *dhawq* specifically. This is because the concept of *dhawq*, for al-Ghazālī, is generally used in the context of describing the types of experiences that Sufi practices can induce. Indeed, if al-Ghazālī understood the experience of the divine light in terms of *dhawq* then he would have made that explicit. However, he does not reference Sufi practices or use *‘dhawq’* in this part of the *Deliverance*; both are introduced later in the context of his pursuit of Sufism.

What does it take, then, to have this experience of the divine light? According to Hadisi, a subject must engage in a variety of Sufi transformative practices that cultivate and discipline her imagination into being receptive to an experience of the divine light qua *dhawq*. This is the sense in which Hadisi ascribes to weak divine interventionism. God has to rescue al-Ghazālī from scepticism, but al-Ghazālī must be *active* and perform a variety of practices in order for this to happen. Hadisi writes:

Unlike the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* which seems to be easily available to all agents, on Ghazālī's account, only an expert with well-trained imagination can access the foundation of all knowledge. (“Ghazālī’s Transformative Answer”, 138)

I agree that al-Ghazālī does claim that Sufi practices are designed to induce experiences of *dhawq*. However, these transformative practices are neither necessary nor sufficient for an experience of the divine light in the context of engaging scepticism. Indeed, it is problematic to read Sufi practices into al-Ghazālī's engagement with scepticism, because at this point in al-Ghazālī's intellectual and spiritual autobiography, al-Ghazālī has yet to verify the truth of Sufism. It is only after engaging scepticism and other epistemological paths to the truth, that al-Ghazālī ultimately turns to Sufism as the ultimate path to the truth, and discovers the realities of *dhawq*.²⁵

It is for this reason that al-Ghazālī is best read as a strong divine interventionist in his response to scepticism. His experience of the divine light is truly due to the mercy of God, and not due to any of his own activities. Al-Ghazālī must be *passive* in order to receive this mercy. On my reading, the experience of the divine light is not one of *dhawq* but of *kashf* (unveiling).²⁶ As al-Ghazālī claims: “whoever thinks that the unveiling of truth depends on precisely

²⁵ According to Kukkonen (2020: 122-23), God’s mercy only gives one the resolve or commitment to engage such transformative practices, it does not guarantee the immediate experience of *dhawq* itself.

²⁶ Again, the point of contrast is that *kashf* in this context is a mystical experience that does not require spiritual practices. If one wants to call this a type of *dhawq*, given al-Ghazālī's varying uses of this term, that is fine as long as this difference is stressed.

formulated proofs has indeed straitened the broad mercy of God” (DE: 57). Although the experience of the divine light via *kashf* is not *dhawq*, it is still a variety of knowledge-by-acquaintance for al-Ghazālī.²⁷

That this experience of the divine light is one of knowledge-by-acquaintance is key to securing the foundations of knowledge, i.e. primary truths. This is because al-Ghazālī cannot have *‘ilm* of primary truths because *‘ilm* requires a proof (*burhān*), and proofs depend on primary truths. As such, al-Ghazālī requires different epistemic grounds to establish that primary truths do not merely have actual-certainty, but modal-certainty. The experience of the divine light

²⁷ Now, what exactly is the divine light? Here is a suggestion. In the *Niche of Lights* al-Ghazālī countenances “rational lights” that exist in a hierarchy that flow from the light of God:

The world in its entirety is filled with both manifest, visual lights and nonmanifest, rational lights...The low lights flow forth from one another just as light flows forth from a lamp...Some of the high things kindle each other, and their hierarchy is a hierarchy of stations. Then all of them climb to the Light of lights, their Origin, their First Source.

This is God alone, who has no partner. All other lights are borrowed. (NL: 20)

In an Avicennan emanationist framework, which al-Ghazālī is influenced by, we could say that the divine light referenced in the *Deliverance* is plausibly the active intellect (Treiger, “Monism and Monotheism”, 8; Davidson, *Al-Farabi, Avicenna, & Averroes*, 132; Hesova, “The Notion of Illumination”, 68-71). If so, then it would be appropriate to say that the securing of primary truths does, in a sense, originate in an intellectual source; however, this would not be a *human* intellectual source. As such, option C above (“Primary truths do not originate in any intellectual sources”) would not be violated.

provides a knowledge-by-acquaintance of the grounds of primary truths, allowing al-Ghazālī to know that (1) the origin of his innate knowledge of primary truths is God, and thereby (2) because God is the source of truth, he can have certainty in the primary truths. Recall the sceptical challenge al-Ghazālī faced prior to experiencing the divine light:

1. The only way for *S* to counter scepticism is through a proof.
2. A proof requires appeal to primary truths.
3. Primary truths are undermined by the dream doubt.
4. *S* cannot construct a proof to counter scepticism.

Therefore: *S* has no way to defeat scepticism.

Al-Ghazālī can now reject premise (1), which in turn allows him to reject premise (3). A proof is not the only way to counter scepticism. A subject can defeat scepticism through an experience of the divine light. Through this experience the subject is able to re-establish primary truths and thereby reject the dream doubt. The conclusion, then, is false: al-Ghazālī does have a way—i.e. through the assistance of God—to defeat scepticism.

5. Conclusion

I have argued that al-Ghazālī *can* be read as a nativist, and that doing so helps us understand that he is a strong divine interventionist in his resolution to scepticism. Ultimately, al-Ghazālī needs an experience of the divine light in order to secure the foundations of knowledge, namely, primary truths. The experience of the divine light unveils and transforms the certainty of primary truths from actual-certainty to modal-certainty. It does so by revealing that God is the source of the primary truths that are innately present in al-Ghazālī's mind. This experience is not achieved,

however, through any type of proof or engagement with Sufi practices. Rather, it is wholly due to the mercy of God.²⁸

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