



READINGS in ISLAMIC DA'WAH

EDITOR
Mohd. Yusof Hussain



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READINGS IN ISLAMIC
DA'WAH

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Mohd. Yusof Hussain



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Fur'ān because Hārūn was more fluent in speech than him. Allāh (s.w.t.) says in the Qur'ān:

"Go thou to Pharaoh for he had indeed transgressed all bounds. Moses said: O my Lord! Expand me my breast, ease my task for me and remove the impediment from my speech so that they may understand what I say; and give me a minister from my family Hārūn, my brother."

Tāhā, (20):24-30

Improving Credibility

A person's credibility can fluctuate. It can increase and it can also decrease. The danger for *dū'āt* is if their credibility decreases.

A *dā'ī* committed to Islamic *dā'wah* must make sure that his credibility as a *dā'ī* do not decrease. He therefore has to take very good care of his *imān*, *amal*, *akhlāq*, religious knowledge and communication skills.

Especially important is his religious knowledge and *akhlāq*. He has to keep on studying the various branches of Islamic knowledge - Qur'ān, *sunnah*, *Fiqh*, *Uṣūl-Fiqh* and *Tasawwuf*. He has to be mindful of his *akhlāq* and choice of friends.

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THE CONTENT OF ISLAMIC DA'WAH

Mohd Yusof Hussain

The content (*mawḍū'*) of Islamic *dā'wah* is derived from the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* (sayings and examples of Prophet Muhammad [s.a.w.]). The content is in the form of message (*risālah*), commands, prohibitions and information (*ma'lumat*) related to Islam.

Message (Risālah)

By message we mean the essence of a statement which contains religious truth sent by a *dā'ī* to an individual, group or society at large. The central message of Islam is *tawḥīd* (oneness or unity of Allāh). *Tawḥīd* has always been the creed of the Abrahamic faith (*Ḥanifism*) recognizing Allāh (s.w.t.) alone as the Creator, without partners or associates. Allāh alone is the giver of life and death and Allāh alone is the Lord, Ruler, Master, Provider, Judge and Forgiver.

All worship, pietism, praise and devotion belong exclusively to Allāh (s.w.t.) and not to be shared with any prophet or saint in line with Allāh's declaration:

"I have only created *Jinns* and men, that they may serve Me."

al-Dharyāt, (51):56

That Allāh (s.w.t.) is one and He alone is worthy or worship and devotion is stated in a number of Qur'ānic *āyats*:

"And your God is one God: There is no God but He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful."

al-Baqarah, (2):163

"Say: He is Allāh, the One and Only; Allāh, the Eternal, Absolute: He beget not, nor is He begotten: And there is none like Him."

al-Īkhlās, (112):1-4

"They say, Allāh has begotten a son, Glory be to Him! He is Self-Sufficient! His are all things in the heavens and the earth! No warrant have you for this! Say you about Allāh, what you know not."

Yūnus, (10):68

"And the places of worship are for Allāh (alone): So invoke not any one along with Allāh."

al-Jinn, (72):18

"Among His Signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Prostrate not to the sun and the moon, but prostrate to Allāh, who created them, if it is Him you wish to serve."

Fussilat, (41):37

Related to this is the message that Islam does not compromise on Tawhīd. *Shirk* (associationism) is an unpardonable sin. All other sins are pardonable. If a person commits *shirk* his worship is not accepted, his good deeds (*'amal ṣāliḥ*) are in vain and he is doomed to suffer in hell-fire. Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

"Allāh forgives not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgives anything else, to whom He pleases; to setup partners with Allāh is to devise a sin most heinous indeed."

al-Nisā', (4):48

"Allāh forgives not (the sin of) joining other gods with Him; but He forgives whom He pleases other sins than this; one who joins other gods with Allāh, has strayed far, far away (from the Right)"

al-Nisā', (4):116

Every Muslim has direct access to Allāh (s.w.t.). He does not need the mediation or intercession of saints, priests, holy men, holy grave, shrine or idol when worshipping Allāh (s.w.t.).

The second message of Islam conveyed by a *dā'ī* is that Muḥammad (s.a.w.) is the last messenger of Allāh. After Prophet Muḥammad, Allāh (s.w.t.) will not send another messenger. Regarding Muḥammad (s.a.w.), Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

"Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the messenger of Allāh and the seal of the Prophets. And Allāh has full knowledge of all things."

al-Aḥzāb, (33):40

"Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own (scriptures), in the *Tawrāt* and the Gospel: ..."

al-'Arāf, (7):157

Besides those two core messages a *dā'ī* also conveys other *Qur'ānic* messages which he support by quoting Qur'ānic verses as evidence (*al-dalīl*). They include the following messages:

1. The *Qur'ān* is the final revelation of Allāh (s.w.t.) revealed to Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w.) through angel Gibrīl:

"As for thee, thou receive the *Qur'ān* from One all-Wise, All-Knowing."

al-Naml, (27):6

Say: "If the whole of mankind and *Jinns* were to gather together to produce the like of this *Qur'ān*, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support."

Banī Isrā'īl, (17):88

"And if you are in doubt as to what we have revealed from time to time to Our servant then produced a *sūrah* like there unto: And call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides Allāh, if you are truthful."

al-Baqarah, (2):23

2. Islam is the only religion recognized by Allāh (s.w.t.). The Muslim position is that Islam is the religion preached by all the earlier prophets including Ibrahim, Musa and Isa. It is the truth taught by all the revealed books including the *Tawrāt* and *Injīl* until they were tempered with. If any one wants a religion other than that which Allāh (s.w.t.) has willed and planned for him, than he is false to his own *fīṭrah* (nature) as he is false to Allāh's Will and Plan. Such a person cannot

find true guidance for he has deliberately rejected Allāh's guidance:

"This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you, Islam as your religion"

al-Mā'idah, (5):3

"The Religion before Allāh is Islām (submission to His Will)"

Āli-'Imrān, (3):19

"If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allāh) never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost."

Āli-'Imrān, (3):85

3. All previous prophets are Muslim and are equally respected by Muslims.

"Say you: We believe in Allāh, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) Prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another of them. And we submit to Allāh."

al-Baqarah, (2):136

4. 'Isā (Jesus) a.s. is only a messenger of Allāh (s.w.t.) and not His son:

"Christ the son of Mary was no more than a Messenger; Many Messengers that passed away before him. His mother was a woman of truth. They had both to eat their (daily) food."

al-Mā'idah (5):75

5. Muslims are the best "Ummah" ever evolved by Allāh s.w.t:

"You are the best of people evolved for mankind. Enjoining what is right forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allāh."

Āli-'Imrān, (3):110

6. All Muslims are brothers in faith:

"The believers are but a single brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allāh, that you may receive mercy."

al-Hujurat, (49):10

7. The purpose of life is to serve Allāh (s.w.t.):

"Say: Truly, my prayers and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death are (all) for Allāh the Cherisher of worlds,"

al-An'ām, (6):162

8. Allāh forgives all sins except *shirk* (associating partners with Allāh):

"Allāh forgives not that partners should be set up with Him but He forgives anything else; to whom He pleases; to set up partners with Allāh is to devise a sin most heinous indeed."

al-Nisā'; (4):48

9. All living things will die:

"Every soul shall have a taste of death, and We test you by evil and by good by way of trial. To us must you return."

al-Anbiyā'; (21):35

10. There is life after death:

"And verily the hour will come: There can be no doubt about it or about (the fact) that Allāh will raise up all who are in the graves."

al-Ja'ji, (22):7

"From the (earth) did we create you, and into it shall we return you, and from it shall We bring you out once again."

Tāhā, (20):55

11. Our deeds in this world will be judged in the hereafter.

"Then those whose balance (of good deeds) is heavy they will attain salvation. But those whose balance is light will be those who have lost their souls; in hell will they abide."

al-Ma'mi'n, (23):102-103

12. Believers who are righteous will enter *jannah* (paradise)

"If any do deeds of righteousness – be they male or female – and have faith, they will enter Heaven, and not the least injustice will be done to them."

al-Nisā', (4):124

13. Unbelievers will enter hell:

"But those who reject Allāh and deny Our Signs, they are the companions of the fires of hell."

al-Hadid, (57):19

Allāh's Commands

Allāh's commands and prohibitions are meant to help mankind stay on the right path. The commands are practical and easy to follow. Examples of Qur'ānic verses which contain Allāh's commands are:

"O you who believe! Obey Allāh and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority, and if you have a dispute concerning any matter refer it to Allāh and the messenger."

al-Nisā', (4):59

"Establish worship, pay the poor-due, and bow our heads with those who bow (in worship)"

al-Baqarah, (2):43

"And enjoin upon thy people worship, and be constant therein"

Tāhā, (20):132

"O you who believe! Fear Allāh as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islam."

Āli-'Imrān, (3):102

"O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you that you may (learn) self restraint."

al-Baqarah, (2):18

"And proclaim the Pilgrimage (al-Hajj) among men...."

al-Hajj, (22):27

"...and read the Qur'ān in slow, measured rhythmic tones."

al-Muzammil, (73)

"O you who believe! Fulfill (all) obligations...."

al-Mā'idah, (5):1

"O you who believe! Persevere in patience, and constancy...."

Āli-'Imrān, (3):200

"Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord and for a Garden whose width is that (of the whole) of the heaven, and the earth, prepared for the righteous."

Āli-'Imrān, (3):133

"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allāh, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin...."

al-Nisā', (4):135

"Marry women of your choice, two, or three, or four, but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them) then (marry) only one."

al-Nisā', (4):3

Allāh's Prohibitions

Prohibitions are things actions that have to be avoided at all costs, as they will weaken and corrupt a Muslim. In some cases it will make him fall from grace. Examples of Qur'ānic *ayats* which contain Allāh's prohibition are:

"Join not in worship (others) with Allāh, for false worship is indeed the highest wrong doing."

Luqmān, (31):13

"O you who believe! Follow not the footsteps of Satan."

al-Nūr, (24):21

"And come not near unto adultery. Lo! It is an abomination, an evil way."

al-Isrā', (17):32

"Slay not your children fearing a fall to poverty. We shall provide for them and for you."

al-Isrā', (17):31

"Nor take life - which Allāh has made sacred - except for a just cause."

al-Isrā', (17):33

"Come not near the orphan's property except to improve it."

al-Isrā', (17):34

"Nor walk on the earth with insolence...."

al-Isrā', (17):37

"Make not thy hands tied (like a niggard's) to thy neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach, so that thou become blameworthy and destitute."

al-Isrā', (17):29

"O you who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible), for suspicion in some cases is a sin."

al-Hujurat, (49):12

"O you who believe! Devour not usury doubled and multiplied...."

Ali-Imrān, (3):130

"O you who believe! Let not your riches or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allāh."

al-Manāfiqūn, (63):9

"He has only forbidden you dead meat, and blood and the flesh of swine and that on which any other name has been invoked besides that of Allāh."

al-Baqarah, (2):173

Information

We define information as answers to questions of "what," "who," "when," "why," "where" and "how."

Information is included in religious talks, speeches, lectures and *khutbah* (sermon). Among the information delivered by a *da'ī* in the process of *da'wah* is information about:

1. Allāh (s.w.t.)
2. Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.)
3. Qur'ān
4. Angels
5. Mankind (*insān*)
6. Allāh's rewards
7. Allāh's punishment
8. Divine law

Allāh (s.w.t.)

Every *da'ī* will make it a point to inform individuals and groups about the divine nature and attributes of Allāh (s.w.t.). It is important that everyone knows what he is submitting to. That Allāh (s.w.t.) is one, is the transcendent Creator, the ultimate Master, Lord, Judge and Forgiver must be made known to everyone. This information is given together with relevant Qur'ānic ayats (verses):

Some examples are as follows:

"And your God is one God: there is no god but He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful."

al-Baqarah, (2):163

"Allāh! There is no god but He - the living, the Self-Subsisting, Eternal."

Ali-Imrān, (3):2

"No vision can grasp Him. But His grasp is over all vision: He is above all comprehension, yet is acquainted with all things."

al-An'ām, (6):103

"To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth; how can He have a son when He has no consort? He creates all things, and He has full knowledge of all things."

al-An'ām, (6):101

Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.)

Every *dā'ir* derives his information about Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) from the Qur'ān and the *ṣirāḥ* Rasūl Allāh (s.a.w.) (life of the Messenger of God) written by Ibn Ishāq (d. 767) or Ibn Hishām (d. 827).

Some of Qur'ān verses containing information about Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) are:

"Muhammad is no more than a Messenger; many were Messengers that passed away before him."

