

# QUESTION

Critically Evaluate the theory of Imamate by AL-Ghazali

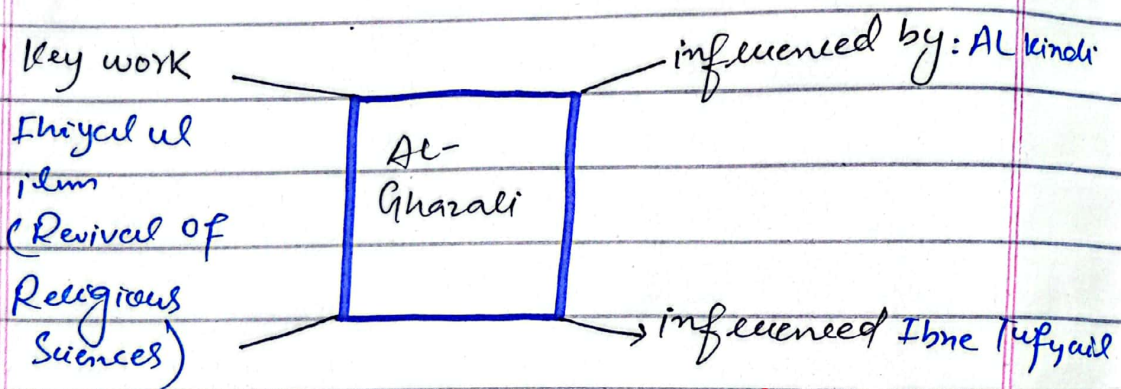
## I INTRODUCTION

The theory of Imamate and kingship has been propounded by many Islamic philosophers. However, AL-Ghazali had outlined distinctive features in his theory of Imamate. He has conserved the divine right of kingship. Moreover, he has described various characteristics of becoming a caliph. His theory includes many strengths such as the propagation of Islam and establishment of a just society. On the other hand, his theory overemphasizes the religion and lacks a clear concept of succession of next caliph. Hence, the theory of Ghazali includes different strengths and different weaknesses.



## II. AL-GHAZALI: AN INTRODUCTION

He was born in 1058 AD in Itram. He is a renowned Islamic scholar. Moreover, He is also regarded as "Mujaddid" because of his work regarding preserving pure Islamic thought.



### Before Al-Ghazali

Al-Farabi presented his famous concept of "Rais ul Awwal"

### After Al-Ghazali

Ibne-Rushd had criticised the theory of Imamate by Al-Ghazali

### III UNDERSTANDING AL-GHAZALI THEORY OF IMAMATE

Al-Ghazali's theory of Imamate rests on different aspects such as

Divine right of Imam

↳ Ghazali says that Imam is a requirement of Shariah

Religious protection

↓ Ghazali said:

"Din is foundation and Imam is a guardian" (Nasihat ul Mulk)

### IV CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THEORY OF IMAMATE BY AL-GHAZALI

A) Strengths of Al-Ghazali's Theory of Imamate



### i) Establishes Justice

Qhazali argues that Imam should work for establishing justice. Similarly Plato has also discussed the establishment of justice. Hence, the Imam of Al-Qhazali will also work for ensuring justice because it is his sole duty after gaining power.

### ii) Protects Religion

As Qhazali mentions:

"Din is foundation and the caliph is a guardian."

This outlines the duty of caliph to protect the religion. Hence, Imam will work for protecting religion.

### iii) Promotes the welfare of public

Qhazali mentions the daily routine of a caliph such as investigating the issue of public.

By investigating the issue of public  
the imam will also work like  
the sovereign of Hobbes to promote public  
welfare.

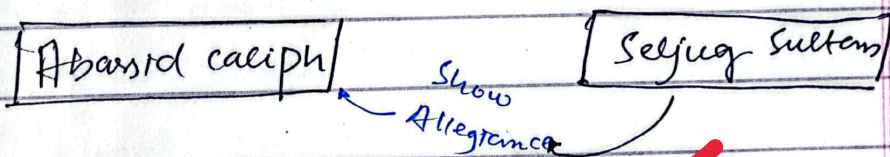
iv) Counters the challenge to Islamic  
world

Ghazali

↓  
caliph should have the  
ability of Ijtihad

By possessing this quality, the caliph  
will work for ensuring the mitigation  
of challenges to Islamic world and  
Islamic Fiqah. Al-Mawardi has also  
enlisted this quality for a caliph

v) Reconciled Sultan and caliph



These two were famous and distinct  
powers in the time of Al-Ghazali.  
However, Al-Ghazali has asked Sultan  
to show allegiance to caliph. This  
resulted in reconciling both.



## B) Weaknesses of Al-Ghazali's Theory of Imamate

i) Overemphasized religion

Critics argue that Al-Ghazali has overemphasized religion in his theory of Imamate. Caliph as a protector of religion and having the ability of Jihad are the manifestations of overemphasis on religion.

ii) All authority in the hands of a single person

Ghazali gives all power to caliph. Even though, according to him, Sultan should show his allegiance to caliph.

Hobbes Sovereign  
↓  
Authoritative

Al-Ghazali Caliph  
↓  
Authoritative

Similar to Hobbes, Al-Ghazali's theory promotes authoritarianism.

iii) Lack of clarity regarding Succession of a Caliph

Unlike Mawardi, Ghazali has not clearly defined the succession of caliph. This is a major drawback of Al-Ghazali's theory of Imamate because of not defining the criteria of succession.

iv) Overload of work on caliph

During enlisting the daily routine of a caliph, Al-Ghazali divides the time of a caliph into four parts. However, the work such as riding, ~~and~~ investigating the affairs of subjects and listening to complaints seems a burden on caliph in a short time devoted to work. Hence, the caliph is overloaded with work.



## V) Ineffective method of Deposing a Caliph

Qunali

Caliph devoid of the faculty of Ijtihad can be deposed. Ibn-Rushd has criticised this concept of Al-Ghazali of deposing a king. The deposition of a king should be based on the factors related to state not personal quality.

Good attempt!!!

## VI CONCLUSION

The theory of Al-Ghazali is based on various drawbacks and different advantages. The theory of Al-Ghazali carries equal weightage of drawbacks and advantages. However, the theory of Al-Ghazali is not up to the standard of other Islamic philosopher such as Al-Mawardi.