Āli-'Imrān, (3):144

"You have indeed in the Messenger of Allāh a beautiful pattern (of conduct), for anyone whose hope is in Allāh and the Final Day and who engages much in the praise of Allāh."

al-Aḥzāb, (33):21

The *Ṣirāḥ Rasūl Allāh* of Ibn Hishām provides more detail information about Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). It covers his birth, his life before Prophethood, his life after receiving Prophethood which is divided into the Makkah period, the Madīnah period, his conquest of Makkah, his Farewell Pilgrimage and his death.

The Qur'ān

The Qur'ān is also known by other names such *al-Kināz* (2:2), *al-Furqān* (25:1), *al-Dhikr* (15:9), and *al-Tanzīl* (26:192). It contains 6236 verses, 4726 verses were revealed in Makkah and the remainder in Madīnah. Besides these information a *dā'ir* also convey information about the revealed – nature of the Qur'ān its finality, its uncorruptedness, its function as a book of guidance. Among the Qur'ānic verses which contain these types of information are:

"(It is) a Qur'ān in Arabic, without any crookedness (there in) in order that they may guard against evil."

al-Zumar, (39):28

"We have without doubt sent down the message and we will assuredly guard it from corruption."

al-Ḥijr, (15):9

Angels

The Qur'ān refers to the angels (*al-malā'ikah*) fifteen times and belief in their existence is one of the six pillars of faith (*imān*). Angels were created from light. They were informed by Allāh (s.w.t.) of His plan to create Adam (a.s.)

"Behold! Thy Lord said to the angels: I am about to create man from sounding clay, from mud moulded into shape."

al-Hijr, (15):28

The exact number of angels that are in existence is only known to Allāh (s.w.t.). Angels immerse themselves completely to praising Allāh (s.w.t.) and submitting to His will and commands.

"So the angels prostrated themselves All of them together (to Adam) Not so Iblīs."

al-Hijr, (15):30-31

They perform specific tasks and functions. Angel Jibrā'il (Gabriel) brings Allāh's revelation; angel Izrā'il takes the soul of humankind at the time of death; angel Israfil sounds the trumpet to signal the end of the world, and Angel Mālik guards the gate of Hell.

There are also two recording angels who record our deeds. The angel on our right records our good deeds and the angel on our left records our bad deeds.

Mankind (*Insān*)

The Qur'ān gives us a number of information about mankind, among which are mankind was created from clay; he was entrusted with the responsibility of being a vicegerent (*Khalīfah*) on earth; he was created in the best of mould which enabled him to carry out this divine will; and he is to serve Allāh (s.w.t.) some of the Qur'ānic verses which contain this information are:

"We created man from sounding clay, from mud moulded into shape."

al-Ḥijr, (15):26

"He it is that has made you vicegerents in the earth; if, then any do reject (Allāh) their rejection (works) against themselves...."

Īlījir, (35):39

"We have indeed created man in the best of moulds."

al-Ḥūm, (95):4

"I have only created jins and men so that they may serve Me."

al-Dhāriyāt, (51):56

Allāh's Rewards

Allāh promises great reward in the hereafter to those who lead a life of submission. The magnanimity of this reward is beyond one's comprehension. The Qur'ānic verses which mention this reward are:

"And those who keep their duty to their Lord are lead unto the Garden in troops, until, when they reach it, and the gates thereof are opened, and the wardens thereof say unto them: Peace be unto you! Ye are good, so enter ye (the Garden of delight), to dwell therein."

al-Zumar, (39):73

"The righteous (will be) amid gardens and fountains (of clear flowing water) (Their greeting will be) Enter you here in peace and security."

al-Ḥijr, (15):45-46

"Those who eschew evil and fall not into its worship and turn to Allāh (in repentance) for them is good news...."

al-Zumar, (39):17

"He will forgive you your sins and bring you into Gardens underneath which rivers flow, and pleasant dwellings in Gardens of Eden. That is the supreme triumph."

al-Saff, (61):12

Allāh's Punishments

Allāh's punishments are reserved for those who reject or disbelieve in Allāh (s.w.t.) and those who go against Allāh's laws and prohibitions. Examples of Qur'ānic *āyats* which contain this information are:

"And as for those who are unjust, they are firewood for hell."
al-Jinn, (72):15

"Lo! Those who disbelieve, among the People of the Scripture and the idolaters, will abide in the fires of hell to dwell therein (for ever). They are the worst of created beings."

al-Bayyinah, (98):6

"But those who deny (their Lord) for them will be cut out a garment of fire; over their heads will be poured boiling water. With it will be scalded what is within their bodies as well as (their) skins."

al-Hajj, (22):19-20

The Shari'ah (Divine Laws)

The word *shari'ah* comes from the root *sh-r* which means "road." Thus *shari'ah* is the road that Muslims must follow in this earthly life in order to be saved in the next life.

Shari'ah is all embracing. It includes *'ibadat* (what pertains to worship) and *mu'amalat* (what pertains to transactions).

The Shari'ah divides all acts into five categories: acts that are obligatory (*Wājib*); acts that are recommended (*mandūb*); acts of which the shari'ah is indifferent (*mubāh*) acts that are reprehensible (*makrūh*); and acts that are forbidden (*ḥarām*).

The foundation of the shari'ah is found in the Qur'an, Hadith, *Ijmā'* (consensus of *'ulamā'*) and *Qiyās* (analogy).

There are four major schools of shari'ah (*al-madhāhib*). They are Māliki, Shāfi'i, Hanafī and Hanbalī. In addition to these, there is the *Shi'i* school of law called *Ja'fari*, named after Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq.

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QUALITIES OF A CREDIBLE *DĀ'Ī*

Mohd Yusof Hussain

A *dā'ī* (one who invites to Islam) has to possess credibility. By credibility we mean possessing personal qualities that make a person believable. Credibility is disciplined or subject-based. A heart surgeon has high credibility when he speaks on the subject of heart diseases but he may have low credibility on the subject of international diplomacy. A British politician has high credibility on the subject of parliamentary democracy but he may have low credibility on the subject of Islamic law. This chapter discusses the credibility of a *dā'ī* when he speaks on the subject of Islam.

Source Credibility

Source credibility are qualities possessed by a source that make his speech believable. The source is perceived as qualified to speak on the subject. A person's credibility can range from high to low. A person of low credibility scores low on credibility and has little chance of success.

Source credibility is a multi-dimensional concept. A review of literature on Islamic *da'wah* reveals that there are at least five dimensions of source credibility. They are as follows:

1. *Īmān* (faith)
2. Religious knowledge
3. '*Amal* (Deeds)
4. *Akhlāq* (character)
5. Communication Skills

Īmān (Faith)

A *dā'ī* must have unshakeable faith in Allah's existence and oneness. Only then will he be able to invite others to the *dīn* (religion) of Allāh (s.w.t.) with full conviction.

Īmān is best described in a *ḥadīth* of Rasūlullāh s.a.w. narrated by Bukhārī:

"*Īmān* is that you believe in Allāh, His angels, His books, His prophets, the hereafter and *qada'* and *qadar*."

Īmān (faith) in Allāh (s.w.t.) means belief in His unity and oneness and that He is the creator, sustainer, judge and ruler of the day of judgment.

The Qur'ān describes a *mu'min* as one who has unshakable *Īmān* (faith) in Allāh (s.w.t.):

"For believers are those who when Allāh is mentioned feel a tremor in their hearts and when they hear His signs rehearsed find their faith strengthened, and put (all) their trust in their Lord."

al-Anfal, (8):2

A person with strong *Īmān* is judged not by what he says but by his actions and right conduct. Allāh (s.w.t.) says in the Qur'ān:

"The believers must (eventually) win through – Those who humble themselves in their prayers; Who avoid vain talk; Who are active in deeds of charity; Who abstain from sex; except with those joined together in marital bond or (the captives) whom their right hand possesses for (in their case) they are free from blame, but those whose desires exceed those limits are transgressors-those who faithfully observe their trusts and covenant and who (strictly) guard their prayers...."

al-Mu'minūn, (23):1-9

Rasūlullāh (s.a.w.) also says in his *Ḥadīth* narrated by Bukhārī:

"No one truly believes until he desires for others what he desires for himself."

"Anyone who believes in Allāh and last day has to speak the truth or keep silent; anyone who believes in Allāh and the last day has to respect his neighbours, and anyone who believes in Allāh and the last day has to honour his guests."

Knowledge

A *dā'ī* inviting people to Islam must have a good amount of Islamic religious knowledge which is based on the Qur'ān and *sunnah*. Otherwise, he will not be able to reach and influence a wide range of diverse audience.

Men of knowledge hold special position in Islam. Allāh (s.w.t.) says in the Qur'ān:

"...are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?"

al-Dhūmar, (39):9

"... Allāh will raise up to (suitable) ranks (and degrees) those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge..."

al-Mujādilah, (58):11

Rasūlullāh (s.a.w.) was also reported to have said in a *ḥadīth* narrated by Bukhārī:

"The parable of '*ulama'*' in this world is like the stars in the sky on a dark night. They act as guides to mankind (traveling) on land and sea."

A *dā'ī* is also expected to continually increase his knowledge and continually make the following *dā'ā'* (supplication) mentioned in the Qur'ān:

"O my Lord! Advance me in knowledge."

Tāhā, (20):114

Akhlaq (Character)

A *dā'ī* should have the finest of character (*akhlaq*). He is a role model in his community. For *dū'at* (plural of *dā'ī*), their role model is Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w.) Regarding the Prophet's (s.a.w.) *akhlaq* Allāh (s.w.t.) says in the Qur'ān:

"You have indeed in the messenger of Allāh a beautiful pattern (of conduct)..."

al-Ahzāb, (33):21

"And thou (stands) on an exalted standard of character."

al-Qalam, (68): 4

In a *ḥadīth* the prophet (s.a.w.) said:

"The best amongst you are those who have the best manner and character."

Bukhārī

Akhlaq is a multidimensional concept. When *Aisha* (r.a.) was asked about the prophet's (s.a.w.) *akhlaq* she replied that "the prophet's (s.a.w.) *akhlaq* is the Qur'ān." This means that the prophet (s.a.w.) acted and behaved according to what the Qur'ān teaches.

A *dā'ī* should cultivate three of these character traits mentioned in the Qur'ān. They are *tawādu'* (humility), *siddiq* (truthfulness) and *ṣabr* (patience). Allāh (s.w.t.) says in the Qur'ān about these traits:

Tawādu' (Humility)

"And the servants of Allāh Most Gracious are those who walk on earth in humility...."

al-Furqān, (25):63

Siddiq (Truthfulness)

"O you who believe! Fear Allāh and be with those who are true (in words and deeds)"

al-Tawbah, (9):119

"Say: O my Lord! Let my entry be by the gate of truth and honour, and likewise my exit be by the gate of truth and honour and grant me from thy presence an authority to aid (me)."

al-Isrā', (17):80

Ṣabr (Patience)

"Therefore, be patient with what they say, and celebrate (constantly) the praises of thy Lord..."

Tāhā, (20):130

"O you who believe! Seek help with patient perseverance and prayer; for Allāh is with those who patiently persevere."

al-Baqarah, (2): 153

'Amal (Deeds)

A *dā'ī* is consistent in doing '*amal*', i.e. actions, deeds and services done in obedience to Allāh's commands. There are three categories of '*amal*' – '*amal 'ibādah*' (e.g. *ṣalāt*, *ṣīkr*, and reading the Qur'ān), '*amal ṣoleh*' (good and righteous deeds) and '*amal jāriyah*' (eg. Giving donations to worthy causes such as building mosque, schools, etc.). All these three categories of '*amal*' are mentioned in the Qur'ān or *Ḥadīth*:

'Amal 'ibādah

"I have only created Jinns and mankind that they may serve me."

al-Dhāriyāt, (51):56

'Amal Ṣoleh

"Who is better in speech than one who calls men) to Allāh, works righteousness and says: I am of those who bow in Islam."

Faṣṣilat, (41):33

'Amal Jariyah

"When the son of Adam died his '*amal*' (to Allāh) comes to an end except three (things) – his *ṣadaqah jāriyah*, the beneficial knowledge (that he teaches or shares with others) and a pious son or daughter who offers *dū'āt* (supplication) for him.

Communication Skills

A *dā'ī* must be able to speak well. He must be able to deliver his message and express his ideas and opinions clearly, fluently and convincingly. He possesses both verbal and non-verbal skills.

The importance of communication skills have been realized by *dū'āt* since time immemorial. In the Qur'ān it was mentioned that Prophet Mūsā (a.s.) requested Allāh's permission to bring along his brother Hārūn when Allāh (s.w.t.) commanded him to preach to

Fir'aun because Hārūn was more fluent in speech than him. Allāh (s.w.t.) says in the Qur'ān:

"Go thou to Pharaoh for he had indeed transgressed all bounds. Moses said: O my Lord! Expand me my breast, ease my task for me and remove the impediment from my speech so that they may understand what I say; and give me a minister from my family Hārūn, my brother."

Tāhā, (20):24-30

Improving Credibility

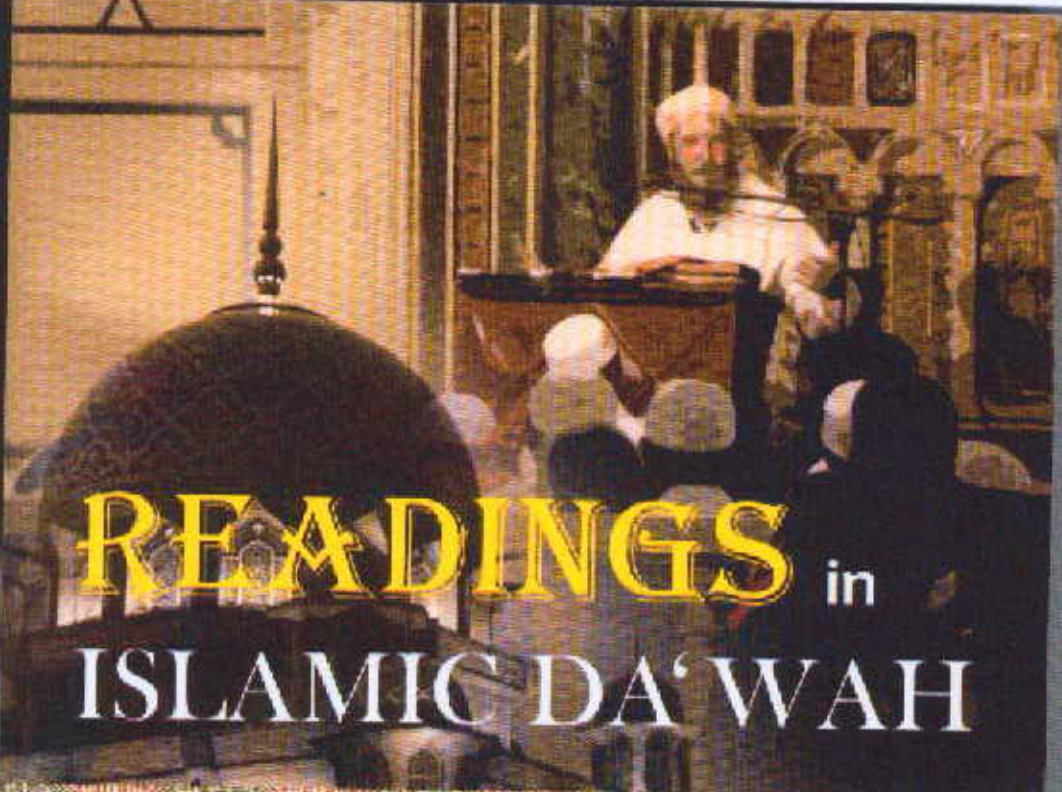
A person's credibility can fluctuate. It can increase and it can also decrease. The danger for *da'at* is if their credibility decreases.

A *da'i* committed to Islamic *da'wah* must make sure that his credibility as a *da'i* do not decrease. He therefore has to take very good care of his *īmān*, *'amal*, *akhlāq*, religious knowledge and communication skills.

Especially important is his religious knowledge and *akhlāq*. He has to keep on studying the various branches of Islamic knowledge - Qur'ān, *sunnah*, *Fiqh*, *Uṣūl-Fiqh* and *Tasawwuf*. He has to be mindful of his *akhlāq* and choice of friends.

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READINGS in ISLAMIC DA'WAH



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THE MEANING, PROCESS AND PURPOSE OF ISLAMIC DA'WAH

Mohd Yusof Hussain

The word *da'wah* is derived from the root-word *da'ā*, which means "call" or "invitation." The word is used to refer to the call made by Allāh (s.w.t.) to mankind through His prophets, call made by man to Allāh (s.w.t.) in his *manājat* (supplication), and call made by man to his fellow-men to come wholeheartedly to the *din* of Islām.

These meanings are enounced in the following Qur'ānic verses:

Allāh's (s.w.t.) call to Man,

"O you who believe! Give your response to Allāh and His messenger, when He calls you to that which will give you life;

al-Anjāl, (8):24

Man's call to Allāh (s.w.t.)

"When my servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them); I listen to the prayer of every supplicant when he calls on Me; ..."

al-Baqarah, (2):186

Man's Call to Man,

"Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: they are the ones to attain felicity."

Āli- 'Imrān, (3):104

This chapter will focus on *da'wah* of "man to fellow-men" to accept and practice Islām. We will try to explain three main concepts - the meaning of *da'wah*, the process of *da'wah* and the purpose of *da'wah*.

Meaning of *Da'wah*

'Abd al-Karīm Zaydān in his book *Uṣūl al-Da'wah*, defined *da'wah* as follows:

Da'wah means the call to Allāh (s.w.t.) as Allāh (s.w.t.) says: says (O Muhammad): This is my way. I call on Allāh with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follow me." What is meant by call to Allāh is the call to His religion, and that is Islām. Indeed the religion of Allāh is Islām which Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) brought from his Lord. And Islām is the object of *da'wah*...."

It should be noted from the definition that Islām is the religion of all prophets of Allāh, including Ibrāhīm, Mūsā and 'Isā, peace and blessings of Allāh be on them. Thus, the call of all prophets of Allāh is to Islām. The *da'wah* of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) was the last *da'wah* performed by a prophet of Allāh. All *da'wah* done after the death of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) in 632 has been carried out by Muslims themselves. A Muslim who does the "work" of *da'wah* is called a *dā'ī*.

Besides *da'wah*, there are other terms that are used by Muslims to mean call or invitation. One of the often-used terms is *tabligh* which comes from the root-word b.l.g.h. From this root the word *muballigh* is also derived which refers to a person who calls or invites others to Islām. This word appears several times in the Qur'ān:

"...and the duty of the messenger is only to preach publicly (and clearly)."

al-'Ankabūt, (29):18

The majority of Muslim scholars ('*ulamā'*) consider doing *da'wah* or *tabligh* as the *shar'ī* responsibility and *farḍ kifāyah* of Muslims. This means that if *da'wah* is performed by a few competent Muslims, it exonerates others from doing it. This view is based on a Qur'ānic verse and *Ḥadīth* of Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h. as follows:

Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong: they are the ones to attain felicity.

Ālī- 'Imrān, (3):104

There are also scholars who hold the view that every Muslim in a small way should be involved in *da'wah*. This view is supported by the following *ahādīth*:

"Convey (my teaching) to the people even if it is one *ayat* (verse), and whoever devises a lie against me intentionally has reserved for himself a place in hell."

(*Bukhārī*)

"He who amongst you sees something abominable should modify it with his hand, and if he has not strength enough to do that, then he should do it with this tongue, and if he has not strength to do even that, then he should abhor it from his heart and that is the least of faith."

(*Muslim*)

Dā'ī or Muslims who do *da'wah* are promised great rewards in the hereafter for their efforts:

"... One who guides to something good has a reward similar to that of the person who does it"

(*Muslim*)

"Whoever invites to guidance will receive a reward equivalent to the reward of the person who accepts his invitation without any decrease and whosoever invites others to *kufṛ* will receive a punishment equivalent to the punishment receives by the person who follows his advice without any decrease."

(*Muslim*)

The Process of Islāmic *Da'wah*

The process of Islāmic *da'wah* is always an on-going process. It begins when the *dā'ī* encodes a message or information in his mind and sends it directly or through a media to an individual or group who upon receiving the message or information decodes it.

The individual or member of the group may decide to give feedbacks in the form of a question or comment to the *dā'ī*. If this is the case he will encode a question or comment and send it directly or through a media to the *dā'ī* who will decode the question or comment and then deliver his response. This process is repeated again in

subsequent encounters. The process in most *da'wah* encounters is two-way rather than one-way.

Elements of Islāmic *Da'wah*

The elements in a *da'wah* process are the same as the elements in a communication process. They are:

- a. Source
- b. Message
- c. Channel
- d. Receiver or audience

Source

Source is the person or persons who encode and convey the message or information to another person or persons. A source is normally a person who is knowledgeable about Islām and possesses the necessary communication skills and is perceived as credible by others. He may represent only himself or a *da'wah* organization or institution. He has a clear purpose that is to make a call which is good, to enjoin what is right, and to forbid what is wrong.

Message

Message is the truth that is delivered by the source. The main message of Islāmic *da'wah* is the message of *tawhīd* or oneness of God as mentioned in a number of Qur'anic verses (ayat), which includes the following:

"...They do blaspheme who say Allāh is one of three in a trinity for... there is no God except one God..."

al-Mā'idah, (5):73

"Verily, I am God, there is no God but I, so serve Thou Me (only)..."

Zaka, (20):14

"This is the true account. There is no God except God; and God - He is indeed the exalted in power, the wise."

Āli-Imrān, (3):62

"God is He than whom there is no other god - The sovereign, the Holy one, the Source of Peace (and perfection), the

Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the supreme. Glory to Allāh (High is he) above the partners they attribute to Him."

al-Hashr, (59):23

Other messages of Islāmic *da'wah* include:

1. Islām is the only religion recognized by Allāh (s.w.t.) as mentioned in the verses:

"The Religion before God is Islām (submission of His will)..."

Āli-Imrān, (3):19

"This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islām as your religion..."

al-Mā'idah, 5:3

2. Muḥammad (s.a.w.) is the last messenger of Allāh (s.w.t.) as mentioned in the *ayat*:

"Muḥammad is not the father of any of you man, but (he is) the apostle of God, and the seal of the Prophets, and God has full knowledge of all things."

al-Aḥzāb, (33):40

3. The Qur'ān is the final revelation and is revealed to Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w.) as mentioned in these verses:

"The Qur'ān has been revealed to me by inspiration. That I may warn you and all whom it reaches."

al-An'ām, (6):19

"This Qur'ān is not so much as can be produced by other than God. On the contrary, it is a confirmation of (revelations) that went before it, and a fuller explanation of the book... wherein there is no doubt - from the Lord of the worlds."

Yūnus, (10):37

"Say: if the whole of mankind and *jinn*s were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'ān, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support."

al-Isrā', (17):88

Other messages conveyed include there is life after death, Muslims who are righteous will enter *jannah* (paradise) and non-believers will enter *jahanam* (hell).

Channel

A channel is a medium or vehicle used by a source to deliver his message or information to his target groups. With the aid of a channel, a source can convey his message to a far and larger audience.

There are two types of channels used in Islamic Da'wah:

1. Oral channel
2. Mass Media

Oral channel is the oldest channel used in human communication. It is one-to-one communication (dyadic communication) or one-to-two communication (triadic communication). All the participants communicate face-to-face, communicating not only their thoughts but also feelings and emotions. One advantage of interpersonal channel is that it allows for instant feedback by the participants. All the *ḥadīth* of Rasūlullāh (s.a.w.) that we inherit were communicated through interpersonal means by the holy Prophet.

Oral channel is also when a source communicate directly to a small group or large group of audience. Examples of communication that use the oral channel are religious lectures and Friday *khutbah* (sermon).

Mass media are used by a source to reach audiences which are usually scattered and disperse. Examples are written or print media channel and electronic media channel, which can reach large audience. Until recently, mediated channels do not allow instant feedback. One of the first media used in Islāmic da'wah are letters. Rasūlullāh (s.a.w.) wrote letters to rulers of Egypt, Rome, Persia and Ethiopia inviting them to embrace Islām.

Electronic media is a recent development. It is used in Islāmic da'wah after the introduction of the electronic media in Muslim countries, first the radio in the 1940s, then the television in the 1960s, then the audio-cassette in the 1970s and then the compact discs and the internet in the 1990s.

Receiver (Audience)

Receivers (*mad'u*) are the target group or audience of Islamic da'wah. As Islām is the religion of all humanity, the target group of Islamic da'wah is all humanity. This is mentioned in the Qur'ān in a number of *āyats* which are addressed to all humanity. Some examples are:

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (Not that you may despise each other), Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allāh is (he who is) the most righteous of you. Allāh has full knowledge and acquainted (with all things)."

al-Hujarāt, (49):13

"O you Children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you, in the same manner as he got your parents out of the Garden, stripping them of their raiment, to expose their shame: for he and his tribe see you from a position where you cannot see them: We made Satans friends (only) to those without faith."

al-'Arāf, (7):27

Mankind as the target group of Islamic da'wah is further categorized into the following groups according to the given verses:

a. Believers

"O you who believed! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible) for suspicion in some cases is a sin! And spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, you would abhor it...But fear Allāh! For Allāh is oft Returning Most Merciful."

al-Hujarāt, (49):12

b. *Ahl al-Kitaab*

"Say: O people of the Book! Come to common terms between us and you: that we worship none but Allāh; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allāh..."

Āli-Imrān, (3):64

c. *Unbelievers*

"Say to those who reject faith! Soon will you be vanquished and gathered together to hell an evil bed indeed (to lie in)."

Āli-Imrān, (3): 12

Believers as a group are further categorized into:

a. *Men and Women*

"For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage in Allāh's remembrance, for them has Allāh prepared forgiveness and great reward."

al-Ahzāb, (33):35

b. *Leaders*

"Go both of you to Pharaoh, for he has indeed transgressed all bounds; but speak to him mildly; per chance he may take warning or fear (Allāh)."

Tāhā, (20):43-44

c. *Parents*

Lo! Abraham said to his father Azar: Take thou idols for gods? For I see thee and thy people in manifest error."

al-An'ām, (6):74

d. *Wives*

"O Consorts of the Prophet! You are not like any of the (other) women: If you do fear (Allāh), be not too complainant of

speech, lest one in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire; but speak you a speech (that is) just."

al-Ahzāb, (33):32

e. *Sons and Daughters*

"Behold, Luqman said to his son admonishing him, O my son join not in worship (others) with Allāh; for false worship is indeed, the highest wrong doing."

Luqman, (31):13

f. *Youth*

"We relate to thee their story in truth: they were youth who believed in their Lord, and we increased them in guidance. We gave strength to their hearts: Behold, they stood up, and said: Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and of the earth, never shall we call upon any god other than Him; if we did we should indeed have uttered an enormity."

al-Kahf, (18):13-14

g. *Prisoners*

"O my two companions of prison! (I ask you) are many Lords differing among themselves better or Allāh the one, Supreme and Irresistible."

"Whatever you worship apart from Him is nothing but names which you have named, you and your fathers, for which Allāh has send down no authority; the command is for none but Allāh; He has commanded that you worship none but Him; that is the right religion, but most men understand not."

Yūsuf, (12): 39-40

Purpose of Islamic Da'wah

The main purpose of Islamic da'wah is to invite mankind to accept Islām the religion of *tawhīd*, the oneness or unity of God as creator and sustainer of the universe with full conviction and shed *shirk*, i.e., any thought that God has partners and helpers.

In addition to this fundamental purpose, the other purposes of Islamic da'wah are:

1. To invite mankind to Islām and to all that is good. Goodness means actions and deeds that will get mankind the best of the present and the next world.

2. To enjoin *ma'ruf* or what is right according to Allāh (s.w.t.) which include holding high moral standards and leading a life of service to Allāh (s.w.t.) and to mankind.
3. To forbid *munkar* or what is wrong which include rejecting *tāghūt* and abstaining from doing what Allāh (s.w.t.) forbids.
4. To inform mankind about the teachings of Islām, eg. Regarding '*aqidah*, (Islamic creed), *shari'ah* (laws) and *akhlāq*.
5. To teach skills of performing '*ibādat* like *ṣalāt*, *du'ā'* and *zikr*.
6. To remind the forgetful about their responsibilities in the present life.
7. To convey the good tidings (*bushrā*) of forgiveness and reward from Allāh (s.w.t.) to those who accept Islām as *dīn* and live their lives according to Allāh's laws and commandments.
8. To warn (*inḍhar*) about the painful consequences of not accepting Islām, of following *tāghūt* and of doing what Allāh (s.w.t.) forbids.

Every *dā'ī* has to keep in mind all these purposes when he is doing *da'wah* to Muslims and non-Muslims. He should also aim for different purpose at different stages of Islāmic *da'wah*. For example, when he is doing *da'wah* to non-Muslims, his initial purpose is to tell and convince them that there is Allāh the creator and sustainer, that life in this world is temporary and that all of us will meet Allāh in the Hereafter. After they have become Muslim the purpose changes to educating and increasing their knowledge and practice of Islām. Many years later after they have possessed a good knowledge of Islām the *dā'ī*'s purpose should shift to motivating the new Muslims to translate their knowledge of Islām into their personal, family, social, economic and political lives.

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AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S POLITICAL THOUGHT: ITS NATURE AND CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

Muddathir 'Abd al-Rahīm

1. *The Historical Setting: Challenges and Stimulants*

Universally recognized as theologian, philosopher, master-sufi and jurist, the celebrated *Mujīd al-Islām* (Proof of Islam), Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ahmad al-Tūsī, Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī,¹ was also an outstanding and highly original political thinker.

A prolific writer, al-Ghazālī's political ideas especially as expressed in *al-Iqtisād fī l-'Ilqāq, Mīzān al-'Imāl, Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk, Fada'ih al-Bāniyyah* (or *al-Mustazhiri*) and *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* are closely intertwined with his views on theology, philosophy, ethics, law and jurisprudence. A major expositor and interpreter of Islam in its many and all-encompassing facets, al-Ghazālī's ideas in fact constitute an integral whole none of which can be fully comprehended in isolation from the others.

Like many other major political thinkers in both the Western and the Islamic traditions—Plato, Hobbes, Marx, al-Mawardi, Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Khaldūn included—al-Ghazālī's interest in the theory and practice of politics was at least partly aroused and sustained by the fact that the political conditions in which he happened to live (born in 450 A.H./1058 A.D., died in 505 A.H./1111 A.D.) were far from perfect and the principal Islamic political institution, the caliphate, had for decades been in serious decline.²

¹ Al-Sabkī, Tajuddin, *Tabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya al-Kubrā*, 10 vols. (Cairo, Dar al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya, 1969) vol. 6, p.191. Al-Ghazālī's first mentioned nisbah, al-Tūsī, derives from his birthplace, a suburb of Tūs, near present day Meshed in Khurāsān, but he is, of course, much better known as al-Ghazālī (sometimes spelt al-Ghazālī with two 'z's or *shadāli*) preceded with the kunya, Abū Ḥamid. See, for example, Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma'āthir al-Jihā fī Ma'āthir al-Khiṣṣah*, ed., 'Abd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farraj (Kuwait: Wizārat al-Iṣlāḥ, 1964), reprinted

Under the Buwayhids (945-1055) in particular, it had become little more than a plaything in the hands of the dominant war-lords who, as Shi'ites moreover, could not and, of course, did not, recognize the legitimacy of the Sunni 'Abbasid caliphate even in theory.³

No less disconcerting for al-Ghazālī was the fact that corruption, long known to have been widespread among the administrative and business classes, had also engulfed many among the *ulamā'*. This was particularly depressing because as bearers of the *Sharī'ah* and Islamic ethics, the *ulamā'* were, individually and collectively, expected to be not only examples of propriety and personal integrity but also leaders and standard bearers in the struggle for social reform, which for all Muslims was and remains a basic religious duty if not an article of faith.⁴

In 1055 (i.e. three years before al-Ghazālī was born) the Seljuks, already in control of Khurāsān and Western Persia, finally destroyed the 110 year old Buwayhid hegemony over the enfeebled caliphate in Baghdad. Like the Buwayhids, the Seljuks were war-lords who, as such, continued to dominate the caliphate. Unlike their predecessors however, the Seljuks were Sunni Muslims and ardent defenders of the faith as articulated by al-Ash'ari and his followers; including al-Ghazālī's renowned teacher, Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwaini and subsequently, al-Ghazālī himself.

Under the leadership of such able men as Tughrul-Beg, Alp Arslan and especially the brilliant *wazīr*, statesman and administrator, Nizām al-Mulk, the Seljuks did not only bring an end to the chaotic and unstable situation which had prevailed for several years previously—establishing important reforms of enduring value but they also played crucial roles in the development of science and scholarship, especially through the establishment of a number of *madrasahs* (colleges of higher learning), generically known as

Mizāniyyahs, named after their great sponsor and benefactor, Nizām al-Mulk. The most renowned among these was the *Mizāniyyah* of Baghdad where both al-Juwaini and al-Ghazālī were professors.

Under these circumstances, caliphs naturally began to feel more confident as well as more comfortable than they had been for several decades. Many others, including al-Ghazālī, who deemed the caliphate both guardian and chief executive of the *Sharī'ah*—the fountain of legitimacy for the *ummah* constituting the singular lynchpin that held the entire body politic together—the welcome change that ensued from the rise of the Seljuks gave renewed hope. Although it was perhaps impossible, they wished to recapture or reinvent the vigor and the glory, for example, of the days of Harūn al-Rashid, so that much would be done to strengthen and reinvigorate the caliphate in order to revive both the *ummah* and the state. Needless to say however, the identification and structuring of those components necessary for required reform and formulation of these into a coherent and workable programme of action were tasks by no means easy to accomplish.

But there was another and more immediately pressing challenge: i.e. that of the Ismā'īlites or Seccener Shi'ites, also known as Bāṭinites and Assassins (a corruption of *nashashashin* or *hashish*). Because of the methods, for which they became famous, this group has been described as 'the most radical and dangerous type of revolutionary Shi'ite sect'.⁵ The Ismā'īlites, or Bāṭinite challenge to the 'Abbasid caliphate was in fact twofold: i.e. military-strategic, and political-ideological.

As a militant movement skillfully organized and ruthlessly led by Hasan ibn al-Sabbāh, the Ismā'īlites took the fortress of Alamūt in southern Persia in 1090. From that stronghold they continued to harass the caliphate and the Seljuks. Two years later (October 14th, 1092) they assassinated Nizām al-Mulk. The Bāṭinites thus dealt a

³ Beirut, 'Alam al-Kutub, 1980), vol. I, p. 217 ff.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 284–338.

⁵ For a thorough and thoughtful treatment of this subject in English, see Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁶ Bertold Spuler, *The Age of the Caliphs* (Princeton: Martinus Wiener Publishers, 1995), p. 67. For a comprehensive and sympathetic account of the Ismā'īlites from their inception to the present day, see Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs – Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

hard blow, not only to the Seljuks and the caliphate, but also to the whole community of Sunni Muslims, especially the many scholars and students throughout the realm whose patron and benefactor the great statesman had long been.

Politically and in terms of religious belief and doctrine, the Ismā'īlites, the Qarāmīyah (Carmathians), together with the followers of Bābak of Adharbājan and the Khurramīdins of Isfahan, had been vigorously denounced by Nizām al-Mulk as heretics and subversives. Clearly reflecting the views of the majority Sunni community, Nizām al-Mulk stated in his *Siyāsat-Nāmah* (Book of Government) that "the constant object of them all [was] to overthrow Islam,"⁶ the charge of heresy and its attendant corollary, subversion, were rooted in the fact that the Ismā'īlites believed that the Holy Qur'an has a hidden or esoteric (Arabic: *bāṭin* or *bāṭinī*) meaning distinct from its *ẓāhir* (i.e. plain or exoteric) meaning, hence the designation "Bāṭinīes" by which they came to be known. They also held that only their imām, whom they believed was an *infallible* charismatic leader, could know the truth and correctly understand the real or esoteric meaning of the Holy Book. Other mortals, Hasan Ibn al-Sabbāḥ insisted, could acquire such understanding only by means of *waḥm* (i.e. authoritative instruction) given by the imām,⁷ hence the designation "*Ta'limīyah*" by which Ismā'īlites also came to be known. This implied, *inter alia*, that the methods of *gīḥnād* (personal intellectual effort), *nazar* (reasoning) and *ra'y* (thinking) which were favored by the Sunni *ulama'* could not lead to the truth. This constituted "a direct attack on the scholar-jurists"⁸ as well as the basic principles of Islamic jurisprudence.

⁶ Nizām al-Mulk, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings* (*Siyar al-Mulūk* or *Siyāsat-Nāmah*), translated by Hubert Drake (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960) p. 238.

⁷ Al-Ghazālī, *Maḥāṭib al-Bāṭiniyyah*, ed. 'Abd al-Rahmān Badawī (Cairo: Wizrat al-Taḥqīq wa'l-Istīḥād, 1964), p. 11 ff. Also, W. Montgomery Watt, *Muslim Intellectuals - A Study of al-Ghazālī* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1963), p. 81; and Daftary, *op. cit.*

⁸ Watt, *op. cit.*

The decline of the caliphate and the spread of corruption even among the *ulama'*, together with the bitter and long drawn-out conflict with the Bāṭinīes and other schismatic groups, were not only powerful challenges to al-Ghazālī and his contemporaries as viewed in the context of the promising and more hopeful atmosphere that prevailed under the Seljuks, but also functioned as stimulants for serious thinking about politics and socio-political reform. It should be remembered in this connection that at least one of al-Ghazālī's political discourses, namely *Faḍāḥ al-Bāṭiniyyah* (The Scandals of the Bāṭinīes) was written not long after the assassination of Nizām al-Mulk and at the behest of the young Caliph al-Mustazhir.⁹ Appropriately dedicated to al-Mustazhir,¹⁰ the book has come to be known as *al-Mustazhirī*, after the said Caliph. Another one of al-Ghazālī's works, i.e. *Nasīḥat al-Mulūk* (*Counsel for Kings*),¹¹ was addressed to Sulṭān Muḥammad Ibn Malik Shāh. In addition, al-Ghazālī wrote a number of letters to various rulers and top administrators in the Seljuk Sultanate.¹² A review of this category of al-Ghazālī's writings clearly shows that he was a greatly esteemed personality whose opinions were eagerly sought and respectfully received by the high and mighty as well as others of his age and that he was an untiring campaigner for good governance. He was particularly anxious to see such values as justice, integrity, efficiency, clemency and transparency carefully and consistently observed and demonstrated in both the performance of public duties and in the personal conduct of rulers and administrators.

⁹ Abu Hāmid al-Ghazālī, *Maḥāṭib al-Bāṭiniyyah*, pp. 4-6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Tibār al-Masbūḥ fī Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1988). For English translation, see F.R.C. Bagley, *Book of Counsel for Kings* (Oxford, 1964). Hereafter cited as *Al-Tibār*.

¹² Cf. Abdul Qayyum, *Letters of al-Ghazālī* (above: Islamic Publications Ltd, 1976). This is a selective translation (from Farsi) of some twenty letters with a general introduction. An edited and annotated Arabic translation consisting of thirty two letters and six other pieces has been published; see Dr. Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī, ed. *Faḍāḥ al-Annām min Risāl 'il-Hajj al-Islām* (Tunis, 1972).

II *The Importance and Legitimacy of the State*

By contrast with, for example, the Najdite faction of the Kharijites in the Islamic tradition and the anarchists in the modern Western tradition—for both considered the state an undesirable and superfluous imposition—al-Ghazālī was firmly convinced that the state (a term which he virtually identifies with politics and statesmanship in general) is a vitally important and necessary institution for human society. Indeed, a precondition without which social existence would be impossible and civilized living unthinkable. In this respect al-Ghazālī's position is not unlike that of most political thinkers, Western or Muslim. But his reasoning, in many ways parallel to that of other thinkers in the two traditions, and yet in other ways, quite distinct.

The drastic and dire consequences of the absence or non-existence of sovereign and effective public authorities, al-Ghazālī points out, can be clearly seen and comprehended by observing what actually happens when offices of state fall vacant whether as a result of civil strife or the natural death of incumbents. "For should such conditions persist without another sovereign or dominant person taking effective control," al-Ghazālī continues, "chaos would set in; killing and death spread; famine prevail; livestock perish; industries cease to function; whatever achievements may have been previously made would then turn into utter loss and grief; none of those who manage to survive would be able to concentrate on either worship or the pursuit of knowledge; while most would simply perish in consequence of continued strife and civil conflict."¹³

It is worth noting the remarkable similarity between al-Ghazālī's portrayal of the subject under consideration and that given by Thomas Hobbes some five centuries later (1588-1679). Describing the condition of men in the absence of sovereign authority as one "where every man is enemy to every man," Hobbes further states:

"In such condition there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."¹⁴

The similarity between the two men's positions paralleled and echoed the troubled conditions, different in many respects, though they were, in which they happened to live. In fact, Hobbes explicitly states in the final paragraph of *Leviathan*, that the writing of his masterpiece was "occasioned by the disorders of the present time"—an obvious reference, *inter alia*, to the civil war in England and the far from peaceful conditions on the continent which were among the most important factors that shaped both his personality and his outlook.¹⁵ Although many details of his work were evidently inspired by observation and personal experience, his methodology is based on a number of hypotheses and assumptions about human nature that are largely modeled on the deductive method of geometry on one hand, and extrapolations from Galileo's theory of motion on the other. These constructs are basically and predominantly hypothetical and abstract in nature.¹⁶ In contrast, however, al-Ghazālī's analysis is rooted on a deep understanding and clear appreciation of historical events that actually happened during the period of strife preceding the coming of the Seljuks in the course of his own life time, as well as during earlier phases of Islamic history.

¹³ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (London, 1651), Chapter XIII.

¹⁴ Hobbes was born prematurely—reportedly on his mother's having heard of the imminent attack of the Spanish Armada in 1588. It is related that her subsequent comment on the occasion was that "Hobbes and fear were born twins." A remarkably prudent man who managed to survive the tumultuous events of his time and lived on until he was 91 years of age, Hobbes described himself as a diffident person—which he was evidently not.

¹⁵ Cf. C. B. Macpherson's introduction to the Penguin edition of Hobbes' *Leviathan* (London, 1985) p. 16 ff.

¹⁶ Al-Ghazālī, *al-Iqtisād fī 'l-ʿIṣṣād* (The Golden Mean in Belief) (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1983), p. 148. All translations provided in this paper are by the present writer.

He clearly and succinctly states that "observation of times of civil strife"¹⁷ (*mushāhadatu awqāt al-fitan*), stands as witness for the indispensability of established state authority for securing the safety of persons and property (*"al-amru 'alā al-amḥar wa'l amwāl la yantazimu illā bi sulṭān muṭī'ā"*).¹⁸

For al-Ghazālī, therefore, it is an uncontested fact—attested by observation—that the state (*al-sulṭān*) and its attendant function of politics (*al-siyāsah*: management of public affairs)¹⁹ are indispensable if only for preventing civil strife and maintaining law and order, thereby making it possible for society to thrive and civilization to flourish. Considering the various forms of activity in which men engage themselves in society, al-Ghazālī identifies three categories of industry or professions: *basic* (without which life cannot be sustained); *secondary* (which service the former); and *tertiary* or supplementary.²⁰ Of all these he says, the most "honorable" and important are the basic: (*"wa ashrāfu ḥadhithi al-sinā'ati usulūḥa"*), i.e. agriculture, building, clothing, and politics.²¹ Among these, the most "honorable" and therefore most important of all is politics: for life on earth is unsustainable without it (*"ashrafu usūli al-sinā'at al-ḥayāti 'alā la qawāma li'l 'ālamī illā biha."*)²² This is so he says, not

only on account of the prevention of civil strife via the maintenance of law and order and proper management of public affairs by state agents as already mentioned, but also because it is through the guidance and leadership that rulers and statesmen provide [or should provide] that society is held together and its interests served (*"bi'l-ta'īn wa'l istiṣlāḥ."*)²³ For al-Ghazālī therefore, political leadership is the most demanding profession of all because it requires a greater degree of competence and ability than that of any other profession: (*"yastadī' ḥadhithi al-sinā'ati min al-kamāl fi man yatakaḥḥatu bihā mā la yastadī'hi sā'iru al-sinā'at."*)

Clearly therefore, the state and politics for al-Ghazālī are of the utmost importance for human life on earth.

But al-Ghazālī was firmly convinced that politics and the state are, above all, indispensable for infinitely more important reasons besides these. The latter arise in connection with the fact, as he saw it, that human beings are everywhere and forever engaged in the pursuit of happiness: (*"... al-sa'ādatu ... mathūb al-awwān wa'l ākhīr."*)²⁴ Though they (especially Muslims) are expected and fully entitled to seek happiness and enjoy the good things of life—physical, intellectual, artistic and otherwise²⁵—human beings endowed with reason and intelligence as they are, cannot fail to realize, he says, that life on earth is fragile and transient and that true happiness and everlasting bliss can hopefully be attained only in the Hereafter.²⁶ By creating and maintaining the physical conditions in which individuals and society as a whole are encouraged and supported by the wise and appropriate guidance given by rulers, the *'ulama'* can pursue their various objectives ethically with due consideration for the social and spiritual precepts of the faith. The state provides the greatest service that it is capable of delivering: i.e. helping people, individually and collectively, to lead decent, enjoyable

¹⁷ Al-Ghazālī *Al-Iqṣā' fī'l Fiqah*, p. 148.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Al-Ghazālī also uses the term *siyāsah* with reference to the management and control of self, household, neighbourhood and township. In justification of this broad usage, he asks: "how can a person who is not capable of managing and controlling himself and his own desires be entrusted with the management and control of the affairs of others?" Cf. *Mizān*, pp. 231-232. It is however with the narrower or more specialized sense of the term that we are concerned here.

²⁰ Al-Ghazālī, *Ḥyā' 'Uḥm al-Dīn* (Istanbul: Dar Taml, 1985), vol. I, pp. 22-23 and *Mizān al-Ma'ad* ed. Dr. Sulayman Duway (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'arif, 1964), pp. 328-329. It should perhaps be pointed out in this connection that, for al-Ghazālī, scholarship or education (*al-ilm*) is, by far, the most honorable and fundamental of all pursuits: (*"al-ilm al-ḥay' al-ashrafu 'alā 'amal."*) But he does not include it among the professions or industries as indicated above. Cf. *Mizān*, p. 123 and *Ḥyā'*, vol. I, pp. 21-22. Elsewhere however, he says that it is, in certain respects, a profession; in others, a form of worship, and, in yet other respects, a vicegerency for God on earth. Cf. *Mizān*, p. 310.

²¹ *Ḥyā'*, vol. I, p. 22 and *Mizān*, loc. cit.

²² *Mizān*, p. 329, also *Ḥyā'*, loc. cit.

²³ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 22.

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 21.

²⁵ *Mizān*, p. 179.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 294-304 and *Ḥyā'* (Kitāb al-halāl wa'l haram), vol. II, book 5, p. 21; cf. *al-Baḥrīyya*, p. 205.

and responsible lives here on earth, thereby simultaneously seeking with the Grace of the Merciful and Compassionate Lord, eternal bliss and everlasting happiness in the Hereafter. For, as al-Ghazali repeatedly tells us, religious and worldly affairs are complementary and absolutely inseparable. Thus, partly paraphrasing a saying of the Prophet, al-Ghazali says that this world is like a farm that we till and cultivate with a view to harvest the fruits thereof in the Hereafter. Otherwise faith and the virtues with which it seeks to adorn the soul would remain barren and incomplete unless buttressed and facilitated by a good life here on earth: "*al-dunya mazra'atu al-akhirah, wa la yatinimu al-dinu illa bi'l-dunya*." It is for this reason that it has been said, he continues, that faith and the state are twins: "*al-dinu wa'l-sulṭan law amān*." Religion is the foundation of properly established societies while the state is the protector thereof, and that which is without this properly laid foundation is doomed to collapse, while at the same time that which is not well guarded is bound to dissipate and be lost: "*al-dinu 'ussam wa'l-sulṭanu ḥārīs, wa mā lā aṣla lahu fa mahdūm, wa mā lā ḥārisa lahu fa dā'i'a*."²⁷

For al-Ghazali therefore, the importance and legitimacy of the state and hence of politics, ultimately derives not merely from its rationally or pragmatically proven utility in saving humans from the perils of chaos and anarchy by maintaining law and order and thus making social existence possible etc, but from providing infinitely more valuable opportunities and guidance for individuals and society to lead spiritually and ethically, as well as physically good and wholesome lives. For in this way, people would not only have the possibility of enjoying full and meaningful lives during their sojourn on earth, but would hopefully and much more importantly, attain salvation and bliss everlasting in the Hereafter.

Consistent with this, al-Ghazali then goes on to say that the obligation incumbent on Muslims to institute or appoint an *imām* (or caliph, or ruler) is not, as the Mu'tazilites for example had argued, dictated by reason as distinct from faith, but is derived from the

Shari'ah: "*la yambaghī an tazamma amma wujūba [faṣḥ al-imān] ma ikhṭaḥim min al-'aql [b'al] imma al-wujūba yu'khalifu min al-Shar'a*."²⁸

Once the *Shari'ah* is thus clearly seen and unequivocally recognized as the fount of legitimacy and the basis on which Islamic government stands, however, there can be no objection to the rational consideration of the uses and advantages of instituting an *imām* or caliph: for the objectives of the *Shari'ah* (*maqāsid al-shari'ah*) do, of course, include on the one hand, the promotion of policies and actions that are beneficial to mankind, and on the other, the removal or eradication of others that are harmful or destructive.²⁹

In accordance with this approach, al-Ghazali then indicates his dissatisfaction with the manner in which some scholars have tended to argue for the establishment of caliphs on the basis of *ijmā'* (or consensus) without further comment or explanation. Instead he says that it is necessary to investigate and clearly state the rationale on the basis of which *ijmā'* itself stands. Al-Ghazali's enquiry in this regard leads him to argue: *first* that the establishment of the faith (or Islamic order: *niẓam al-Islam*) was certainly the prime concern or objective of the Prophet, and *secondly* that the realization of that objective would be inconceivable in the absence of an *imām* (or leader) whose orders and directives are obeyed and followed by one and all. In other words, he concludes, *niẓam al-dīn*, i.e., the Islamic order or system cannot be realized except through the establishment of a properly constituted and effective worldly system or order: "*inna niẓama al-dīni la yachisulu illā bi niẓami al-dunya*."³⁰

To this, al-Ghazali points out that some may object by saying that the reverse should be the case. In other words that faith and the world should be considered contradictory and mutually exclusive. But this, al-Ghazali argues, is a misconception based on gross misunderstanding of the nature of both the faith (Islam) and the world.

²⁷ *Al-Iqtisād, op. cit.*, pp. 148-149; *Iḥyā'*, vol. 1, p. 30; *Mezān*, p. 372 and *Fada'il*

al-Rāṭinīyah, p. 205.

²⁸ *Al-Iqtisād*, p. 147.

²⁹ *Ibid*.

³⁰ *Al-Iqtisād*, pp. 147-148.

For while it is undoubtedly true that indulgence in worldly pleasures and the pursuit of luxurious life styles are certainly destructive for the soul and corrosive to ethical sensibilities, a morally measured and responsible or moderate involvement in worldly affairs vis-à-vis having enough of the good things of life to meet basic human needs are, in fact, *preconditions* without which neither the good life in general, nor spiritual refinement and moral fulfillment in particular, can be attained.³¹ More specifically the argument continues, the establishment of "*niẓām al-dīn*" or Islamic order, is contingent upon the acquisition of knowledge and on worship in its various forms and facets. But neither of these can be accomplished in the absence of physical life, good health, or adequate provisions for the satisfaction of such basic needs as all humans have for food, shelter and clothing in conditions of peace and security. A person who has to spend all his time and energy defending his life against hostile forces in order to secure the wherewithal for physical survival, would surely not be able either to seek knowledge or engage in worship and the performance of good deeds: the two indispensable prerequisites of attaining salvation and eternal bliss in the Hereafter. It should therefore, be clear that the establishment of a well organized worldly system, complete with a properly constituted and effective *imānī* (or government) that at the very least keeps law and order as well as gives a modicum of appropriate guidance, is a necessary *precondition* for the existence and development of a healthy spiritual and moral (specifically Islamic) order. In al-Ghazālī's own succinct words: "...*niẓāmu al-dunya...sharṭun...fi' niẓāmi al-dīn*."³²

But al-Ghazālī is not content merely to demonstrate the correctness of his position and the coherence of his argument. Taking the battle to the opponents' camp, so to speak, he vigorously assails those ignoramus (*al-juhāl*)³³ who mistakenly think that in order to be a truly good Muslim one must renounce the world on

the assumption that it is all contaminated with evil and *ḥaram* (i.e. unlawful) things and actions. Describing this attitude as a most harmful *bid'ah* (i.e. accretion),³⁴ al-Ghazālī proceeds to expose its weaknesses and contradictions in several ways and at some length. Suffice it to note here, that he is strongly of the opinion that a true *zāhid* (i.e. ascetic, or very devout person) is not necessarily one who is bereft of wealth, but one who is not obsessed by, or excessively preoccupied with wealth, even if he happened to be the richest person on earth. Citing numerous passages from the Holy Qur'ān, alongside several sayings of the Prophet, furthermore, al-Ghazālī grants that there are indeed good and evil forces in the world, as well as many grey areas between the two. With sufficient knowledge and good common sense however, it should be quite possible for a conscientious Muslim who is capable of work to navigate his or her way through life in a manner perfectly consistent with dignity and moral integrity. Indeed, the argument continues that hard work for the purpose of securing honest earnings with a view to satisfying the legitimate needs and ambitions of oneself and one's dependents, including, parents, is not merely permissible. In the light of both Qur'anic precepts and Prophetic teachings rather it is a highly commendable form of worship, or even of *jihād*, the assured reward for which is (tidily blessings and heavenly bliss.³⁵

Winding up the whole argument, al-Ghazālī says that the state is necessary and indispensable for social life and worldly order. These, in turn, are necessary and indispensable for healthy spiritual and moral life. And, for him, as we have seen, religion encompasses the socio-economic, political and cultural, as well as the spiritual and moral aspects of life viewed as necessary and indispensable for the attainment of salvation and eternal bliss in the Hereafter.³⁶ This constitutes true happiness³⁷ and is the ultimate objective of the *Sharī'ah*, indeed³⁸ of all prophetic missions. The state and politics

³¹ *Al-Iqtisād*, p. 148.

³² *Ibid.* Also, *Fada'ih al-Baṭin* (henceforth: *al-Mustashḥiṭ*), pp. 196-200.

³³ *Ḥya*, vol II, book 5, p. 20 ff.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ḥya*, vol I, book 4, p. 168 ff and vol. II, book 5, pp. 21-137.

³⁶ *Al-Iqtisād*, p. 149.

³⁷ *Mizan*, p. 305 and *Ḥya*, vol. I, p. 21.

are of pivotal importance throughout, and it is from their central role in both this world and with regard to the Hereafter that they derive their legitimacy and ultimate significance.

III. *Principles and Institutions of Government*

It should be clear from what has been said above, that the *Shari'ah*, for al-Ghazali, was the fount of legitimacy for all actions of the *umma* and constituted the basis on which governmental, as well as other, institutions stood.³⁸ It is indicative of the great importance which he attached to the *Shari'ah* in general and to *usul al-fiqh* (principles of jurisprudence) in particular, that although he was, of course, fully cognizant of the mastery contributions which had already been made to the subject by al-Shafi'i and Imām al-Haramayn, among others, and despite the fact that he had himself discussed it in several of his earlier works, al-Ghazali dedicated some of the last years of his life to the writing of a comprehensive and highly systematic book on the subject, namely *al-Mustasfa min 'Ilm al-'Usul*.³⁹ Subsequently described by Ibn Khaldūn as one of the best four books ever written on *usul al-fiqh*,⁴⁰ *al-Mustasfa*, alongside its counterparts, came to be widely regarded *inter alia* as a veritable manual in the light of which *muftahids* throughout the ages, could rationally and consistently, with the teachings and principles enshrined in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, produce appropriate *ahkām* (i.e. rulings and judgements) to fit the needs and requirements of Muslim societies in different and changing circumstances.

One of the greatest challenges which al-Ghazali had to face

in his own day and age was the fact that the caliphate was no longer what it used to be or should have been. For while caliphs as the custodians of the *Shari'ah*, continued to enjoy a certain essentially moral or theoretical authority, real power in the sense of ability to take effective decisions in matters of public policy and that the said decisions were implemented, was wielded not by caliphs but by Seljuk sultāns and their aides, whether military or civilian. The caliphs, for their part, were often far from being ideally qualified in terms of learning, character and general ability for the important office of the leadership entrusted to them. Meanwhile the Batinites, opposed to Seljuk sultāns and 'Abbasid caliphs alike, continued to fight both not only militarily but also politically and ideologically.

Apart from having to rebut the ideological and political onslaught of the Batinites, al-Ghazali and his contemporaries had to contend with the even more serious and difficult question—or cluster of questions—of how to reconcile the situation arising from the feebleness of the caliphs on the one hand, and the domination of both the caliphs and the *umma* by the Seljuk sultāns and war lords on the other, with the precepts and principles of the *Shari'ah*. Given this situation, was there any way in which the *Shari'ah* could still remain the fount of legitimacy for both the society and state? Or, had the *Shari'ah* legitimacy in fact been lost in the existing set up and was the *umma*, in consequence, living in sin?

If such questions were deeply troubling for all politically conscious Muslims at the time (which they undoubtedly were), they must have been much more unsettling for those individuals who were endowed with highly sensitive souls and minds, of whom al-Ghazali was the most prominent example.

But there were other troubling questions besides. Among the most pressing of these were several that arose in connection with the manner in which sultāns, *walis*, and lesser functionaries and administrators who managed public affairs were in many instances far removed from the high standards of justice, efficiency and transparency as stipulated by the *Shari'ah*. And furthermore, as if to render an already difficult situation more complex, the *ulama* who were as the professional interpreters and expositors of the *Shari'ah*, and supposed to be models of integrity and champions of reform,

³⁸ *Ihya'*, vol. 1, p. 9 ff.

³⁹ See, for example, Dr Muhammad Sulaiman al-Ashgar's edition, published in two volumes, by Mu'assasat al-Risalah, Beirut, 1997.

⁴⁰ 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldūn: *Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn, al-Muqaddimah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1992), p. 487. Also, Franz Rosenthal's English translation of *The Muqaddimah* (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1957), vol. 3, pp. 28-29.

were also themselves often corrupt self-seeking individuals.⁴¹

Al-Ghazālī tackled the first set of questions (concerning caliphs and sultāns) by first of all, recognizing the situation for what it actually was: an obvious and painfully flawed condition which only tenuously reflected the values and principles of the *Shari'ah*. In terms of *usul al-fiqh*, al-Ghazālī, not surprisingly, considered it an anomalous or extraordinary situation in which necessity rendered legitimate and acceptable judgements and practices which would otherwise be regarded as illegitimate and unacceptable: '*al-darūrāt tubīḥu al-maḥzūrāt*'.⁴² Short of revolution, which, like Hobbes, al-Ghazālī would not entertain for fear that it would almost certainly unleash unpredictable and uncontrollable forces of destruction that would undermine the entire fabric of both society and the state, the situation was simply not capable of admitting or making possible a neat or perfect solution. Only a contrived series of partial reforms and compromises could be realistically considered.

In theory, al-Ghazālī pointed out, the accession to the caliphate could be affected through any of three possible ways, namely: designation by the Prophet; designation by a reigning caliph; or through selection by a militarily and politically dominant person or group of persons to whom obedience is rendered by the majority of the populace.⁴³ (It is a remarkable fact—perhaps reflective of the desperately contentious circumstances in which he lived—that al-Ghazālī did not even mention *shūrā*, whereby rulers would be chosen by the ruled as a fourth, theoretically possible, way).

In practice however, al-Ghazālī boldly, though perhaps with a tinge of controlled sadness, stated: '*al-wilāyatu al-an la tatba'u illā al-shawkāh: fa man bay'ahā yāḥibu al-shawkāh fa huwa al-khulifāh*'.⁴⁴ ... accession [to the caliphate] nowadays is entirely dependent upon military might, for that person [from among the 'Abbasids] to whom allegiance is proffered by the holder of military might, is caliph'.⁴⁵

As if engaged in a desperate search for some way whereby a veneer of legitimacy could be shed upon the above described procedures and processes, al-Ghazālī then goes on to say that: 'provided the independent wielder of military might in question professes allegiance to the caliph [and demonstrates his allegiance] by seeing to it that the caliph's name is mentioned in the *khutbah* [in congregations for Friday and 'id prayers] and on the coinage, the sad [war lord] should be recognized as a [legitimate] sultan whose orders and judgements are to be followed and implemented throughout the realm'.⁴⁶ ... '*wa man istabacka bi'l-shawkāh wa huwa muḥim il-l-khulifāh fi aṣl al-khulifāh wa'l-sikkah, fa huwa sultānun naḥḥu il-faḥm wa'l-quḍā' fī ugār al-arḍ wilyaḥ naḥḥu al-ahkām*'.⁴⁷

In this way the danger of the *umamah* being plunged into sin is averted, for the sultan who has effective control of power, is recognized as a legitimate (if clearly dominant) partner of the caliph in the management of the affairs of the *umamah*.

But it was not only in military prowess and political power that caliphs or would-be-caliphs in those days were deficient. For, apart from having been born 'Abbasid, thereby fulfilling one of the conditions which were then regarded as essential qualifications for assuming the caliphate (i.e., Qurayshite descent), the other required qualifications included the basic one of being educated at least to the level of muḥī or *mufṭahid*, and were—according to al-Ghazālī himself—totally missing.⁴⁸

Just as the lack of military might and political power could be compensated for by recognizing loyal sultāns as partners with caliphs in the management of public affairs in the above indicated manner, their lack of knowledge and proper education however, al-Ghazālī argues, could be made up for by arranging for caliphs, who at the very least expected to be conscientious and reasonably intelligent men,⁴⁹ to seek appropriate guidance and welcome good advice given by competent God-fearing scholars or *ulama'*.⁴⁸

⁴¹ *Iḥyā'*, vol. II, book 7, pp. 92-93.

⁴² *Al-Iqtisād*, p. 151.

⁴³ *Iḥyā'*, pp. 149-150.

⁴⁴ *Iḥyā'*, vol. II, book 5, p. 110 and *al-Mustashir*, pp. 176-177.

⁴⁵ *Iḥyā'*, loc. cit.

⁴⁶ *Al-Iqtisād*, p. 151; *Al-Mustashir*, pp. 192-194.

⁴⁷ *Al-Mustashir*, pp. 185-186.

⁴⁸ *Iḥyā'*, vol. II, book 7, pp. 68-97.

By virtue of his being an expert in politics and conflict resolution, al-Ghazālī says the *ʿālim* (scholar-jurist) should be the sultan's tutor and guide in the management and control of public affairs: "*al-faqīhū huwa al-ʿālimu bi qamūlī siyāsa wa tarīqī al-tawāṣut bayna l-khalīq ʿilma tunāza u bi hukm al-shahawā, fa kāna al-faqīhū muʿallim al-sulṭān wa murshidahu ilā tarīqī siyāsanī l-khalīq wa dābirihim liyantaẓima bi ʿistiqānithim umūrahum fī al-dīnya*"⁴⁹

With the three principal institutions in the caliphate (i.e., sultans, caliphs and *ʿulamāʾ*) thus complementing each other and hopefully acting in concert, the integrity of the *ummah* would be secured and the legitimacy of the body politic sustained.

As if to disarm potential doubters and critics in advance of any possible attack, al-Ghazālī then hastens to add that the alternative (of, for example, withdrawing recognition of legitimacy from such sultans and caliphs as have been described above) would be the collapse of the entire edifice of legality and of legal transactions. This would undermine all judicial and administrative appointments and decisions, as well as all marriages and testimonials; indeed, the whole system of rights and obligations that, under the *Shariʿah*, are due not only to men and women here on earth, but also infinitely more importantly, to the Lord above. The *ummah* in its entirety would be irredeemably plunged into sin.⁵⁰ Which would be better, al-Ghazālī then rhetorically asks: to accept as legitimate an admittedly imperfect caliphate and thus safeguard the integrity of the social order and the validity of official appointments, judicial decisions, marital contracts, etc.? – or risk the collapse of the entire social order simply because of the non-availability of persons who are fully qualified for the caliphate as ideally conceived?⁵¹

In any case, al-Ghazālī points out that obeying rulers and giving them loyal support and assistance even though, as humans, they cannot but be imperfect, are religious duties which, as such,

cannot be lightly shirked or put aside by any (equally human and imperfect) person who would consider himself or herself truly Muslim.⁵²

Al-Ghazālī's argument aimed *inter alia* at bridging the gap between the ideal and the real in the socio-political situation of his time and was, to say the least, clearly original. None of his predecessors, including the brilliant al-Mawardi and al-Juwayni, had either faced the problem or attempted to resolve its inherent tensions and contradictions the way al-Ghazālī did. Not surprisingly, therefore, his thesis and the generally persuasive arguments which underpinned it have met with wide acceptance, not only among his own contemporaries but also among succeeding generations of Sunni Muslims around the world.

As might have been expected however, the Bāṭinites and the Shīʿah in general, were not similarly impressed. Al-Ghazālī, for his part, was certainly not interested in winning them over to his point of view. His primary objective as far as the Shīʿah in general and the Bāṭinites in particular were concerned was, rather, to rebut their arguments and demonstrate the incoherence of their views (especially those of the Taʿlimiyyah of his time: *Bāṭiniyyat haḥḥa al-ʿasr*⁵³, as he described them),⁵⁴ regarding the Sunni caliphate in general, and that of the young ʿAbbāsīd caliph, al-Mustazhar, in particular. The book, *Faḍā ilā al-Bāṭiniyyah/Al-Mustashir*, which al-Ghazālī wrote to that end, is a highly systematic and fairly detailed refutation of a wide range of Shīʿi and especially Ismāʿīlite beliefs and positions: theological, juridical, and political.

We need not explore al-Ghazālī's arguments in this connection in any detail here. Suffice it to note that, beginning with an exposition of Bāṭinite esotericism and how it necessarily leads to the undermining of faith and *Shariʿah* (*ihḍāl al-Shariʿi* [*wa*] *al-insilākh* [*an* *gawāʿid al-ʿdīn*] as well as thinking (*ʿayy*) and reasoning (*taṣarruf al-ʿuqūl*),⁵⁴ al-Ghazālī then proceeds to reject as preposterous

⁴⁹ *Iḥyāʾ*, vol. I, book 1, p. 30.

⁵⁰ *Al-Iḥyāʾ*, p. 151; *Al-Mustashir*, pp. 169-170 and *Iḥyāʾ*, vol. II, book 2, p. 10.

⁵¹ *Al-Iḥyāʾ*, p. 151 and *Al-Mustashir*, pp. 191-194.

⁵² *Al-Mustashir*, pp. 3-4 and 190; also *Al-Iḥyāʾ*, p. 150 and *Iḥyāʾ*, vol. II, book 5, p. 110.

⁵³ *Al-Mustashir*, p. 17.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-17.

and totally unfounded, the fundamental claim commonly held by Bāṭinites and all Shi'ites that Imām 'Alī and his progeny after him had been designated successors by the Prophet. His argument in this respect is twofold. Al-Ghazālī first points out that it is simply inconceivable that the Companions (totally devoted to the Prophet and proverbially keen on watching, memorizing and propagating his every utterance or action as they were) could have conspired – and unanimously so – to conceal or deny knowledge of anything pertaining to the Prophet or the faith however small or apparently insignificant, let alone one of such obvious gravity and importance as the question of the leadership of the *ummah*. Had he designated anyone to succeed him everybody would have surely known and testified accordingly. Assuming, for the sake of the argument, that the impossible did somehow happen, and that the document containing the alleged designation was conspiratorially hidden or destroyed, why, al-Ghazālī then asks, did neither Imām 'Alī himself nor any of his supporters at the time, seeing that the validity of his succession to the caliphate was challenged by adversaries against whom he had to fight a series of prolonged and bitter battles, not produce, or even mention either the supposed document or the alleged designation.⁵⁵

Devoid of true faith (*ṣiḥḥat al-'aqīdat wa salamat al-dīn*) as well as of any evidence to substantiate his claim to the imamate or caliphate therefore, Al-Ghazālī concludes, there are no basis whatsoever for considering the Bāṭinite's nominee or claimant for the imamate as anything other than inadmissible and totally unacceptable.⁵⁶

Recapitulating on the arguments which he had earlier marshaled in support of his main thesis, al-Ghazālī then reasserts his position that the 'Abbāsīd caliphate in general and that of the incumbent caliph, al-Mustazhir in particular, were alone legitimate and valid. In that context, al-Ghazālī then introduces another and interesting new principle; namely, the majority rule, or in his own words, "*al-tarjīḥ bi'l-kathrah*". Using language which is familiar

enough in the context of modern debates and discussions about the merits and limitations of democracy and democratic procedures, al-Ghazālī says that since it is virtually impossible for all concerned in any given situation where a potentially divisive issue is being considered to come to a unanimously agreed position, it is imperative that all should abide by the opinion of the majority: "... *fa innahum law' ikhtalafu ... wajibu al-tarjīḥu bi'l-kathrah*".⁵⁷ On that count too, al-Ghazālī maintains, the Bāṭinites who constituted no more than a small fraction of the body politic, had no right or claim for the leadership of the *ummah*. By contrast, the 'Abbāsīds (including al-Mustazhir), because they were recognized by the overwhelming majority of the populace, including all outstanding scholars and power, were indeed the legitimate imāms or caliphs to whom obedience was therefore religiously and morally owed by one and all.⁵⁸

To the Bāṭinite inspired jibe that the obedience owed by the sultāns and warlords to the caliph was not infrequently conspicuous by its absence, al-Ghazālī's response was twofold. Al-Ghazālī begins by asserting that, for the Seljuḳ sultāns and warlords, obedience to the caliph was indeed a matter of faith and principle which they would ardently defend with all their might against any enemy or challenger: that they would in fact regard defending the 'Abbāsīd caliphate in this way as *jihad fi sabil Allah*.⁵⁹ The fact that they did sometimes behave contrary to the caliph's wishes or directives did not amount to a negation of the loyalty which they sincerely owed him in principle. The same, al-Ghazālī argues, is in fact true with regard to the obedience owed by any servant to his master or even by men of faith to God. Sincere commitment to the principle cannot fairly be denied merely because practice sometimes happens to be inconsistent with the principle in question.

As was usual with him, al-Ghazālī then carries the battle into

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 132-140 and p. 174.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 172-173.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 174-177.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

the court of the adversaries. Why do those Bāṭinites who hasten to raise this kind of question, not think of Imām 'Alī's experience with his supposedly loyal supporters (*shī'a*) who so frequently let him down in both word and deed; that almost all his speeches echo his disappointment and bitter complaints about their treacherous disobedience to himself? If the failure of so many of Imām 'Alī's supporters to be true to him could not lead us to saying that there were all disloyal, why should it be said that occasionally similar conduct on the part of some of the Seljuk sultāns and warlords be regarded as tantamount to withdrawal of loyalty and obedience from 'Abbāsīd caliphs?⁶⁰ For al-Ghazālī, therefore, the validity of the majority principle (*al-tarīf bi'l-kathrah*), with all its afore-mentioned corollaries remains intact.

Reconstructing the juridical and political basis of the 'Abbāsīd caliphate at a time when power had already passed from the hands of the caliphs to those of the Seljuk sultāns and war lords, and defending the caliphate against the ideological onslaught of the thus reformed caliphate against the ideological onslaught of the Bāṭinites and others, were two major objectives for the realization of which al-Ghazālī, as we have seen, had ardently struggled and not without a considerable measure of success.

But al-Ghazālī was also anxious to see that the actual performance of the caliphate and its constituent organs in the day-to-day management and administration of the affairs of the *umma* were, as far as possible, in conformity with the high standards of good governance, including integrity, clemency, justice, efficiency, transparency etc., which are enshrined in the *Shari'ah*.

Being a most distinguished thinker and a highly influential reform-minded teacher and public personality but not a ruler or administrator himself, al-Ghazālī's chosen method for the realization of his objective in this regard was, naturally, the

written and/or spoken word of advice.⁶¹ Al-Ghazālī was indeed a prolific and untiring source of such advice, including admonition, encouragement, warning, etc. as appropriate, and which he directed to sultāns, judges, *waḥīd* and *'ulamā'*, as well as to the caliph and members of the public at large: sometimes in the form of books and pamphlets, some others as letters and epistles of various kinds and length. Consistently with his afore-mentioned views, especially in connection with the importance and legitimacy of the state, al-Ghazālī was constantly concerned with the attainment of excellence in thought and action. This was not only for its own sake or as a necessary precondition for the realization of the good life here on earth (which, as we have seen, he greatly valued and appreciated) but, also, and much more importantly as a prerequisite, God-willing, for salvation and the attainment of eternal bliss in the Hereafter. For al-Ghazālī, the spiritual and ethical aspects of the human experience continue to be the uppermost considerations in political and social thought and action.

This is particularly clear in the advice contained in the tenth and final chapter of *Faḍā'il al-Bāṭiniyyah*, which al-Ghazālī gives to the young caliph al-Mustazhir. Not insignificantly in the circumstances, the thirty pages of this chapter only formally and proverbially touch on matters relating to power, politics and administration. It more directly and effectively focuses instead, as its very title clearly indicates,⁶² on the need for the caliph if his tenure as such is to continue for long, to concentrate on the deepening of his faith, the refinement of his spiritual sensibilities, and the acquisition and development of a number of ethical and moral qualities in his character. Among the qualities and attributes on which special emphasis is placed are piety, righteousness, self-restraint, justice, clemency, integrity, courtesy,

61. It is almost certain that in choosing this method, al-Ghazālī had the famous *ḥadīth* in mind: "*al-fuḍū al-nazīhah*": meaning that [good] advice [sincerely given to rulers, groups, individuals or to the *umma* at large] is [of the essence of] faith. As such advice is a form of worship (*'ibādah*) or, depending on circumstances, even of *jihād* – a most commendable form of action.

62. *Al-Mustazhir*, pp. 195-225. The title of the said chapter is *Fa'il waḥīd 'alī dhayrat al-haṭṭ bi'l muwā'adati 'alāyah yadūnu istīqāṭu al-īmānah*.

kindness, love of learning and wisdom, the veneration of 'ulamā', and the respectful consideration of the latter's advice.

Traditionally regarded in Muslim societies as *warāḥanā' al-ambiyā'* (i.e., heirs to the prophets) the 'ulamā' and certainly those of them who, for al-Ghazālī, were truly worthy of the designation, were not merely purveyors of knowledge and information, or occupants of various posts and offices, but also as custodians of the *Sharī'ah* they were, leaders of society and tutors of rulers and statesmen. Naturally therefore, al-Ghazālī, was most anxious to see the 'ulamā' shoulder the heavy and important responsibilities entrusted to them by both society and the state, with requisite competence and integrity.

Extraordinarily insightful and perceptive and, at the same time, endowed with exceptionally powerful analytical abilities as well as system-building skills, al-Ghazālī has in fact enriched the human heritage with a wide range of theories, concepts, and tools of analysis that, taken together encompass the human experience in its entirety. It goes without saying that giving an adequate idea about his views on learning and educational processes for instance, or with regard to the ways and means whereby moral integrity may be built-up, or cognitive abilities and academic competence enhanced, are all beyond our present concerns.

Suffice it to note that as far as the basic ingredients of what he regarded as the necessary and appropriate education of truly qualified 'ulamā' were concerned, al-Ghazālī was strongly of the opinion that both the rational and religious sciences should be included. Those who claim that revelation is on its own sufficient and accordingly insist on the exclusion of rational sciences, al-Ghazālī says, are ignorant while those, on the other hand, who maintain that reason and the rational sciences are enough and would therefore have us do without the light and guidance of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, are arrogant and misguided. The two together, i.e., reason and revelation, al-Ghazālī argues, are in fact necessary and complement each other.⁶³

An encyclopaedist by nature⁶⁴ and conviction, and a passionate believer in the inter-disciplinary approach to learning, al-Ghazālī in fact insists that serious scholars and would be real 'ulamā' should endeavour, wherever and whenever possible, to learn enough of each science in existence to be able, at the very least, to understand and appreciate the methods and objectives of the science or the sciences in question, for all sciences, al-Ghazālī states, are closely interconnected and complement each other. Therefore, if life is too short for one to master all sciences, one should at least take a whiff of each: "... *inna al-'ulamā kulluhā mutatawminun mutawāḍiʿūn ba'ihuhā bi ba'ā ... [fa] idhā lam yattas'ia al-'ilmun li jam'i li-'ulum ... fayataʿaf bi shammalin min kullī 'ilm.*"⁶⁵

The same integrative outlook on life and knowledge is also evident in al-Ghazālī's way of considering the old debate between the *fiqhāh* (who favour the legalistic or juridical approach, whereby considerable emphasis is put on *ahkām* i.e. rules and regulations) on the one hand, and the *mutakawwifūh* or *suḥū* (who attach greater importance to spirituality and the moral dimension of life and religious thought and practice, while perhaps neglecting *fiqh*) on the other. Al-Ghazālī, as may be expected, is strongly critical of the 'radicals' or 'exclusivists' on both sides and resolves the tension by demonstrating the importance and complementarity of the two approaches.⁶⁶

It goes without saying that, for al-Ghazālī, knowledge in all its forms and aspects (excepting only such spurious or pseudo sciences as magic and astrology which he describes as either useless or harmful)⁶⁷ is of the utmost value and importance.

In the last analysis however, al-Ghazālī repeatedly says that what is really important (both for life here on earth and most certainly in the Hereafter) is not knowledge or learning or scholarship *per se*, however well conceived or brilliantly demonstrated they may be.

⁶³ Al-Ghazālī himself eloquently testifies to this in the first few pages of his remarkable intellectual autobiography, *al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl*.

⁶⁴ *Mizān*, pp. 348-350.

⁶⁵ *Iḥyā'*, vol I book I, pp. 24-70 and vol II book 8, pp. 31-35.

⁶⁷ *Iḥyā'*, vol I book I, pp. 49-53 and 65.

It is important to remember furthermore, that in trying to establish justice in the realm, it is not enough, al-Ghazālī points out, that the sultan himself be just and avoid wrongdoing; he should also ensure that his aids and assistants are likewise upright and just.⁷³ To achieve that objective, the sultan should observe and supervise the conduct of his aids and *wazīrs* as carefully as he would the conduct of his family and household.⁷⁴ Special care should be taken in making appointments to the judiciary. Only persons of integrity and good character, as well as appropriate academic or professional qualifications, should be appointed *qādīs* because they will be entrusted with the direct application of the *Shari'ah*.⁷⁵

Wazīrs should be perspicacious, honest and particularly capable in the management of public affairs. Occasional and minor slips on the wazīr's part should be graciously forgiven by the sultan. As the sultan's right hand man the wazīr should be treated as a confidant, consulted in all matters of state and protected from invidious reporting by jealous rivals. Should it be decided that his services are no longer needed, his [legitimately earned] wealth or property should not be covered or confiscated.⁷⁶

Since justice is best known through the *Shari'ah*,⁷⁷ the sultan should always seek the company of the *ulama'* and carefully listen to their advice. In so engaging himself however the sultan should be careful not to fall in the clutches of *'ulama' al-w'* (or evil scholars) who, through flattery, trickery and sycophancy, would only want to secure certain *haram* (i.e. illegitimate) benefits for themselves. The true (or *bona fide*) *alim*, al-Ghazālī points out to the sultan, is he who does not long for your bounty and would not hesitate to give genuine and dispassionate opinion or advice [even what may].⁷⁸

In order to make absolutely sure that justice is upheld and the authority of the state and all those who are in charge of public affairs

is respected and held in awe, al-Ghazālī advises the sultan to make himself a good example for others. He should carefully observe the values, rules and principles of the faith, and in addition to being just, strong and decisive, should endeavour to adorn himself with such qualities as self restraint, modesty, clemency and affability.⁷⁹ If he absolutely cannot help being attracted to such things as drinking alcohol, hunting and playing chess, the sultan should be careful not to allow these to distract him from attending to his duties, both religious and political. There should be a time for everything al-Ghazālī says.⁸⁰ No less realistically and interestingly, al-Ghazālī concludes his *Nasihat al-Mulūk* with two chapters on the fairer sex and how they should be sensitively, perhaps passionately but always ethically and responsibly treated; especially by those, such as sultans and wazīrs who are in charge of public affairs and the destiny of the *ummah*.⁸¹

IV. Some Concluding Remarks: The Contemporary Relevance of al-Ghazālī's Political Thought

Al-Ghazālī departed this world some nine hundred years ago. His thought and ideas, theological, philosophical, ethical, political and otherwise however, have continued to attract, fascinate, inspire and sometimes enrage many thinking people; Muslim and non-Muslim alike for almost a millennium now. And they are likely to continue to do so for as long as thinking men and women exist.

This has been the case, to some extent, because the nature

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 9 ff.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁷⁵ *Al-Tib*, pp. 122-131. It should be mentioned in this connection that the

authenticity of the second half of *Nasihat al-Mulūk* has been questioned by

some scholars. See the entries on al-Ghazālī by Bowering and Pourjavady in

the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. X and Patricia Crooke (1987). The majority of

Muslim and Western scholars however remain convinced that the whole text

is the authentic work of al-Ghazālī. For a clear review of the subject see Nik

Kostman Abdul Samad, *Al-Ghazālī on Administrative Ethics With Special*

Reference To His Nasihat al-Mulūk (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, ISTAC, 2003),

pp. 39-44.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Letter to the wazīr Fakhr al-Mulk; no 6 in *Nasā'ih al-ʿulamāʾ*, p. 65.

⁷⁹ *Al-Tib*, pp. 83-84.

⁸⁰ *Al-Mawāʿiz*, p. 205.

⁸¹ *Al-Tib*, pp. 18-19.

of knowledge, its pursuit and the process of thinking itself—all subjects of perennial and universal importance—have been pivotal to the life and thought of al-Ghazālī and he had many brilliant and enlightening things to say about each of them. Living at a time when the creation of a knowledge-based society has become a universally cherished ambition of humanity—even though the concept may have been variously understood and only partially realized so far—all those who are in any way seriously concerned with the subject today would, therefore, naturally want to consult al-Ghazālī and perhaps others who, like him, may have, to a greater or lesser extent, enriched the human heritage across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

The value of his integrative approach to knowledge and the human experience in general should also be a matter of considerable interest and appreciation for the many across the world today who are increasingly distressed by the prevalent and growing state of post modern fragmentation in general and, especially, those who contemplate or have to bear the consequences of the rapidly growing separation, and in many cases the now well established divorce, between ethics and morality on the one hand, and politics along with a whole series of social functions and activities, including education and business, as well as numerous applications or misapplications of modern scientific research on the other.

Al-Ghazālī's specifically political thought as we have seen was highly original and, perhaps even more importantly, characterized *inter alia* by an unflinching realism which, far from the cynicism normally associated with the term in much of our contemporary political discourse, was, however, firmly rooted in spiritual teachings and ethical values. The particular historical context in which al-Ghazālī developed his social and political thought has of course disappeared a long time ago. But the strong bond which he creatively forged between spiritual teachings and ethical values and the difficult realities of the situation in existence at the time remains. And this without the cynicism we nowadays generally assume is an unavoidable, almost necessary consequence or attendant feature of realism! This latter stands as a ray of light, which shining across the centuries, lights up and dissipates the darkness we often fight against today.

Another major theme in al-Ghazālī's political thought that is more easily and perhaps less consciously seen and recognized as relevant today, is his constant and unwavering concern with good governance, including such vitally important ingredients as justice, clemency, transparency and integrity.

Closely related to good governance and its various constituent elements in al-Ghazālī's social and political thought are his views regarding the role of the 'intelligentsia' i.e., scholars and the better educated generally, both in society and the political system. Unlike, for example, Marx in the modern Western tradition, al-Ghazālī did not assign a revolutionary role to the intelligentsia; and this for the simple reason that he did not see revolution as either an emancipatory or constructive process. Perhaps more like Edmund Burke and Thomas Hobbes, al-Ghazālī saw revolutions as basically destructive and therefore morally unjustifiable forms of behaviour. As betrays a deeply conscious Muslim, however, al-Ghazālī was fully committed to the cause of constant struggle for reform and renewal (*al-islāh wa'l-tajdīd*). In this context he felt that it was wrong and irresponsible for members of the intelligentsia to content themselves with being mere technicians and faceless bureaucrats. Over and beyond careers, security of tenure and job satisfaction, etc., scholars in particular and the better educated classes in general, he felt, should be leaders and supporters of social reform and unwavering practitioners of constructive criticism in the political arena. In traditional Islamic terminology, they should have the moral courage and sense of responsibility to be constantly engaged in and committed to *al-amr bi'l-ma'ruf wa'l-nahy 'an al-munkar*, i.e., commanding right and forbidding wrong. And in order to be able to fulfill their duties in this respect consistently and with sincerity, these would be reformers of society and the state, in accordance with the teachings and principles of the faith, had to begin by reforming their own ways in both thought and conduct. Politics, morality, thought and action are thus closely related to each other in al-Ghazālī's integrative system and worldview.

One more point needs to be mentioned before bringing these few remarks to an end. It is about the majority-rule, or *al-tarjīh bi'l-kathirah*. We have seen how al-Ghazālī had imaginatively and

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skillfully introduced this concept as a means of resolving tensions when communities are split over divisive or controversial issues. It would be easy, but demonstrably unjustifiable, to jump from there (as some have done) to the conclusion that al-Chazali should therefore be regarded as a precursor of modern democratic thought.

Fortunately, our appreciation of al-Chazali's genius and brilliant contributions to social and political thought—some aspects of which have been briefly indicated above—does not have to depend on such baseless claims.

Wa Allāhu a'alam!